



PADDLE TO SQUAXIN

Squaxin Island Tribe's hosting of the 2012 Tribal Canoe Journey
July 29 through August 5, 2012

As the host of the 2012 Tribal Canoe Journey, the Squaxin Island Tribe will welcome more than 100 canoes representing Tribal communities from the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Canada and beyond to our ancestral waters in late July 2012. The Journey, which is hosted each year by a different Tribe, culminates with the convergence of all participating canoes at the destination host site for a week of celebration and cultural sharing. The theme for the 2012 Paddle to Squaxin is **gʷədʔadəd – Teachings of Our Ancestors.**

Port of Olympia facilities at the North Point at the Swantown Marina in downtown Olympia will be the landing site. Hosting events and potlatch ceremonies will take place July 29th-August 5th at the Squaxin Island community at Kamilche, roughly half way between Olympia and Shelton. Potlatch is the Native tradition of honoring guests and sharing culture. These ceremonies are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. Over the course of several days, all Canoe Families participate in these cultural presentations, known as “protocols,” that include traditional drumming, singing, dancing, storytelling, and gift giving.

In collaboration with the Port of Olympia and the City of Olympia, the North Point landing site was selected for its beauty, cultural significance and logistical appeal. The downtown landing site will bring thousands of visitors to the Port of Olympia and downtown area, with significant economic benefits to the region. In 2009, the landing and hosting at Suquamish attracted 12,000 visitors. Paddle to Squaxin planners are anticipating thousands of people to attend in 2012, with highest attendance on the day of the landing.

Since the first annual Tribal Canoe Journey in 1989, the inter-tribal undertaking has also expanded its sphere of influence to include environmental, social and cross-cultural impacts. Native and non-Native people join in planning, staging and participating in the event. Squaxin will be the fourth host Tribe to put on a waste-free event to honor our connection with Mother Earth.

The Tribal Canoe Journey began as a tribute to First Nations historic canoe culture and to revive a traditional form of travel on the ancestral highways of the coastal Pacific Northwest. Over the years it has grown to include roughly 100 indigenous canoes that travel from their territories to a host nation, with stops at Tribal territories along the way. Past Journeys have included canoe representing tribes and villages from Washington, Oregon, Alaska, California, Hawaii, New York, Canada, Japan, Brazil, and New Zealand.

If you would like more information, please contact Canoe Journey Coordinator Debbie Meisner at 360-432-3839 or dmeisner@squaxin.us.