

CALLING FOR PROTECTION OF THE ELWHA WATERSHED

October 19, 2024 ~ Orca Recovery Day

Hilary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands
Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands
MS 47001 • Olympia, WA 98504-7001

Dear Commissioner Franz,

We come together to fulfill our sacred responsibility to care for the natural world, united in our commitment to protect the Elwha Watershed and all our ancient and mature forests from the imminent threat of logging. We, as Indigenous Peoples, have known since time immemorial that these forests are not mere resources but relatives, elders, and teachers, offering wisdom and guidance. The Elwha Watershed is an interconnected web of life, a cultural and spiritual home, sustaining the Salmon, the Orcas, and all of us.

The pre-colonial landscape offered abundance, cultivated through our sacred relationship with the land, the water, and our non-human relatives. When settlers arrived, Western Red Cedar, central to our way of life, was logged from many river valleys. We are glad to see replanting efforts, but replanting cannot replace the existing complex forest ecosystems where these trees still thrive.

We welcomed DNR's decision to cancel the "Power Plant" timber sale in December 2023, and to protect 69 acres of critical forest along the Elwha River. We are now alarmed to learn of four planned timber sales in the Elwha Watershed ~ "Tree Well," "Parched," "Alley Cat," and "Bread and Butter" -- totaling 555 acres and currently slated for auction to timber companies by the end of this year. If these proposed sales are allowed to go through, we would lose nearly half the remaining mature, structurally complex forests in the Watershed. This logging, some of which is on steep slopes near the Elwha River and its major tributaries, disrespects a decade's worth of restoration efforts, threatening our Salmon and our way of life.

We do not understand a way of thinking that would spend hundreds of millions on Elwha River restoration but continue to industrially log in that same watershed. We do not understand a way of thinking that takes too much and says it is never enough; that would disrespect a River that gives us so much life and now hope.

Our ancestral knowledge and sacred obligation to the natural world teaches us a different path. We have inherent and treaty protected rights in these lands as our usual and accustomed gathering areas. Together, we call for the protection of the Elwha Watershed as a commitment to our mutual future and to the wellbeing of all who depend upon it. We ask you to stop these planned timber sales and heed our call to be guided by principles of respect and reciprocity in caring for the watershed.

In solidarity,

We, the enrolled citizens of the Elwha Klallam Tribe, Treaty of 1855

<u>Elwha comm member Celestia Chambers</u>	Carolyn Salter LEKT	Mark Charles	CYNTHIA M. CHARLES	Christina Matson
<u>Justine Chambers</u>	Cathy Cooke LEKT	KIALLAM FROM ELWHA Phillip L. CHARLES JR	SPACY L. DUNN	Brandy Williams
Laura Mana	Renee Zmuda Lower Elwha	Robert Francis V Elwha	Alexis A. Dunn Elwha	Beverly Bennett
Corinda Robideaux Lower Elwha	Jeffrey Zmuda Jr Lower Elwha	Gina Williams	Robert Francis IV Elwha	LEKT Elder
Delsen Lauderback Lower Elwha	Margaret R. Zmuda Lower Elwha	Kalean Quilt, Chabelis Elwha	Karlrich MASON	Telesia Francis Quinault
Bridget Bennett Lower Elwha	Linda Laungayan Lower Elwha Klallam	Alanah Rising Sun, Northern Clengone Elwha	Troy Francis Elwha	Isiah Francis Elwha
Verna Henderson Lower Elwha Elder	Loretta Charles Lower Elwha Klallam	Hazel Rising Sun, Quilente Elwha	Nancy Hunter	Jordan Charles LEKT
Robert Kimberly Lower Elwha	Eliana McFadden LEKT	Joziah Francis	Justin Williams	Mariah Francis LEKT
Luana Arakawa LEKT	<u>Pelley Martinez</u>	Randall Jackson (Quilente)	Javi Francis Lummi	Karrin Francis LEKT
LEO CHARLES JR LEKT	Shawnee Tom	Annabell Mason Hoh/Elwha Youth	Paris Francis Elwha/Lummi Youth	Beatriz Arakawa
Melissa Gullman	Lower Elwha	Robert Francis JR ELWHA TRIBE	Addison Dujne Lower Elwha Youth	Kodi Luwas
Jediyah Jackson Quilente/Elwha Youth	James Francis Youth			
Dante Quilt, Chabelis Elwha	<u>Dipn Tom</u>			

WON'T YOU JOIN OUR CALL TO ACTION • THANK YOU