



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Suquamish Tribe Holds Scaled-Down Covid-Conscious Chief Seattle Days

With the Delta variant of the coronavirus spiking across Kitsap County and Washington state, the Suquamish Tribe held a scaled-down version of Chief Seattle Days over the weekend. There were just a handful of the usual number of events, and the occasion was open to Tribal households only.

“We missed hosting the larger community, as we normally do,” said Suquamish Tribe Chairman Leonard Forsman. “Hospitality is an important part of our culture, and Chief Seattle Days has grown into playing a big role in that joy of connecting with our community. But we had to put the safety of our Tribal citizens first.”

Concern about safety has grown as Kitsap County has seen higher numbers of infected and hospitalized than at any other time since the pandemic began.

Within the Tribe, vaccination rates are above 70 percent, says Emergency Operations Manager, Cherrie May. Still, with school about to begin, and children age 11 and under still unable to receive vaccination protection, concerns have grown.

Last year, the 2020 Chief Seattle Days was all but cancelled due to the pandemic. To keep the tradition alive, however, Suquamish Elder Marilyn Wandrey spoke to the Tribal community by video message offering reflections at Chief Seattle’s gravesite.

This year, the Tribe brought back some of the key events, but permitted limited numbers and were mostly for Tribal households only. This year’s events included:

**The Chief Seattle Days Golf Tournament**, on Thur. August 19, at the White Horse Golf Club with dozens of teams playing at this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event.

**Ceremony at Chief Seattle’s Gravesite**, on Sat. August 21, a long-standing honoring of Chief Seattle, with Tribal Elder Marilyn Wandrey presiding. The ceremony was for Tribal households and ceremony staff, and live streamed for those who could not attend in person.

**Salmon meals** were served “to go” to Tribal members on Sat. August 21 at the House of Awakened Culture.

**Royalty Pageant** – With the cancellation of most events at Chief Seattle Days 2020, the 2019 Royalty had generously continued their duties until this weekend. The princess and her entourage were finally able to turn over their crowns at a ceremony on Saturday. For the coming year, Teylor Matysn Ives will serve as the royalty court’s Junior Miss Chief Seattle Days.

**Suquamish Canoe Races** – Suquamish youth took their swift “war canoes” out on the water off shore from the House of Awakened Culture. The races were live streamed in heated competitions. Normally, racing teams from First Nations and Native communities throughout the region would join in, but this year’s race was limited to Suquamish Tribal members with family members in attendance.

### **Looking Forward to 2022**

The Suquamish Tribe hopes to open Chief Seattle Days to the larger community again in 2022.

“We are grateful and appreciative of the relationships people have created within Suquamish and the surrounding communities,” says Lisa Jackson, who organized this year’s event. “We had to keep this gathering small for safety. But we are looking forward to hopefully welcoming many more people in 2022.”

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