Lengtíxw tse Schténgexqen Á7leng
House of Watching Over All the Territory

Samish Indian Nation-Department of Natural Resources

Todd Woodard, Director of Natural Resources
twoodard@samishtribe.nsn.us
Samish Indian Nation
Traditional Territory
Samish Tradition

- **S7a’mesh** – “The Giving People”
- A people with hundreds of generations of history
- A deep connection to the Salish Sea and its abundant natural resources
- Rich in chela’ngen (culture) with traditions that continue to this day
- “When the Tide is Out, the Table is Set”
TEK-One Possible Definition

• Traditional Ecological Knowledge is a broad term encompassing the observations, memories and science of any group that has been in the area long enough to see environmental change.

• Indigenous Knowledge or Indigenous Science is the term for the cumulative scientific and observational knowledge of the original inhabitants of an area.
Indigenous Science

- Based on the same observational process as modern day environmental science but recorded in the oral traditions of the people rather than written papers.
- Example can be found in the Samish Calendar
  - February - Month of the Frog
    - Pacific Chorus Frogs begin to call indicating a time to end winter activities and the transition to spring
  - May - Month of Gathering Seaweed and Camas
    - Generally a time when daytime tides are getting lower so resources are more accessible and when Camas is in bloom for proper identification
  - September - Month of the Coho
    - This will be a busy time fishing and preparing for winter as the Coho return
  - November - Month of Howling Winds/Shaking Leaves
    - Might not want to plan travel by canoe during this time
Samish Department of Natural Resources

• Mission Statement
  “The mission of the Samish Department of Natural Resources is to preserve, protect and enhance culturally significant natural resources and habitats within Samish Traditional Territory for current and future generations.”

• Culture is the guide which by necessity must include Indigenous Knowledge

• Indigenous knowledge from our Tribal Members plays a huge role in the type of work we pursue

• “We look to native practices, native plants and the traditional knowledge of our ancestors to help guide our efforts.” -Tom Wooten, Samish Tribal Chair, in an article in the Seattle times calling for action to save J-pod
Indigenous Knowledge Guiding Work-Examples

- Stream Restoration
  - Not just about Salmon—although that is critical
  - Incorporation of traditional use plants into restoration plans
Indigenous Knowledge Guiding Work-Examples

- Beach Restoration
  - Protecting culturally significant sites
  - Enhancing shellfish and forage fish habitat
  - Planning for sea level rise
Indigenous Knowledge Guiding Work-Examples

- Kelp Monitoring and Recovery
  - Concerned Tribal Elder unable to find kelp for traditional cooking methods
  - We are now partnering with NOAA, NASA and NW Straits to look at kelp trends in Samish Traditional Territory with an eye towards restoration projects
Indigenous Knowledge Guiding Work-Examples

- Prairie Bald Restoration
  - Seeking to restore the traditional management of important Camas harvest prairie bald areas-tree thinning, controlled burns, traditional harvest
Indigenous Knowledge Guiding Work-Examples

• Marine Debris and Diffuse Creosote Removal Project
  • Removes creosote, plastic and other marine debris from beaches throughout Samish Traditional Territory removing toxins that impact all life from sand fleas to orca to humans.
  • 700,000 lbs in 5 summers so far
Partners

And More......
In my ten years with Samish, I have been to memorials for Granny (J2), Ruffles (J1), Samish (J14), Telelequah (Telequah’s infant) and Scarlet (J50).

In that same time, I have only been to two whale naming ceremonies……Our Relatives Need Help. What would you do to save your family?
Questions?

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