



2013 Paddle to Quinault ~ Honoring Our Warriors

Taholah, WA – From August 1 to August 5, 2013, the Quinault Indian Nation hosted the 2013 Tribal Canoe Journey. More than 12,000 visitors witnessed the 2013 *Paddle to Quinault – Honoring Our Warriors* landing ceremony at Point Grenville near Taholah.

A total of 25 Division of Child Support (DCS) staff from Central Services, Everett, Headquarters, Olympia, Tacoma and Vancouver volunteered at soft landings (interim stops on the way to Quinault) and at the Quinault landing and potlatch. Staff assisted with preparing meals, delivering water bottles, general volunteer support, public works (firewood delivery and garbage control), traffic control, and support in elders/veterans/protocol tents. “I was there for the landing, and it was impressive to see the protocol and hear the stories from the canoe families,” said Patti Shives, Tacoma DCS. Patti worked as a volunteer in the Elder’s Tent and with security. She said, “The Elder’s tent was very interesting, and heartwarming to see the reverence with which Elders are treated. Security was fast paced, keeping people safe, and cars, carts, and trucks moving...it was fun straightening out all the issues and getting folks back on track.” Gail Hanson, also from Tacoma DCS, was impressed with Protocol, a time where the tribes honored the Elders, honored their warrior veterans, and honored cancer survivors. She stated that “As volunteers, we were allowed to go down to a tribal beach that has never been opened before to the general public. What an honor!” Janet Hatfield, Vancouver DCS stated, “It was a great experience. My heritage is Quinault. I would be more than happy to do it again.”



Upper left: Monica Fierro and Kathy Lake-Baker, Olympia DCS; and Robert Cites, DCS Central Services.

Upper right: Melissa Capoeman and Lynn Cheney, Quinault Nation, Ann Bailie, Olympia DCS, Michele Sommer and Teia Neal, Tacoma DCS, Brady Rossnagle, DCS HQ, and Dorothy Ramirez, Quinault Nation. Bottom Right: Donna Collins, Vancouver DCS



Rinae Perron, DCS HQ SEMS shared, "The really cool stuff...for me...is learning more about the culture, values and history and seeing how that represents itself in 2013. I kept hearing references to the Elders and the Children. I saw the children showing respect to the Elders, I saw a lot of concern and care for the Children. I am impressed at their effort to make the event drug and alcohol free." "...many children were present and participating in the events. There were a couple of really ambitious girls – about 10 years old, toting around cases of water and distributing it in the Protocol tent...and then they were bringing around huge containers of freshly cooked elk (YUM) late into the night!" Rinae added, "The generosity of the tribes is also amazing. The amount of time/work/food/expense that goes into the event has to be staggering...and that is only the beginning! The gifting and thankfulness/appreciation ... between the hosting and visiting tribes is mindboggling! On Monday morning, I returned to the Protocol tent...and there is a HUGE, carved statue/totem! I also read about a 70 foot totem being given as a gift on the day of the landing. WOW!" Rinae also said, "All the while I was volunteering, I could hear the beautiful singing and dancing. And, I spent enough time "working" in the Protocol tent that I got to see quite a lot of performances. The dancers are quite amazing and all the different regalia – just stunning! The differences/similarities between the dancers within a specific tribe to the differences from tribe to tribe are really interesting. I met some cool people...had some good conversations. Would I do it again? In a heartbeat!"

The Canoe Journey is a cultural event for tribes in the Pacific Northwest. It began in 1989 as the "Paddle to Seattle" with the 9 canoes landing at the Port of Seattle during the Washington State Centennial Accord, a government-to-government event between the Governor and leaders of federally recognized tribes in Washington. The next Canoe Journey was in 1993. It has been celebrated as an annual event for twenty years since, growing from 9 to over 100 canoes.

This year tribal families from Hawaii, New Zealand, the Lakota Indians from North and South Dakota, the Crow Nation from Montana, and the Shinnecock Indian Nation from New York, also came to share their heritage and traditional songs and dances. Each year the number of participating tribes grows.

Samish (Soft) Landing in Anacortes



Samish Indian Nation Flag over the main entrance to the Fidalgo Bay RV Park in Anacortes



Jana Stevenson (foreground), Elizabeth Patton, and a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer help set up the first-aid tent.



Jana Stevenson (left) and Elizabeth Patton (right) prepare food for the paddlers and volunteers.

The canoe families leave from their home nations in Canada and the Pacific Northwest and stay at tribal hosting sites (soft landings) along the way. Each night the hosts welcome a number of canoe families, make them welcome, provide lodging or a camping area, and share food, songs and dances with the guests. This aspect of the journey allows tribal members to celebrate traditions and keep heritage alive for future generations.

Three staff from Everett DCS volunteered at the Samish landing in Anacortes. Upon arrival, they helped set up a first-aid station and began food preparation for the afternoon meal. They then cycled through many roles including traffic control, kitchen prep, parking attendant and “runner” – serving wherever they were most needed. “For me, I think the thing that stands out the most is the wonderful feel of community and acceptance that permeated the entire day,” said Nathan Ray. Elizabeth Patton shared, “What amazed me the most was the volunteers’ eagerness to be involved with this event and the tribal members that came to support their tribe’s paddlers. We were in an RV park and there were even people staying in their RV’s there that volunteered when they found out what was going on. I’d definitely do this again and see the arrival of the canoes next time as well as the protocol.”



Nathan Ray helping beach canoes at the Samish Indian Nation.



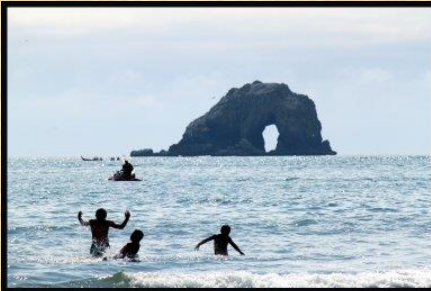
Lummi Nation Paddlers request permission to land at the Samish Nation.

Janet Hatfield, Vancouver DCS, shared a conversation she had with a woman from the Quileute tribe, who had been “on the water”, participating in Paddle’s for the past 6 years. She was unable to be in the canoe this year due to being 8 months pregnant. She said that when she was in the canoe, each time she placed her paddle in the water she felt like she was pulling for her family, for the tribe and for the future.

2014 Tribal Canoe Journey

The 2014 Tribal Canoe Journey will be hosted by the Heiltsuk Tribal Council in Bella Bella, British Columbia, and the Qatuwas “People gathering together” festival will be held July 13-19, 2014. The theme will be “Pulling together to save the Great Bear”. The Heiltsuk traditional territory lies in the heart of Great Bear Rainforest. The tribe collaborates with many groups to protect the rainforest lands, waters and resources while developing a sustainable coastal economy.

See next page for more photos of the Paddle to Quinault.



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