**Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe (The Strong People)**

* Good morning. Thank you for hosting us today. We are honored to meet here on Jamestown S’Klallam ancestral homeland.
* Thank you Chairman (Ron) Allen and members of the tribal council for this opportunity to meet, discuss, and better understand the Tribe’s Dungeness Bay Oyster Farm needs and concerns as outlined in your March 18, 2019 letter.
* Your invitation reminds us that we are all bound by similar values and beliefs. We all value conserving the species upon which we depend, and upon which our children’s children will depend. We take our responsibilities seriously, and I

I place a high value on our tribal trust responsibilities, obligations, and relationship.

* I also place an equally high value on our partnerships with The Strong People to meet mutual conservation goals in the region, such as replacement of the Rail Road Trestle bridge[[1]](#footnote-1) and work toward the recovery of eelgrass beds, substrate and benthic communities, and water quality of Dungeness Bay.
* The process to re-establish the Tribe’s shellfish growing and harvesting operations in Dungeness Bay, after being suspended in 2005 due to years of declining water quality, has been a frustrating and difficult process.
* While the proposed oyster farm site lies within the Refuge boundaries, permitting agencies for aquaculture projects are Clallam County, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Washington State Department of Ecology.
* Again, we recognize the sensitive and challenging nature of this task, and we thank you for continuing to engage with us.
* We continue to welcome your input and perspectives in an ongoing dialogue of government to government consultation and staff level cooperation.
* We strive to complete our many obligations under the law, treaties, and our respectful relationship with the Jamestown S’Klallam tribe.
* I look forward to our discussion today and the opportunity to better understand your concerns and to work together toward a mutually satisfactory resolution.

1. We worked with the tribe on a Puget Sound Coastal Project helping with ESA compliance for replacement of the Rail Road Trestle over the Lower Dungeness on Tribal Trust Land.  The old failing creosote piles were removed and a modern foot bridge with four concrete piles in the river replaced it.

   For the railroad trestle bridge, staff reviewed designs and made recommendations on extent of pullback, enhancements to secondary channels, and how to armor the ends of the pedestrian bridges.  Coastal Program staff then discussed BMPs and conservation measures to be incorporated into project implementation with the tribe.  Incorporation of these BMPs and conservation measures allowed this office to support implementation by use of our PROJECTS programmatic consultation.  This expedited the project, and allow it to be implemented in less than a year.  Timing was critical as the old creosote trestle was actively failing and would soon fall into the river, leaving creosote coated piles on the river banks and in the estuary.  In the end, a new pedestrian bridge was installed without the loss of any creosote timbers, and allowed the Dungeness River to fully utilize the floodplain and secondary channels that had been constrained by the trestle for 100-years.  For fish and wildlife, this meant the reestablishment of habitat forming and maintaining processes for spawning and foraging salmon and bull trout (there is a resident population of BT in the Dungeness).   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)