

# NISQUALLY ABSCH News



Nisqually Tribal News

4820 She-Nah-Num Dr. SE Olympia, WA 98513

Phone # 360-456-5221

Volume 16, Issue 3

www.nisqually-nsn.gov

March 2026

## Seattle Seahawks 2026 Super Bowl Champions LX

Well, we waited 11 years, but the Seattle Seahawks are the 2026 Super Bowl Champions again.

The Adult Wellness Program had our Seattle Seahawk tailgate parties for every game this year and at first, we weren't quite sure where we were heading with the loss we suffered to the San Francisco 49ers in our first game. In the end we won 12 in a row to win the Super Bowl.

Attendance at the Nisqually Tribal Tailgates grew every week as the Seattle Seahawks progressed to the #1 spot. There were over 200 fans in attendance as the Seattle Seahawks entered the playoffs.

Our mission and goal are to provide a clean, sober and safe environment for the Nisqually Indian Tribe community members, young and old. Mission accomplished.

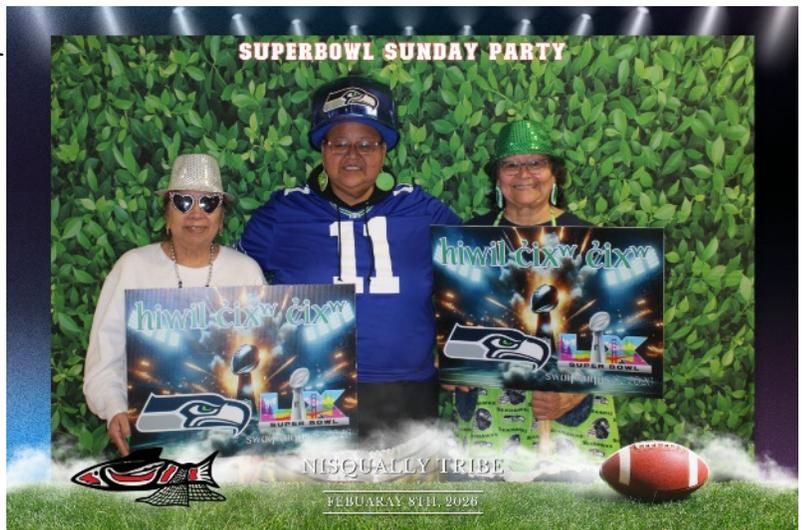
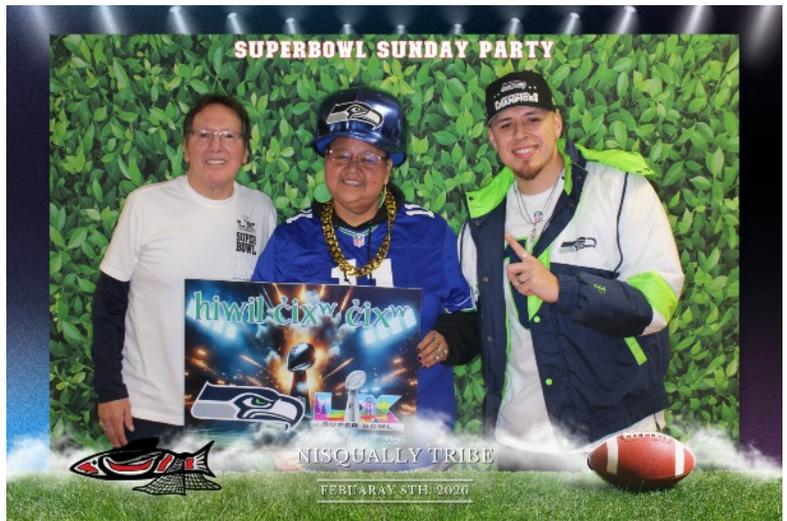
Shout out to the Nisqually Youth Center, Richard Kautz and staff, Donna, C.J. and the countless volunteers who showed up every week to help.

Special Thank You to Amanda Hicks, Jordan McCloud and Rosa Olin for their endless dedication to make our Seattle Seahawks tailgate parties a success.

My hands go up to The Nisqually Indian Tribe for supporting, the Tribe's Adult Wellness Program. GO HAWKS!

See everyone next year when we win Super Bowl LXI.

Farron McCloud



More photos continued on page 6-SEAHAWKS

# Canoe Journey Update 2026

- Vendor, Volunteer and Canoe family registration will be live on the website as of February 18, 2026, paper applications will be available at the front desk in Financial Services.
- Pricing for Vendors for Tribal Members:
  - Nisqually Food Vendor:
    - 10 x 10' \$300
    - 10 x 20' and Food Trucks \$500
  - Nisqually Craft Vendor Booth:
    - 10 x 10' \$500
    - 10 x 20' \$800
- Tribal and community members that wish to can go to Billy Frank Jr gym and get help with Regalia from Avis Monday through Friday along with gift making and song and dance practice.



## How to Contact Us

Tribal Center 360-456-5221  
 Health Clinic 360-459-5312  
 Law Enforcement 360-413-3019  
 Youth Center 360-455-5213  
 Natural Resources 360-438-8687

## Nisqually Tribal News

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 Olympia, WA 98513  
 360-456-5221

Leslee Youckton  
 youckton.leslee@nisqually-nsn.gov  
 ext. 1252

The deadline for the newsletter is the second Monday of every month.

## Nisqually Tribal Council

Chair, Ken Choke  
 Vice Chair, Cheebo Frazier  
 Secretary, Jackie Whittington  
 Treasurer, Norine Wells  
 5<sup>th</sup> Council, Chris Olin  
 6<sup>th</sup> Council, Guido Levy Jr.  
 7<sup>th</sup> Council, Leighanna Scott

Where to Find Information:

### **Squalli Absch Newsletter**

- Mailed, on website

### **Street Buzz**

- Mailout, on She Nah Num

Facebook and website

### **Nisqually Indian Tribe Facebook**

- geared toward educating the public

### **She Nah Num**

- Private Facebook page

Website - [www.nisqually-nsn.gov](http://www.nisqually-nsn.gov)

## Nisqually Tribal Office Holiday Closures

*Please mark them on your calendars!*

**Friday March 6, 2026**

*Billy Frank Jr. Day*

**Monday May 25, 2026**

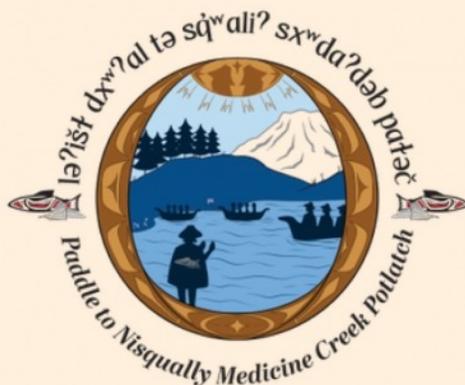
*Memorial Day*

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# CANOE JOURNEY GIFT MAKING



suhali?ilalq'u'situbut'at ?a tiit xashik'cab ?a k'i yalyalab'at  
"Healing Through Our Waters by Honoring Our Ancestors"

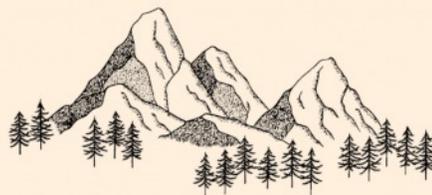
2026

## @ THE BILLY FRANK JR. GYM

**MONDAY** 10am-3pm & 5pm-7pm

**TUESDAY** 10am-3pm & 5pm-7pm

**WEDNESDAY** 10am-3pm & 5pm-7pm



**THURSDAY** 10am-3pm & 4pm-6pm Song & Dance @ Youth Center

**FRIDAY** 4pm-6pm Drum Circle @ Youth Center

All staff, tribal members, community members, and volunteers are welcome to help make gifts for Nisqually Canoe Journey 2026.

**PLEASE SIGN IN AS YOU ARRIVE.  
QUESTIONS? CONTACT THE CULTURE PROGRAM STAFF.  
THANKS!**



# Council's Corner – Native Advocacy at the Capitol

Dear Membership – our schedules at Council stay tremendously busy.

On Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> , I had the opportunity to be introduced to the Legislative Process at the Washington State Capital building in collaboration with Native Action Network's Native Advocacy Day. This was trial by fire! I represented District 2, seven people signed up but I was the only one to show that day. I had hoped someone would show me the ropes. Instead, I had to brush up on the scheduled offices and representatives and be prepared to talk and represent Tribal matters by advocating for our interests. I was a quick-study and did research to see what causes, legislation, bills and committee work they represent.

I also represented the University of Washington-Tacoma Native Students program. I spent the day with their students, staff and some other Tribal Members from Steilacoom, Cowlitz Tlingit/Haida and Puyallup Tribes. We were able to engage with the offices of: Representative Nance, Representative Berkis, Senator McCune and we addressed key critical issues:

- H.B. 1583 – Medicaid coverage for traditional health care practices
- S.B. 5855 – Preventing Law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings to conceal their identities
- H.B. 2281 – Religious freedoms protection of sacred sites
- S.B. 6017 – Crime Victims Bill of Rights for Justice and Safety – MMIW Bridge replacement, Salmon Recovery, Transportation, Youth, Culture, Advocacy

Additionally, our Lobbyist Davor Gjurasic was there and invited me to an urgent meeting with Debra Lekanoff to talk about important health coverage changes with I.H.S. related to our Traditional Healing program, something that Halene Benally has been staying apprised of as the Manager of that important program.

We met in the Senate Rules Room with Claudia Kauffman, Chris Stearns, Debra Lekanoff and many others. This was a great day for community voice and encouragement. One thing I know for sure is that our elected Tribal Leaders in these roles in State and Federal government seats work extremely hard on the measures we ask them to represent on our behalf. This day was rigorous and I cannot imagine what it's like to have that as a career. I was literally running from one side of the campus to another trying to be in many places at once. I recommend this event for all Tribal Members, and I hope that some of you, including youth, can attend with me next year.

Please send me a note if you are interested and/or want to send a youth to attend. I'll try and keep a list of interested parties to see who can go with us next year. Youth and Elders are very welcome. Thank you and I hope that I am representing the Tribe and the Vice Chair well for all of us.

**Cheebo Frazier,  
Vice-Chairwoman**





# Message from the Nisqually Enrollment Department

By Leslie Ferrer

Due to heightened concerns and as a proactive measure, it is recommended that Tribal Members carry a current Tribal ID at all times, along with another form of ID like a driver's license.

It is also recommended that if you are traveling, you have other documentation such as a Certificate of Tribal Enrollment with you.

If you need either of these forms of ID, please stop by the Enrollment office or contact the office at 360-456-5221 ext. 1233 for Leslie or ext. 1212 for Andreyra. The Enrollment office is located on the second floor of the Billy Frank Jr. Gymnasium building.

## Youth Council Clean Up

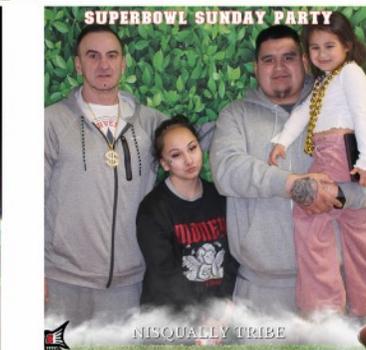
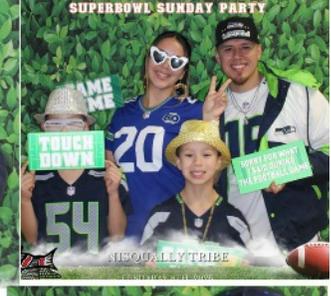
By Danielle McGee

The Nisqually Youth Council came in on Sunday to do garbage pickup around the Youth Center and both parks. They plan to do monthly cleanups to maintain our community for safety and cleanliness.





Continued from cover-SEAHAWKS





# Employee Seahawk Parade





# Chum Season Good Enough to Fill the Smokers and Provide Escapement

By Craig Smith

This year's Nisqually chum run, while not as abundant as last year, was still enough to allow some subsistence fishing and brief commercial fishing opportunity.

"Smokehouses were fired up and for the most part, people did not have difficulties keeping them filled with chum with the added bonus that our presence on the river served as deterrent for the sea lions that have taken advantage of our absence during low run years," said Craig Smith Harvest Program Manager. "High water meant many fishers were not fishing when it might have been more successful."

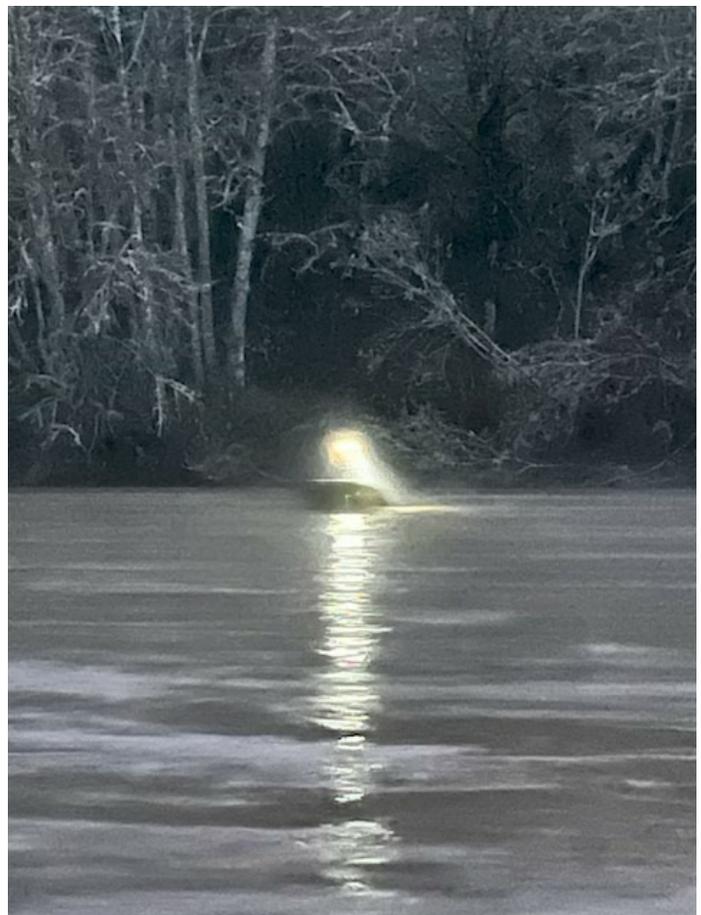
The forecast provided enough certainty to confidently open a subsistence fishery without impacting escapement to the spawning grounds. Opening a commercial fishery continues to be predicated on the number of live chum that are counted weekly in Yelm Creek which projects escapement.

Last year and this year, Yelm produced enough chum to open at the same time in mid-December. This year was different in that the number of fish in Yelm did not continue to climb like last year. The peak came rather early and dropped very fast.

"Having the subsistence and commercial fishery provided the Harvest staff with essential biological data in addition to collecting from carcasses on the spawning grounds," Smith said.

Water levels were great for chum escapement, with high water in all of the streams such as Muck Creek where early estimates are showing up to 4,000 chum returned. Water is also flowing in Exeter Creek, which had been dry a number of years prior.

Preliminary estimates on the spawning ground show we will just exceed our system escapement goal of 25,000. "We feel good about squeezing in a few fisheries, increasing our presence on the river, and making escapement with ideal chum spawning flows," Smith said.





# Building Department on Track to Add Homes and Duplexes in 2026

By Wayne Lloyd and Kevin Sutterliet – Building Department

In 2026, there will be a lot of action out at the Protocol Housing Site. The Nisqually Building Department has been planning and designing the Protocol Site to become a housing development.

In 2024 and 2025, the Nisqually Tribe began the Protocol Housing Phase III Roads Project. This project provided roads, sidewalks, signage, and utilities to support 31 homes to the development. The Building Department is currently in the process of building 13 of the 31 homes that include eight houses and five duplexes.

All 13 foundations have been poured along with some of the driveways and approaches. We have hired a General Contractor to build the 5 duplexes. Framing is complete on three duplexes. We have one currently in the framing process and the last one will be started soon.

The Building Department went through the request for proposals process and selected three general contractors that will be responsible for seven houses, and most of the eighth house will be constructed by Building Department staff, including apprentices. This is a great learning opportunity for the young men and women in the training program. The contractors will be responsible for three different floor plans for consistency.

The Building Department is excited about the opportunity to be a part of the future housing development of the Nisqually Tribe. There is a high demand for housing in the community. This plan and vision will provide many homes for families, so they are able to reside within the Nisqually tribal community. The Building Department, with support from tribal leadership, has developed a solid plan to continue building more homes for the community.





# Annual Leschi Walk

By Jack George photos, Nisqually Tribe Communications and Media Services

The annual Leschi Walk commemorating the date that Nisqually Chief Leschi was unjustly hanged began Thursday, Feb. 19 at Ft. Steilacoom Park in the blustery winds of winter with occasional snow flurries.

The event is hosted by the Nisqually Tribe and city of Lakewood where a marker is located near Ft. Steilacoom noting the location of Leschi's hanging.

For the walk, the Nisqually Medicine River Ranch brought their horses and the youth riders who provided rides to attendees and participated in the walk.

Everyone gathered in a circle as Nisqually culture sang songs to kick off the event. Hanford McCloud, Cynthia Iyall, Keoni Kalama and Mehanna

McCloud spoke about the importance of Leschi's history, heritage, and why horses coming back to the tribe healed tribal youth.

Hanford McCloud and Lakewood Mayor Paul Bocchi addressed the gathering and talked about the cooperative effort that continues to add interpretive signage about Nisqually and Leschi to the park.

The Medicine River Ranch took the lead on the short walk around Fort Steilacoom Park with partners from the city of Lakewood and the local community. The overcast evolved into a light snowfall which created a mystic atmosphere for everyone to enjoy.

A time of community followed with lunch provided by the Nisqually Tribe's food truck including hot soup for a cold day.







# Tea Blending

By Aztec Sovegein, Nisqually Tribe Communications and Media Department

The Elders Program brought Nisqually Traditional Healing in for a tea blending workshop with Adrianna Villegas. Everyone enjoyed it and hope to see it offered again. All went home with some tea and more knowledge about making their own.





# Pulling Together for Success Community Resource Gathering

By Debbie Preston, Nisqually Tribe Communications and Media Director

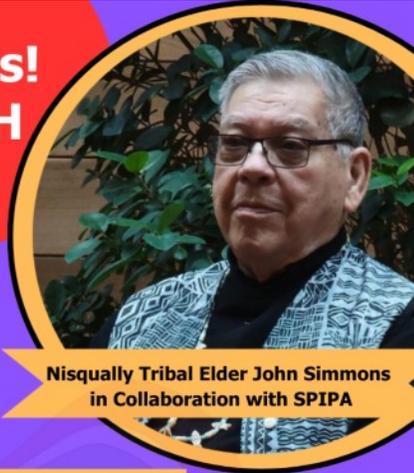
The February Pulling Together for Success Community Resource Gathering was a joint event in collaboration with Nisqually Children and Family Services as part of Parent Recognition Month. Employment and educational support services abounded and some winter vegetables from the Community Garden were also available.





NISQUALLY INDIAN TRIBE

Join Us!  
**MARCH  
30TH**



Nisqually Tribal Elder John Simmons  
in Collaboration with SPIPA

## Rescheduled! Intertribal Men's Health Listening & Talking: Cancer 101 Session

### Men and Their Caregivers: A Special Event in Nisqually!

Join us for an evening of learning, connection,  
and community!

Discover valuable information about different cancers in  
an interactive session led by a trusted healthcare  
professional.

#### What's in store?

- A welcoming space for men to connect, share stories, and support each other
- Breakout sessions for caregivers with Nisqually's Caregiving Specialist, Juanita Banelos
- Delicious dinner, exciting raffle prizes, and a \$15 gift card for completing a quick Men's Wellness & Health Assessment



#### Raffle Items:



Capitol City  
Golf Package



Fishing Basket

#### Questions? Contact Cher Castello



360.550.6224



ccastello@spipa.org

#### WHEN & WHERE:

- Monday, March 30, 2026
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm
- Nisqually Elder's Building Lunchroom  
4820 Journey St SE, Olympia, WA 98513



#### Nisqually WIC

Women, Infants, and Children  
WIC provides healthy foods &  
nutrition information for you  
and your child up to age 5.

For appointments and  
questions, contact:  
**Debbie Gardipee**  
360.463.4439

Email: [dgardipee@spipa.org](mailto:dgardipee@spipa.org)  
SPIPA main number: 360.426.3990

Next WIC date:  
**Wednesday, March 4th**  
SPIPA IPC, phone appts.

We will offer both phone and in  
person appointments. Date  
subject to change.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.  
Washington WIC doesn't discriminate.



#### South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency

### USDA Foods Program Delivery Date

Nisqually Tribe  
**03/11/26**

At the Warehouse  
**10:00am-1:00pm**



NOTE: Please stick to the monthly schedule for the USDA Commodity Food Program. Food distribution staff have other duties that they are responsible for on the days they are not issuing commodities. If you're unable to make the date, please call and schedule an appointment with appropriate staff. For USDA Food, call SPIPA at 360.426.3990.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.





# Announcements



**Happy Birthday  
Ray-Bean!**

*Happy Birthday  
Ace Youckton!*

**Happy 17<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
Dominik Thomas!**




## Tribal Estate and Will Planning

Tribal Estate Planning Services provided by Emily Penoyar-Rambo

- Services offered:
- Last will and testament
  - Durable power of attorney
  - Healthcare directive
  - Tangible personal property bequest
  - Funeral/burial instructions

Appointments will be set up for the first and third Thursday of each month. Available appointment times are 8:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Please call Lori Lehman at 360-456-5221 to set up an appointment.



**FREE Rides**  
**Monday through Friday**  
**Transit available**  
**6:00 a.m. to 6 :00 p.m.**  
**Open to all tribal, community**  
**and tribal employees. We offer**  
**rides from 6:15 a.m. to last off**  
**rez ride at 5:00 p.m.**  
**Contact Cecile Hemphill,**  
**Motor Pool Coordinator/Dispatch**  
**At 360-456-5236**

Nisqually Indian Tribe  
4820 She-Nah-Num Dr. SE  
Olympia, WA 98513

