

# RE-NAMING THE SALISH SEA

10:00 AM Thursday, 15 July 2010 Esquimalt, BC

Hello,

I can hardly contain my excitement. However, I must remember that it is 'slow and steady that wins the race'.

The importance of remembering that every performance is an audition has been confirmed. You never know who's watching.

**Time is of the essence. I know this is short notice. So here it is in a capsule.**

I met on Thursday, 17 June, with His Honour, Lieutenant Governor Stephen Point and Butch Dick, School Liaison for the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations to discuss a 'choir' project that His Honour has dreamed.

His Honour told me that of all the performances on the Banquet of Love evening, it was The Victoria Good News Choir's performance that touched him most because it was a **community** of people singing together as a **community** of people. He said that when he looked at the members of The Victoria Good News Choir he saw his British Columbia.

In any event, His Honour has written a song that he is giving as a gift to the Province of British Columbia.

He wants The Victoria Good News Choir to provide the core in the presentation of this song at the official re-naming of The Salish Sea at **10 AM** on Songhees Nation land in Esquimalt (near the longhouse) on **Thursday, 15 July**.

It will involve the 50-100 drummers of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations (a community drumming circle) and a **mass community** choir – anchored by members of The Victoria Good News Choir.

Rehearsals for this event are scheduled for **Friday, 02, Saturday, 03 and Wednesday, 07 July** at **Government House, 1401 Rockland Avenue** from **7 until 8: 45 PM**. Parking on the grounds of Government House is limited. There is usually street parking available in the area adjacent to Government House. Please arrive at Government House by **6:50 PM**. Government House staff will welcome you and ensure hospitality.

My job is to learn the song, arrange it (in preparation for the 'naming' ceremony and a future recording – but that's another story – still all His Honor's dream) and rehearse it with a mass choir. That's the purpose of this invitation.

His Honour wants old, young, black, white, brown, yellow, young, old, middle aged (did I say old, young? You get my meaning!)- every segment of the society that is **his (and mine and yours, too)** British Columbia – represented as a living testament to the fact that we are, indeed, one people and that separation is no longer acceptable.

I'm excited and also beginning to feel a bit overwhelmed. It never rains unless it pours. And since this is an outdoor event, I'm anticipating no rain.

I need to get moving.

Where to start? Invite your friends and neighbours. Everyone is welcome. I mean it!! Come. Sing.

Do I know what I need? No! Not yet.

What I do know is that this event is an exciting one for this province and a sacred re-turning for the Salish people. That's good enough for me.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a choir of 150 singers?

Thanks for reading. Thank you for considering.

Blessings and thanks,

Louise Rose, director

The Victoria Good News Choir

Questions? Please email Louise: [louise.rose@shaw.ca](mailto:louise.rose@shaw.ca)

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION – Some Background

From the Seattle Times – 14 March 2009

It's celebrated in song, dissected in scientific journals and detailed on government Web sites. It's the subject of international conferences, amateur theater performances, and gatherings of Northwest tribal leaders.

Ask Bert Webber, and he'll say we dip our toes in it, admire it and sail across it every day.

But how many people know where the Salish Sea is?

"Likely as not, nobody knows what you're talking about," said Webber, a retired Western Washington University marine biologist.

Now he's trying to change that, with a campaign to have Washington and British Columbia officially adopt the name Salish Sea for the vast, fertile and imperiled expanse of saltwater we share.

Pieces of it already have well-worn names: Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia. Webber stresses that he's not trying to replace those names. Instead, he wants to create another name unifying the places, and acknowledging many of the native tribes here, collectively known as the Coast Salish because of shared Salishan languages.

While some might shrug at a new name, the proposal has already attracted advocates and critics.

It's the latest in a long line of debates over the names we give to the land and water around us.

"I just love that stuff. Because we take it for granted it's just the way it is. But when you peel back the layers, there's so much lurking underneath," said University of Washington history professor John Findlay. "I'm just fascinated that history is never really settled."

Webber hopes a common name will help energize efforts to restore the damaged waters, by raising awareness that this is one shared ecosystem spanning the border between Canada and the United States.

"Can I have a relationship with you without knowing your name?" asked Webber, a Canadian-born 67-year-old who has lived in the United States since 1968. "I think that argument applies equally well to an ecosystem."

Webber initially proposed the idea in the 1980s, and first asked Washington state officials to formally adopt Salish Sea in 1990. But the state's Board on Geographic Names rejected it, saying there was little evidence people used the name.

Since then, however, the name has been taken up by scientists, artists, writers, government agencies and activists.

A Victoria, B.C., musician has an album titled "Salish Sea." A gathering of U.S. and Canadian scientists in Seattle this year was headlined "The Future of the Salish Sea." A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Web site describes the area as the Salish Sea, and mistakenly claims it's the traditional name given to it by Indian tribes.

In fact, Webber said the earliest reference is in the 1980s. He's drawn to the name partly because it recognizes the importance of the tribes that live around these waters.

The name Salish Sea has been used by tribes on occasion, including at an annual gathering of representatives from Coast Salish tribes.

"Salish Sea, the meaning would be so positive in the sense of all of us working together," said Billy Frank, a leading tribal representative on Puget Sound issues, and chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

Not everyone is a fan, however.

Marie Vautier, a University of Victoria professor, said the Salish Sea proposal is another example of U.S. cultural imperialism. She pointed to previous efforts to ignore the international border in favor of referring to the region as Cascadia. Such moves threaten to erode distinctly Canadian culture beneath the wave of U.S. culture, she said.

"It's just another one of the American efforts to erase the border. And I oppose that, and I think a majority of Canadians oppose it," said Vautier, director of the university's combined major in Canadian literature and culture. "It's a silly idea. We have beautiful names."

The state's Geographic Names board hasn't received much comment on the idea this time around. It is scheduled to hear more at its May 15 meeting, though it won't make a final decision then.

Past efforts to affix new names to the region's major geographic features have provoked a backlash.

In 1987, Harvey Manning, the revered and irascible author of Washington state hiking books, proposed giving the name "Whulj" — a native word translated as "the saltwater before us" — to the waters flanked by the Olympic Peninsula to the south, Whidbey Island to the east, and Vancouver Island and the San Juan Islands to the north.

But he withdrew the application amid an onslaught of criticism and questions.

Earlier in the 1900s, Tacoma civic leaders lobbied for years to have Mount Rainier renamed Mount Tahoma, a move Seattle fought off.

If Salish Sea is officially adopted, it's not clear how widely it would be used. Webber said he envisions a time when the name Salish Sea is common knowledge, though people around Puget Sound would still speak of Puget Sound as well.

But the Puget Sound Partnership, the state agency charged with reviving the Sound, isn't rushing to change its name to the Salish Sea Partnership and risk losing decades of name recognition.

"We've already got the Michael Jordan of ecosystems," said partnership spokesman Paul Bergman. "It wouldn't be helpful to change the brand right now."

## The Salish Sea. It's official!

By [Douglas Todd](#)

The Vancouver Sun ~ Nov 2, 2009

<http://communities.canada.com/VANCOUVERSUN/blogs/thesearch/archive/2009/11/02/the-salish-sea-it-s-official.aspx>