

CHAPTER 1: RESERVATION PROFILE



Tribal Background

The Squaxin Island Tribe members are the descendants of the maritime people who historically lived along the shores and watersheds of South Puget Sound and its seven inlets. Because of their strong cultural connection with the water, they are also known as the People of the Water.

Squaxin Island, four and a half miles long and a half mile wide (1443-acres), is centered near the entrances to the seven inlets of southern Puget Sound - Noo-Seh-Chatl, Steh Chass, Squi-Aitl, Sawamish/T'Peeksin, Sa-Heh-Wa-Mish, Squawksin, and S'Hotle-Ma-Mish. The Squaxin Island Reservation was established under the Treaty of Medicine Creek in 1854. The Squaxin ancestors were confined to the Island during the Indian War of 1856-57. After the war, the island's population dwindled (no drinking water) as people left to take up permanent residence near their original homes. Although there are no year-round residents on Squaxin Island today, it continues to be regularly used by tribal members for fishing, hunting, shellfish gathering, camping, and other activities. After the General Allotment Act of 1887, the tribe gained off-reservation trust lands (about 36 acres) on Harstine Island across Peale Passage in Mason County and across Pickering Passage from Squaxin Island (about 6 acres) in Thurston County.

Tribal headquarters are now located in Kamilche (18 miles northwest of Olympia and 8 miles south of Shelton) in Mason County between Little Skookum and Totten Inlets. Hundreds of acres of land were purchased and a thriving community has been established there. Today the Tribe has 936 enrolled members and 959 acres of tribal trust land (not including Squaxin Island). The tribe is governed by a seven-member council, elected by the General Council of all members, which oversees all branches of tribal government and enterprise. Tribal Council meetings are held at least twice a month, and are open to all enrolled tribal members. Tribal enterprises include the Little Creek Casino Resort (and Events Center), Salish Seafoods, Kamilche Trading Post, and Skookum Creek Tobacco Company. Tribal departments include Planning/Community, Cultural Resources, Health & Human Services, Human Resources, Information Systems, Tu Ha' Buts Learning Center, Legal, Northwest Indian Treatment Center (in Elma, Grays Harbor County), Natural Resources, and Public Safety & Justice. Squaxin Transit is a tribal public transportation service providing scheduled bus service linking the reservation to connections with Mason Transit and Grays Harbor Transit service.

In 2001, the Cultural Resources Department, working under an agreement with South Puget Sound Community College and the State Historic Preservation Office, began partial excavation of an extensive tribal village site in Mud Bay, estimated to be approximately 500 years old. In 2001, dedication ceremonies were held for the newly constructed Squaxin Island Museum Library and Research Center (MLRC), which provides a variety of cultural and educational programs and events, and where artifacts from the ancient village site at Mud Bay are on exhibit. The facility includes a library, archives, research center, cultural and historical exhibits, collection care and storage areas, classrooms, and museum store.

Environment

The Squaxin Island Reservation is located in western Washington State on the southeast corner of the Olympia Peninsula. The climate is predominantly a marine type, with cool summers and mild rainy winters. In the warmest months, the average high temperature ranges between 75 and 80 degrees. In the winter months, high temperatures usually hover around 45 degrees. Prehistoric glacial activity has heavily influenced the terrain.

Demographics

Squaxin Island Tribe demographics. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, the Squaxin population is growing: 157 persons in 1990, 405 persons in 2000, 936 persons in 2007. According to the Squaxin Island Tribe, tribal enrollment is also growing: 645 persons in 1998, 935 persons in 2008, a 45% percent increase.

Mason County demographics. Census 2000 shows a total population of 49,405, 0.8% of the state population, 16.5% persons age 65 and above (over the state average), 20.2% with a disability, 12.2% at/below poverty level, 51.4 persons per square mile, \$41,554 median household income in 1997. Note: The 2005 population is 51,900.

Employment

Traditionally, the Squaxin people made their living in forestry, fishing, and hunting. Today, government services and tribal food and entertainment enterprises are the primary sources of employment on the reservation.

Squaxin government employs about 230 people, including full-time and part-time positions within multiple departments including health and human services, in- and out-patient alcohol and drug treatment, education, public safety and justice, emergency management, natural resources, information services, and housing.

Squaxin enterprises employ about 750 people, including full-time, part-time, and contracted positions within multiple businesses including the Little Creek Casino Resort and Events Center, Skookum Creek Tobacco Company, Salish Seafoods, Kamilche Trading Post. Squaxin is the largest employer in Mason County.

Land Use

The Squaxin Island Tribe has a history of successful master planning rather than comprehensive planning or the development and use of formal zoning ordinances. The primary on-reservation and near-reservation land use areas are residential, government, transition, commercial, industrial areas and sensitive lands.

1. Residential Area

It is essential to provide adequate housing for present and future generations of tribal members. The residential area currently supports 89 low-income housing units and 40 low-income conveyed homes on reservation trust land with Klah-Che-Min Drive as the main collector road. One set of low-density homes was built 20-30 years ago in several phases and the other set, called Slocum Ridge, was built 5-8 years ago in two phases. Other lower density housing (not part of the Squaxin Housing program) is scattered around the Kamilche area. A new housing area is planned off Klah-Che-Min Drive between Slocum Ridge and Bloomfield Road, consisting of non-low-income homes. The residential area is served by community drinking water and waste water systems as well as high-speed telecommunication and community transit.

2. Governmental Area

It is essential to provide strong self-governance for present and future generations of tribal members. The government area is located along Klah-Che-Min Drive consisting of the Tribal Center, Elders Center, Education Center, Health Clinic, Health and Human Services offices, Natural Resources offices, and the Squaxin Museum,

Library, and Research Center. This area is served by community drinking water, waste water, *and* reuse water systems as well as high-speed telecommunication and community transit.

3. Transition Area

The transition area is located along Old Olympic Highway between Klah-Che-Min Drive and SR101 consisting of government and commercial interests that include the Intertribal Professional Center, Legal Center, Island Enterprises, Inc., Island Optics, Fire Station, Out-Patient Treatment Center, and the Squaxin Island Child Development Center. More commercial development is planned. This area is served by community drinking water, waste water, *and* reuse water systems as well as high-speed telecommunication and community transit.

4. Commercial Area

It is essential to provide a strong economic development base for present and future generations of tribal members. The commercial area is located along SR108/Old Olympic Highway west of SR101 consisting of the Little Creek Casino Resort and Events Center, Kamilche Trading Post, and Events Center, seasonal fireworks sales, Park & Ride and transportation hub. Planned development includes a golf course and small to medium sized businesses with no significant pollution discharge to earth, air, or water. Essential government services may be located in this area, but residential development is discouraged except in the golf course area. This area is served by community drinking water, waste water, *and* reuse water systems as well as high-speed telecommunication and community transit.

Commercial development, including transportation system improvements, should compliment existing uses and transportation patterns. Low impact uses including telecommunications, technology and related enterprises should be encouraged. Commercial uses that support and compliment existing commercial development including existing tribal enterprises are also encouraged.

5. Industrial Area

The industrial area is located adjacent to the railroad track along SR108/Old Olympic Highway about a half mile west of the commercial area consisting of Skookum Creek Tobacco and Skookum Creek Distribution, and essential government services (drinking/waste/reuse water systems) that serve tribal housing, government, commercial, and industrial interests. Planned development includes more enterprises that support and compliment existing industrial development. This area is served by community drinking water, waste water, *and* reuse water systems as well as high-speed telecommunication and community transit.

6. Sensitive Lands

It is essential to provide strong natural and culture resource protection for present and future generations of tribal members. Naturally and culturally sensitive lands are an overlay of additional land use restriction rather than a land use category in itself. Sensitive lands include natural floodways, lands with physical limitations such as steep slopes, important archaeological, historic, or cultural sites. It includes tribal ceremonial sites, cemeteries, and burial sites and sites used for collecting materials for cultural uses. Such lands can be of any size or shape, and may be located throughout the Reservation. All bodies of water on the reservation are designated as sensitive areas, including the lands immediately adjacent and bordering waterways.

7. Off-Reservation Land Use

Commercial and residential development outside Kamilche is occurring in areas such as Arcadia (near the tribal boat ramp) and Steamboat Island Rd (near off-reservation trust land).

The interconnectedness of tribal values, community and economic development, land use, and transportation should be considered when transportation planning. >> For more details, please reference the attachments. # # #