



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Up to 15,000 people expected to line the shores of downtown Olympia for “Paddle to Squaxin 2012” hosted by The Squaxin Island Tribe

This year's Tribal Canoe Journey will be hosted by the Squaxin Island Tribe and will attract Canoe Families from Alaska, the northern coast of British Columbia, California, Oregon, the American Great Lakes region, and other international participants from as far away as Japan, New Zealand, and Peru. The Squaxin Island Canoe Family is preparing to welcome up to 130 canoes, a record-breaking number for this annual event.

For centuries, the waters of the Salish Sea were the highways of the native people. The canoe was their way of travel. It helped them gather the bounty of the Inland sea and allowed them to journey to celebrate and share their stories. Then the Canoe Way began to vanish... In 1989 a handful of canoes made the “Paddle to Seattle” for Washington State's Centennial. It was this small group of Tribes who made the ceremonial journey that helped spark the cultural resurgence that will be celebrated on Sunday, July 29, 2012

The Squaxin Island Tribe's commitment to host was made seven years ago and, for the past several months, extensive planning with municipal and governmental agencies has been underway to prepare for the more than 12,000 people who are expected to witness this historic event along the shores of Puget Sound in downtown Olympia.

The Landing at North Point (between the studios of KGY Radio and the Swantown Marina) is where the host tribe will, according to traditional ceremony, welcome ashore each Canoe Family who has made the journey. The welcome will include a Water Ceremony, during which the sacred water brought along by each participating Canoe Family will be joined by that from the Squaxin Island Tribe, and then poured into Puget Sound as a wish for the health of all of the people and the waters that sustain us. The start time is expected to be during the afternoon of Sunday, July 29th, and will continue until each participant has been brought to land.

Extensive planning and development has also taken place in Mason County and on the Squaxin Island Reservation to make ready for the week-long Potlatch Protocol Celebration when the festivities move to the home of the Squaxin Island Tribe at Kamilche located between Olympia and Shelton, beginning Monday, July 30th through Sunday, August 5th. The Tribe anticipates as many as 5,000 campers who will be participating in the Potlatch Protocol Celebrations. Meals, health and safety, and public access to the event have all been carefully planned with the Tribal Community and local law enforcement. The Green Team was created through volunteers and in conjunction with local waste management groups to create one of the first “waste free” Canoe Journey event.

Dancing, drumming and sharing of stories by visiting tribes in their full regalia will take place according to potlatch protocol. The public is invited to bear witness to this drug and alcohol-free celebration of the traditional ways.

To find out more go to www.paddletosquaxin2012.org



Event Times and Media Contact Information

Landing Day at The Port of Olympia Sunday, July 29th

At North Point (Between offices of KGY Radio and Swantown Marina) beginning in the afternoon and lasting until all canoes are welcomed ashore

Potlatch Protocol Celebration Monday, July 30th through Sunday, August 5th

Takes place at the home of the Squaxin Island Tribe at Kamilche located in Mason County between Olympia and Shelton, just off Highway 101 – take the Old Olympia Highway Exit

Securing Media Credentials

Due to limited space in the press area at the landing site, we cannot promise access to all media. When approved, we will provide you with a press pass. Thank you for your cooperation. All media representatives MUST provide credentials. *No exceptions will be made.*

For media credentials please go to: www.paddletosquaxin2012.org
Click the Media Link and the top of the home page. After reading the Media Introduction portion, please click on link at the bottom of the page that says: Sign Up for Media Credentials

Media and Press Contacts

Please feel free to contact the following people at any time with questions and/or to make arrangements for interviews and crew logistics.

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