



Paddle to Swinomish Tribal Journey 2011

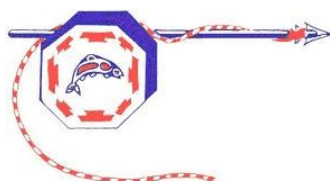
Press Release: Tribal Canoe Journey: Paddle to Swinomish 2011
Loving Sharing & Caring Together
Host: Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Swinomish Reservation near LaConner, WA
July 25th-31st 2011

Beginning July 25th, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community will host The Tribal Canoe Journey (TCJ). Swinomish will welcome over 100 family canoes, mostly from the Northwest, but also from as far away as Hawaii and New Zealand to the shores of its Reservation. The Tribe will formally grant the visiting canoes permission to come ashore where they will be fed, find a comfortable place to rest and throughout the week, have a chance to share songs, dances and tales of their travels.

In 1989 the Pacific Northwest Tribes revived a tradition of bringing together their people to celebrate the connection to salmon, water and each other. Initially the TCJ only involved a handful of canoes that participated in the Washington State Centennial. Since then, TCJ has expanded to include over a hundred tribes and First Nations predominantly from the United States and Canada. Over time this event has come to be known as “The Canoe Journey” (TCJ). It occurs annually each summer on the Salish Sea. Hosting of the annual event rotates among the Northwest tribes and Canadian First Nations. Canoes leave from their homelands and travel to the host tribe. TCJ can last several weeks depending on where the canoes have started; some canoes leave as early during the first week in July and paddle on the open waters for up to three weeks.

Those who participated in the first paddle to Seattle in 1989, like Emmett Oliver, realized that this journey could provide a resurgence of the traditional ways of the canoe culture. These first paddlers decided to form an Inter-tribal Canoe Society and hold the event every year. Over the last twenty-two years, TCJ has helped to bring back Northwest indigenous languages; foster the canoe family song and other songs; and provide an avenue for healing. It has served to aid in addressing and healing the problems that plague indigenous people, such as alcohol and substance abuse and suicide. Suicide has been on the rise in indigenous communities- not just in the Northwest but in the homelands of the First Nations in Canada. The TCJ not only provides a strong sense of pride and helps re-instill wellness amongst indigenous communities, but also helps build trust and cross cultural understanding with non-native communities who often live amongst or adjacent to indigenous people.

During TCJ, families and friends from afar reunite as the canoes travel to the host tribe. The canoe families paddle for an average of eight hours each day, taking breaks on support boats or beaches as necessary. After a full day of paddling, the canoe families stop overnight at designated tribal locations or specified towns to camp, eat, rest, and share songs and dances during the evening. When the tide is right and the conditions are safest the canoes head out again until finally they reach the host site.





Paddle to Swinomish Tribal Journey 2011

Every tribe that hosts TCJ believes that it is an honor and a once in a lifetime opportunity to share the family canoe culture of the Salish tribes with each other and the thousands of people who over the years have attended this annual event. Since its revival, TCJ has drawn canoe cultures from other parts of the United States and even internationally. This year canoe families from Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii, and even as far away as New Zealand are anticipated to land and join in the weeklong celebration and potlatch (traditional “give away”).

The reservation of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community is located across the Swinomish Channel from the town of La Conner, WA, a small town nestled in the surrounding farmlands of Skagit County and located to the west of Interstate 5 and south of State Highway 20. For directions, [google](#):

**Paddle to Swinomish 2011
Canoe Journey Headquarters
11404 Moorage Way
La Conner, WA 98257**

For additional information about TCJ, visit www.paddletoswinomish.org and/or find us on [Facebook - Swinomish Tribal Journey](#). If you wish more information about the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, please go to www.swinomish.org.

This is a FREE event. Volunteers are needed; vendor opportunities on site are first come, first served! To serve as volunteer, please go to www.paddletoswinomish.org

Media coverage is welcome with prior approval and by submitting an application by July 15th to www.paddletoswinomish.com Media guidelines and application can be found at: www.paddletoswinomish.com/media.

Media inquiries: Robin Carneen-Media Coordinator: media@paddletoswinomish.com
(360) 421-1209

PADDLES UP! See you at Swinomish!

