



# Quinault Indian Nation

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April 24, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I'm writing in follow up to the April 10, 2019 public meeting on the Upper Quinault River Roads and Access Plan and to thank everyone in the community for their input at the meeting and through conversations over the last few months.

The comments and questions at the recent meeting were invaluable in helping the Quinault Indian Nation and agency leaders and road managers better understand the concerns and challenges facing residents, property owners, businesses and recreation users in the valley. Key issues you raised included:

- The need to address key South Shore Road problem areas such as at the border of Grays Harbor and Jefferson counties and upstream areas in Jefferson County
- Finley Creek channel management and road crossing issues
- Flooding and flow issues with county bridges, culverts, and driveway crossings near the O'Neil and Marshall properties and family properties in the Ziegler Creek area
- Backwatering and flooding of the river upstream from where the river enters Lake Quinault
- Ensure flooding and erosion risks are not increased and access is maintained in any actions regarding the roads
- Provide a "loop road" and maintain economic opportunities
- The need for more frequent and consistent communication with the community about the status, progress and proposed actions being considered in the planning process

We also heard appreciation for work done to date, in particular the success of engineered logjams and other structures. As noted at the meeting, 70 engineered logjams have been installed to help stabilize the river channel and create new floodplain land while restoring habitat for salmon. The logjams have so far helped to protect 197 acres of private land and 6 homes. We believe we have only begun to tap the potential of logjams to benefit people and salmon.

We heard from road management agency officials from the Park Service, Grays Harbor County and Jefferson County, about the challenges they face keeping up with funding needs for ongoing road maintenance and repair.

As I noted in my remarks, development of a short-and-long-term action plan is critical to making our case for more funding from state, federal and private sources to make the road system more resilient and maintain access in ways that are compatible with habitat restoration.

Without a clear plan that demonstrates broad support among the community, road managers and the Quinault Indian Nation, we stand little chance of getting the funding support needed to break out of the current, reactive road management regime in which we band-aid problems as they come up and fail to address the underlying instability of the river channel.

The Quinault Nation understands that building trust takes time and we are committed to more transparency, better communication and continuing the productive dialogue coming out of the April 10 meeting. Our commitments to the community and next steps include:

- Regular monthly updates and progress reports about the roads and access planning process on the Quinault Division of Natural Resources (QDNR) website ([www.qlandandwater.org](http://www.qlandandwater.org))
- Posting planning documents and technical reports on the QDNR website
- Quarterly updates about river and forest restoration, including status of funding and planned restoration actions posted on the QDNR website
- Outreach, discussion, and coordination with landowners through summer 2019
- Community planning meetings to begin fall 2019 to discuss development of the roads and access plan

Again, thank you for your continued engagement and assistance with this planning process.

Sincerely,



Fawn R. Sharp, President  
Quinault Indian Nation

cc:

Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner  
Rob Wilson, Grays Harbor County Public Works Engineer  
Greg Brotherton, Jefferson County Commissioner  
Wendy Clark, Jefferson County Public Works  
Lee Taylor, Deputy Superintendent ONP  
Pat Crain, Sr. Fisheries Biologist ONP  
Congressman Derek Kilmer  
Steve Tharinger, WA Representative (24<sup>th</sup> District)  
Mike Chapman, WA Representative (24<sup>th</sup> District)  
Reta Lafort, Forest Supervisor ONF  
Greg Masten, Taholah Agency Superintendent Bureau of Indian Affairs  
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