

Partnership with the Puyallup Tribe in Maritime Center Pre-Development

In its pre-development planning for the Maritime Center, the Port of Tacoma placed a strong emphasis on environmental review and cultural resource protection. Central to this effort was an early, ongoing partnership with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, ensuring that development planning was informed by Tribal priorities and cultural considerations.

As part of an Environmental Site Assessment, the Port evaluated soil and groundwater conditions and conducted extensive subsurface testing. At the request of the Puyallup Tribe's Historic Preservation Office, the Port expanded this work to include intensive archaeological monitoring. One hundred and thirty borings, each over 20 feet deep, were placed throughout the site and observed by professional archaeologists, reflecting a proactive commitment to integrating Tribal input into technical site investigations.

The Port retained a cultural resources firm to conduct archaeological monitoring across multiple phases in close coordination with the Tribe. This work included regular communication and adherence to a project-specific inadvertent discovery plan grounded in Tribal standards. This collaboration approach ensured that any cultural materials encountered would be properly identified, documented, and addressed. No significant cultural resources were identified during the course of the environmental and archaeological investigations.

Overall, the Port's precautionary, partnership-driven approach to pre-development of the Maritime Center demonstrates a model of early and sustained collaboration with the Puyallup Tribe, integrating cultural resource stewardship into environmental review and setting a foundation for responsible and respectful Maritime Center development.

