

Lauren Beard

Bašu. My name is Lauren Beard. I come from the Deer Clan of the Biloxi-Choctaw people within the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana. I am a resident of Port Angeles and I attended yesterday's public comment meeting in Port Angeles as an observer. The biggest thing I noticed was that there was ZERO land acknowledged, formally or informally, and I would like to do this for the record. Yesterday's meeting took place on the traditional lands of the S'Klallam people, more specifically the Lower Elwha Kallam Tribe. The comments from the private forest owners and "management" companies all cried victim and discrimination. They spoke of their generations being here. They provided data, statistics, and cost benefit analysis, never taking into account the people who lived here long before logging families arrived. THEY are the people whose lives have been affected and discriminated against. The indigenous people have had to watch the land that they have taken care of and lived with be systematically destroyed all in the name of capitalism. The flora and fauna of this area do not speak the language of numbers and scientific data, they do not speak in dollars and profit, they do not understand the information that was presented from the settler-colonial extractive framework that was shoved down the Board's throat. Those who have come here to cut down every tree cannot understand the language of nature because they were taught to destroy and commodify it. Nature is speaking out with warming waters, erosion, declining populations, drought, and wildfires. These disasters are obvious cries and what should be common sense, but after yesterday's meeting, common sense is not common after all it would seem. We must protect this land and every drop of water we have at all costs. Please support this new buffer rule. Please add more protection. Please think longer than the "long term" you've been taught. Think about the seven generations that will come after you. What will they be left with? Thank you