

## Whidbey Native Connections Initiative Newsletter February 2026

**WEDNESDAY, February 11, 6:30 PM-8:00 PM: Native Connections Zoom Gathering**  
(Find the Zoom link in your inbox.)

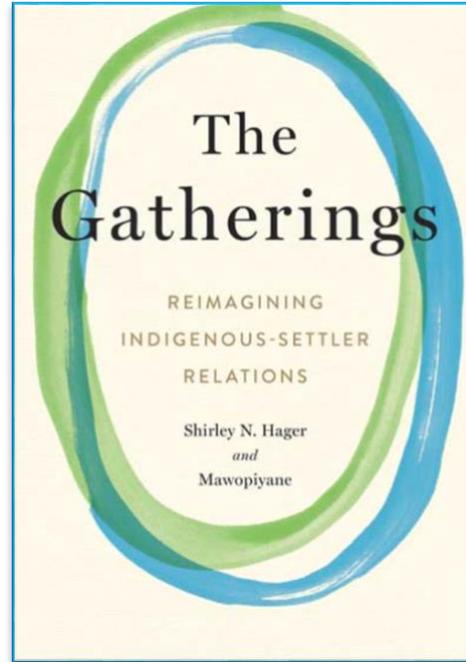
This month, we'll be gathering with the intention of leaning in and listening to each other. For many months we have offered you presentations, but now we find we are hungry to hear *your* voices. Why do you keep attending (or are you just starting to attend now? Welcome!)

This is our fourth year of convening these gatherings, sending newsletters, and showing up when we are invited. We've been slowly growing relationships, emphasizing our commitment to educating ourselves about Indigenous history and contemporary issues, and learning ways to support the Indigenous people whose homelands we occupy.

In November, the sduhubs (Snohomish), led by Carly Mathews, shared the history of the Snohomish Tribe, how it is that they do not have Federal recognition, and ways that we might be able to step up as allies for them. Many of you have asked for some way to get to know each other, to give back to the Snohomish in reciprocity by sharing our stories, and have a discussion about how to live here with integrity, every day.

In our upcoming gathering, we'll break into small groups and listen to each other, and come back together to harvest the nuggets of what has been spoken. We'll set up the small groups with a host who can keep the circle on focus. You can choose to join a small group or spend the time journaling or in silence.

We hope you'll join us on Wednesday!



As gkisedtanamoogk, (enrolled Wampanoag) said in the book, *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*:

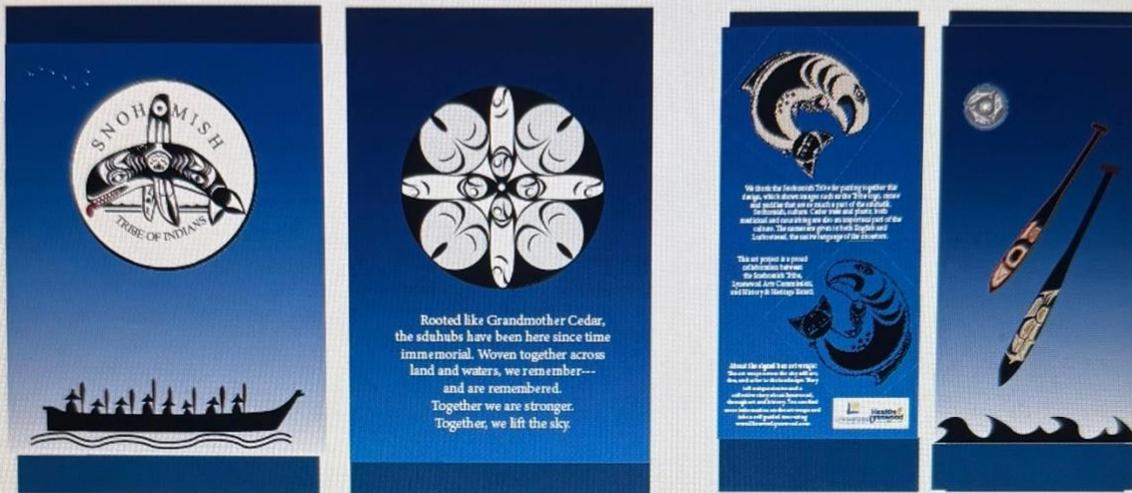
**“It’s not about building the great ark and shipping everyone back to Europe or wherever they came from. It’s about how we live together in this shared space. For me, the ideal is for people to have the same love for the land, and for being part of the land, as we have. It’s on that basis that one can be here legitimately.”**

**What might it feel like to you, to be here legitimately?**

**Cynthia Campbell** (sduhubs or Snohomish) was invited by the city of Lynnwood to create designs in collaboration with the Snohomish Tribe that would be wrapped around two power boxes. She shared her story with us for the newsletter.

## The Saga of the Power Box

I was approached through email by Fred Wong, the Arts and Culture Director for the city of Lynnwood. I had previously met him when I was in the Visual Communications program at EdCC and he remembered I was a member of the Snohomish Tribe. Long story short, I worked with him and the tribe to create designs for two power boxes in Lynnwood. The blue background designs are the larger box, the first two images are the front and back, respectively, and the two narrower are the two sides.



I'm including the text box with the two salmon since it's hard to read.

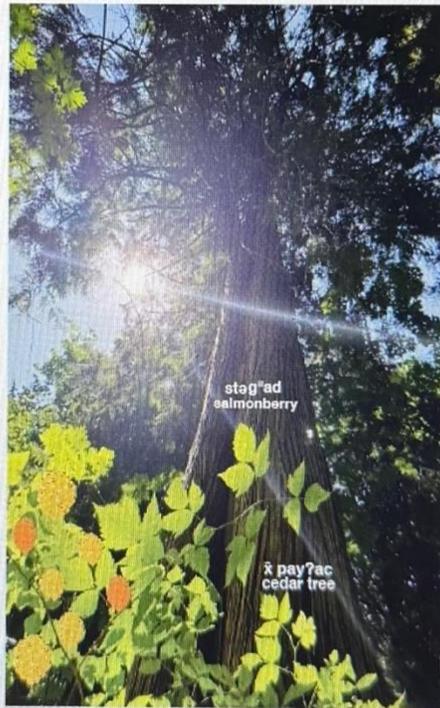
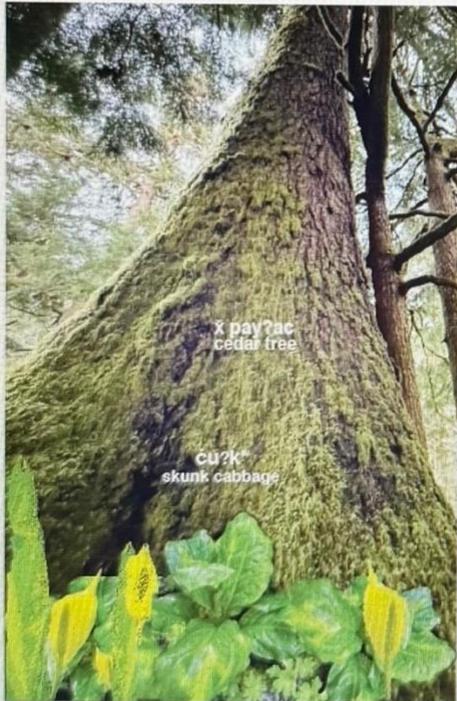
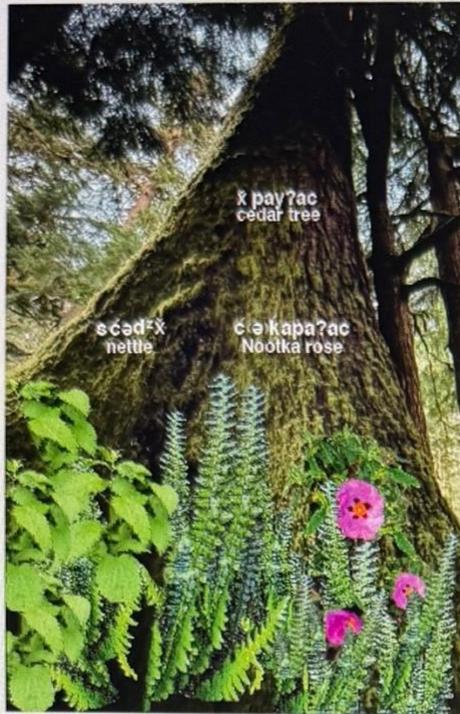
We thank the Snohomish Tribe for putting together this design, which shows images such as the Tribe logo, canoe and paddles that are so much a part of the sduhubs, Snohomish, culture. Cedar trees and plants, both medicinal and nourishing are also an important part of the culture. The names are given in both English and Lushootseed, the native language of the ancestors.

This art project is a proud collaboration between the Snohomish Tribe, Lynnwood Arts Commission, and History & Heritage Board.

About the signal box art wraps: The art wraps across the city add art, fun, and color to the landscape. They tell unique stories and a collective story about Lynnwood, through art and history. You can find more information on the art wraps and take a self guided tour using [www.DiscoverLynnwood.com](http://www.DiscoverLynnwood.com)



This was a time consuming project with a lot of thought put into it, and after the wrap was installed, beautiful to look at, as well as informative. I was looking forward to the official unveiling, or ribbon cutting that was to take place in January. I sent a thank you to Fred and let him know I was looking forward to the official ceremony. I received an email back asking for me to call him, and was stunned to find out the project had been covered up and had to be taken down. The Tulalip Corporation had threatened to sue the city of Lynnwood if they left it up. Mr. Wong sent me a link to the city facebook page where there were many comments, some very ugly, and some very positive from regular people and other tribal people not affiliated with the Tulalip enterprise.



These images are the four sides of the smaller box. They are labeled in both lushootseed and english with native plants at the base of the cedars.

This was a labor of love and a collaboration done with respect for tribal history as well as place history.

The objection cited for taking the designs down was apparently the law pertaining to the advertising or selling of native art, which does not apply here. I was not part of the conversation and was only informed after the fact, so don't know all that was said or threatened. However, the threat to sue the city of Lynnwood is a powerful one.

The comments I was gratified and happy to see on the website were the ones exclaiming at the beauty of the boxes, and wondering how anyone could complain. The comments holding up and honoring our history were heartwarming.

It feels confusing to be attacked for contributing and participating in our culture. We are not taking anything from anyone. I felt honored to be a part of the project, and still don't quite understand the bullying tactics of an entity towards tribal people who live on the lands of their ancestors and who are asking nothing of the conglomerate.

## BEAVER TALES and the sʷədəbš Cultural Center & Creative Hub Updates: STILL HERE

“Late 2025 brought a significant transition for Beaver Tales Coffee. After a prolonged period of navigating conditions that made it difficult to do our work well, we made the decision to step away from that environment.” With help from many hands, they moved out of the Coupeville wharf. As they said, “What we are doing can happen anywhere people are willing to engage. Releasing the space opened the work –allowing it to move, grow, and meet people where they are.”

“The work of Beaver Tales Coffee and the sʷədəbš Cultural Center & Creative Hub continues— now with greater flexibility, reach, and focus.” Watch for monthly potlucks on third Thursdays from 6-8pm. Get timely updates by following them on [Facebook](#) or subscribing to their newsletter ([click here](#), then scroll down to Sign Up).



## ALL MY RELATIONS PODCAST: [Latest Episode: Creation Histories](#)

In the new episode of All My Relations (@amrpodcast), Matika Wilbur and friends talk about why upholding Indigenous creation histories and values matters now more than ever. They contrast Indigenous teachings with the rise of Christian nationalism.

Indigenous worldviews center relationality and kinship.

Christian nationalism centers domination and exclusion.

The future depends on which stories we choose to live by.

## MOON OF THE WINDY TIME: from the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

[Swinomish You Tube for the Moon of the Windy Time](#)

The Moon of late January/February is *Moon of the Windy Time*. During this month, stories are told, nets are mended, and the community comes together to share culture. Watch this Swinomish YouTube to learn how to mend your nets, weave a cattail mat, listen to the Sasquatch Story, and learn about various healing salves and tinctures that the Tribal Community makes.



## **ACTION REQUEST to Stand with the Duwamish Tribe—Comments due Feb 15**

The City of Seattle has released a [Downtown Seattle Regional Center Plan draft](#). The current draft excludes the Duwamish Tribe and erases the reality that the Duwamish Tribe still exists and is still here in Seattle. The draft starts with a land acknowledgment that talks about Duwamish descendants being enrolled in six other federally recognized Tribes, but does not mention the Duwamish Tribe.

The draft is open for public comment until February 15th, and we encourage everyone to submit comments to make it clear that those of us who live, work and play in the greater Seattle area demand that the City of Seattle tells the truth that the Duwamish Tribe is still here.

Go to the [Network For Good Page](#) and fill out the survey in support of the Duwamish.

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## ***"ROOTS OF INJUSTICE, SEEDS OF CHANGE: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples"***

In this 2-hour participatory program, we experience the history of the colonization of Turtle Island, the land that is now known as the United States. The story is told through the words of Indigenous leaders, European/American leaders, and Western historians. We engage with this history through experiential exercises and small group discussions. And we are invited to consider how we can build relationships with Indigenous peoples based on truth, respect, justice, and our shared humanity. Facilitated by TRR's Native and non-Native teams. Appropriate for high school students and adults.

**Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1-3pm PT. [REGISTER HERE](#)**

**Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1-3pm PT. [REGISTER HERE](#)**

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## **News Organizations to Follow**

Now more than ever, it's essential that we keep our eyes on how Tribes and Native communities are losing ground or persisting with struggle, under the current administration. Some have been able to push back. Every day there are urgent messages to send to legislators and heads of governmental branches. Every day a new rally or protest. Do what you can with the time, energy, and privilege you have. And take time out to walk in wild places.

**Native News Online:** <https://nativenewsonline.net/>

[Northern Cheyenne Push Back](#) against the Trump administration's effort to alter Little Big Horn's History. The administration has been trying to reshape historical narratives that Tribes have long fought to make visible and true. Earlier this week, the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council unanimously passed a resolution that opposes any change to the current language that describes broken promises to Native American tribes and references the loss of Indigenous culture and language caused by federal boarding school systems.

## **So It Never Happens Again**

[The Sand Creek Massacre Foundation](#), together with the Arapaho and Cheyenne people, implore us to learn from our past so that no one else will have to suffer like their ancestors.

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### Native Organizers Alliance Action Fund

Almost daily this group suggests letters to write to legislators, Interior Secretary, DHS Tribal Affairs Director, and numerous other people in power. Grassroots organizing to speak up as allies as the administration continues to remove Indigenous history, target Indigenous people for deportation, and trample Treaty rights and basic citizen rights for Indigenous people and communities around the country.



**ACTIONS TO TAKE:** Stay informed by the [Friends Committee on National Legislation, \(FCNL\)](#) focused on Indigenous issues. You can sign up with FCNL for monthly justice updates. This group makes it easy to take appropriate action. “The federal government has a trust responsibility to protect and enhance tribal self-determination and prosperity. FCNL advocates for legislation that will protect tribal sovereignty and treaty rights.”

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### **INDIGENOUS NEWS SOURCES and Resources for Action:**

If you'd like to stay current on the news from Indigenous people and their communities, here are some excellent sources:

- [Underscore Native News](#) (Indigenous-centered journalism in the Pacific Northwest)
- [Native News Online](#)
- [Indian Country Today](#)
- [High Country News, Indigenous Affairs](#)

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*The UUCWI and WIFM convene on the traditional lands of the sduhubs (Snohomish People), the Lower Skagit People, Swinomish, and Samish. Descendants of these Tribes have lived here continuously since time immemorial. Many other people of Coast Salish Nations utilized the coast and nearby waters, and still do. We acknowledge the significant ways the Native People, their families and their communities **are still here**, continuing to steward this island in ways physical, spiritual, political, and social. We honor the elders of the past, present, and future, with profound gratitude.*

#### **Whidbey Native Connections Initiative**

is a justice initiative of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island, (UUCWI) and is supported by UU infrastructure, visionary foundations, and regional and national social-justice sister organizations, such as JUUsticeWA. We are also supported in numerous ways by Whidbey Island Friends Meeting (WIFM) and the broader Quaker justice work.

Contact us at [nciwhidbey@gmail.com](mailto:nciwhidbey@gmail.com)

Let us know if you'd like to [unsubscribe](#).