

NAVY REGION NORTHWEST

fosters
TRIBAL
relations

SAILORS HELP LOCAL
NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES
WITH CLAM SEEDING

Sailors from Navy Region Northwest continued to foster relations with local Native American tribes by helping to seed three million manila clams along the beaches of Naval Magazine (NAVMAG) Indian Island on 9-11 August 2011.

The seeding project is part of a larger agreement between the Navy and the local Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest to recognize the tribes' treaty harvest rights and facilitate the Navy's mission requirements while sharing the land and waters of Puget Sound.





A populous adult clam population does not guarantee the next generation will be as numerous. Clam offspring are affected by a variety of factors including being easy prey for predators and sea currents removing large numbers from the location where they were produced. Clam seeding helps to maintain the shellfish population at optimal levels in designated locations.

MC2 Scott McCall

“This particular shellfish seeding project is the result of a mitigation agreement related to the installation of a port security barrier that provides force protection for visiting ships and submarines,” said Bill Kalina, NAVMAG Indian Island environmental site manager. The seeding process enhances existing clam stocks on the beaches, allowing the tribes to harvest greater quantities of clams during their harvest seasons.

“Six beaches on Indian Island have been designated as tribal harvest beaches, allowing the tribes to seed and harvest those particular beaches every year of the agreement. The tribes will seed between one and two acres of tribal beach area with baby clams each year, checking on them periodically until they’re ready to be harvested, which usually takes about three years,” said Kalina.

This year, the project started 1 August 2011. For three days, tribal members and Navy personnel worked together to stake out protective netting along the beach to minimize harm from

predators. Then beginning on 9 August, they began to seed the netted areas with baby manila clams.

“There are ducks and crab that like to come in and eat the baby clams, so

NAVY REGION NORTHWEST’S Navy Tribal Council

To facilitate government-to-government consultations and relations, Commander, Navy Region Northwest chairs the Northwest Navy Tribal Council. This forum, established in 2003, serves to build strong relationships among tribal leaders and Navy executives at the region and installation level. These relationships help to develop mutual trust and improve knowledge, sensitivity and communications among the Navy and the federally-recognized tribes of Western Washington State. Open dialogue with tribes on issues such as effective consultation processes, training and operations, marine mammal issues, natural and cultural resources, shellfish and water quality allows the Navy and the tribes to care for the land and water they share in the Pacific Northwest.



Navy personnel help carry Tribal canoes to shore during the 2009 “Paddle to Suquamish” Canoe Journey, Suquamish, WA.
MC2 Maebel Tinoko

these nets provide a higher rate of survival,” said Kalina.

The partnership between the Navy and the tribes ensures that the tribes have access to NAVMAG Indian Island’s beaches to harvest shellfish, such as the clams seeded in this effort, for the purpose of subsistence and preserving tribal traditions.

“The tribal members harvest commercially for their existence and for ceremonies, so the additional resources provide them with extra income,” said Viviane Barry, shellfish program manager for the Suquamish Tribe’s Fisheries Department.

“It’s a tradition that’s been going on for thousands of years,” said Barry. “Tribes have been living off the tide lands in Washington State and it’s a tradition that they want to continue.”

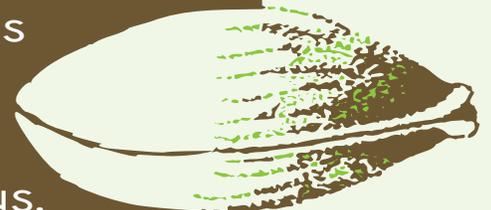
“NAVMAG Indian Island has had a long-standing relationship with the local tribes. The installation has worked closely with the tribes for more than two decades to develop natural resource agreements and access procedures to achieve both the Navy’s mission as well as preserve the tribes’ cultural traditions and harvesting rights,” Kalina said.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Walter Bayne seeds baby manila clams along a beach at NAVMAG Indian Island.

MC2 Scott McCall



THE SEEDING PROCESS ENHANCES EXISTING CLAM STOCKS ON THE BEACHES, ALLOWING THE TRIBES TO HARVEST GREATER QUANTITIES OF CLAMS DURING THEIR HARVEST SEASONS.





“They’re water people and we’re a water-oriented mission agency—so we have that in common,” said Kalina. “We can keep the Navy running and supply the fleet with ordnance and weapons storage here, but we can also maintain the ecosystem and provide the tribes access to beaches to exercise their harvest treaty rights.”

The Navy and tribes share unique federal “usual and accustomed” fishing rights in the Puget Sound area. Mitigation projects—like the clam-seeding at

NAVMAG Indian Island—help support these mutual interests within the Navy’s third-largest fleet concentration area.

“We want to be good neighbors. We work well with the tribes and we always have,” said Cmdr. Gary Martin, NAVMAG Indian Island commanding officer.



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Samuel Moon spreads manila clams on the shore of NAVMAG Indian Island. Sailors from Navy Region Northwest helped local Native American tribes seed three million manila clams.

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“The Navy does a great job with all the tribes in Puget Sound. We just want to continue to have that good relationship.”

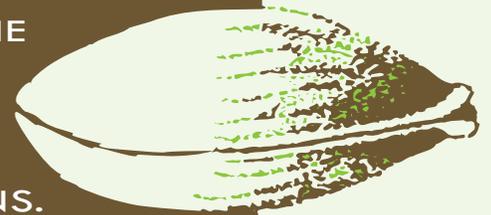
Seeding and harvesting manila clams on Indian Island may also provide additional environmental benefits to the surrounding community. Shellfish like the manila clams are filter feeders, straining out particles and eating microscopic plants (such as phytoplankton) that float in the water. Some species are capable of filtering up to 65 gallons of sea water per day. By reducing the phytoplankton population, a robust shellfish population can help to reduce the occurrence of

FEDERALLY-RECOGNIZED

Tribes & Treaty Rights *in the Northwest*

In 1855, Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens negotiated treaties with 24 of the 29 modern-day federally-recognized tribes in Washington State. The treaties included language pronouncing that “[T]he right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory...together with the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands.” Subsequent legal decisions have identified “usual and accustomed” (U&A) areas and afforded tribes the right to fifty percent of all fish and shellfish present or passing through the tribes’ historical U&A areas, including on and off-reservation areas where tribes engaged in fishing, hunting and gathering of food, as well as access to historical fishing grounds and stations as identified in treaties and other documents. Because many of these U&A areas are co-located in lands and waters owned or used by the Navy in the Navy Region Northwest area of responsibility, government-to-government consultation with potentially affected tribes is required when Navy proposed actions have the potential to significantly affect tribal rights, resources and Indian Lands.

THE PARTNERSHIP ENSURES THAT THE TRIBES HAVE ACCESS TO NAVMAG INDIAN ISLAND’S BEACHES TO HARVEST SHELLFISH, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUBSISTENCE AND PRESERVING TRIBAL TRADITIONS.



THE BASICS ABOUT

Naval Magazine Indian Island

NAVMAg Indian Island is the only deep water ammunition port on the West Coast. It is responsible for the joint transfer shipment of ammunition among the five branches of the military services. The base is also a critical site for joint training exercises, including waterborne security and logistics mobilization drills. Not only do NAVMAg Indian Island employees provide an invaluable service to the fleet, they also go out of their way to be good stewards of the environment by improving and protecting tidal salt marshes, building a shoreline protection system, removing creosote logs off the beaches and remediating contaminated sites from historic World War II operations. These projects resulted in the removal of NAVMAg Indian Island from the National Priorities List by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2005. This achievement makes NAVMAg Indian Island the only Navy installation on the West Coast to be completely removed from this list. NAVMAg Indian Island takes its name from the famous British Explorer Captain George Vancouver who dubbed this land mass "Indian Island" after observing a seasonal village site of the Chemakum tribe on Walan Point during his exploration of Puget Sound in 1792. This Walan Point area is now the present day location of the Navy's Ammunition Wharf.

For more information on NAVMAg Indian Island, visit www.cnic.navy.mil/Indian_Island/index.htm.



Viviane Barry, shellfish program manager for the Suquamish Tribe Fisheries Department, shares her subject matter expertise with Cmdr. Gary Martin, NAVMAG Indian Island commanding officer.

MC2 Scott McCall

harmful algal blooms, which have been observed to be toxic to marine animals.

“One of the main goals of the tribes is to maintain the water quality where the water quality is good enough where you can have open harvest areas,” said Barry. “Second is to improve the water quality in areas where there’s pollution. If you can identify the pollution sources and correct them, you can eventually open up more beaches.”

The local tribes participating in the project are the Suquamish Tribe, the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. 

CONTACT

Liane Nakahara
Naval Magazine Indian Island
360-396-1630
DSN: 744-1630
liane.nakahara@navy.mil



Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Anthon Shuler spreads manila clams on the shore of NAVMAG Indian Island.

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—CDR GARY MARTIN, NAVMAG
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