

Treaties are guaranteed by the Constitution

Lydia Sigo (Suquamish): We are the original caretakers of this area and have been here for thousands and thousands of years.

[sounds of shorebirds in the background]

We are the original caretakers of this area and have been here for thousands and thousands of years. Our traditional ways were designed around the principles of honoring, respecting, and even worshiping the natural world. It is a sad irony that our traditions were called primitive when native people maintained a pristine wilderness and have always shared beautiful and vibrant cultures.

As a member of the Suquamish tribe, I rely on natural resources to sustain my family. In 1855, leaders from our tribe, including Chief Seattle and Jacob Wahelchu, signed the Treaty of Point Elliott in which tribes ceded massive amounts of land so that the settlers could live here. And our inherent and sovereign right to fish and hunt in our Usual and Accustomed Areas was promised not to be interfered with. These treaties are guaranteed by the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution, yet they are broken every day by environmental degradation that threatens our health, our culture, and survival as Indigenous people.

We are at a critical turning point. Please help us protect the [Lushootseed word / saltwater], saltwater.

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