

Jean Avery

It is important to remember the history of this place we call home. The area we're talking about is the ancestral homeland of Native Americans. Indigenous peoples continue to honor Mother Earth through sustainable stewardship and cultural traditions.

Natural areas and wildlife in SW Washington are at risk with the NWIW project because of air pollution and increased vessel traffic. Several of these natural areas are designated as IBA's: Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas. IBA's are internationally recognized as globally important for the conservation of bird populations. The "Washington State Birding Trail" includes these IBA's close to Kalama:

- J.B. Hansen National Wildlife Refuge: 6,000 acres of Columbia River islands and sloughs.
- Chinook County Park and the 1,900 acre Cape Disappointment State Park.
- Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, 5,000 acres of wetlands, grasslands, and woodlands.
- Vancouver Lake Park and Columbia River Lowlands are also designated as IBAs.

The NWIW plant would degrade the area's air and water, threatening natural areas and wildlife. Yet none of these significant impacts are included in the SSEIS.

I would like to end with this Native American proverb:

Listen to the Wind; it talks.
Listen to the Silence; it speaks.
Listen to your Heart; it knows.

(Presented as oral testimony Tuesday evening, 9/22/2020)