Water sample collection in Portage Bay

Surface and ground water quality monitoring has been ongoing since 1993. The purpose of the program is to document baseline conditions of Lummi Nation waters. This information is needed in order to protect ground water, Tribal tidelands, and sensitive shellfish growing areas.

Protection of ground water is essential because:

- Almost all water consumed on the Reservation comes from ground water, and
- An ample supply of good quality ground water is needed in order to serve the purposes of the Reservation as a permanent and economically viable homeland for the Lummi People.

Tribal harvest of shellfish from Lummi tidelands

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"Water...the most critical resource issue of our lifetime. The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land."

Luna Leopold, former Chief Hydrologist of the U.S. Geological Survey

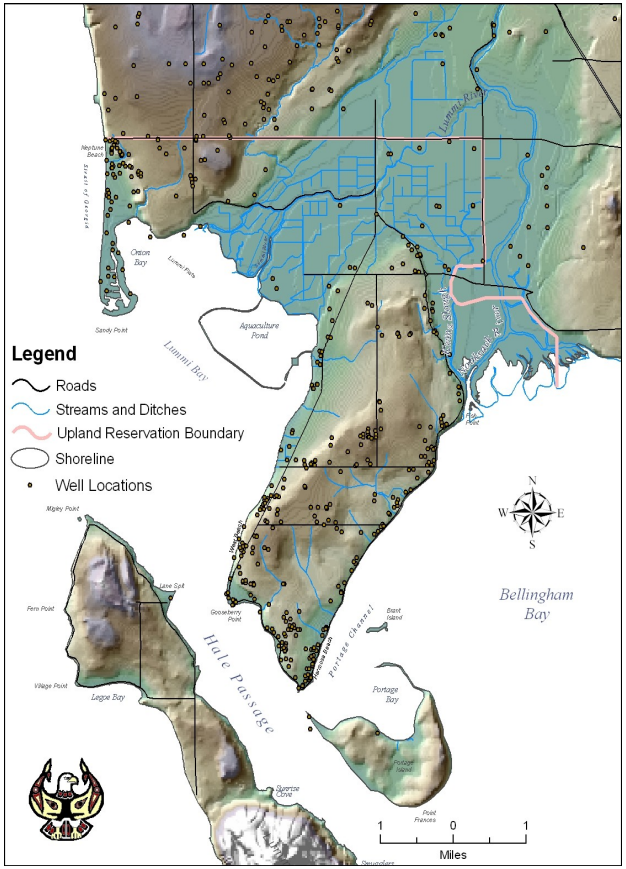
Spill response practice

LUMMI NATION

Water Resources Division

Natural Resources Department

Mission:
To protect, restore, and manage Lummi Nation waters, including Reservation shorelines, in accordance with the Lummi Code of Laws and the policies, priorities, and guidelines of the Lummi Nation.



"When the well's dry, we know the worth of water." Benjamin Franklin

Primary Goals of the Water Resources Division:

- The protection of treaty rights to water both on– and off-Reservation,
- The development and implementation of a comprehensive water resources management program (CWRMP), and
- Implementation of the Lummi Nation Water Resources Protection code (Title 17).

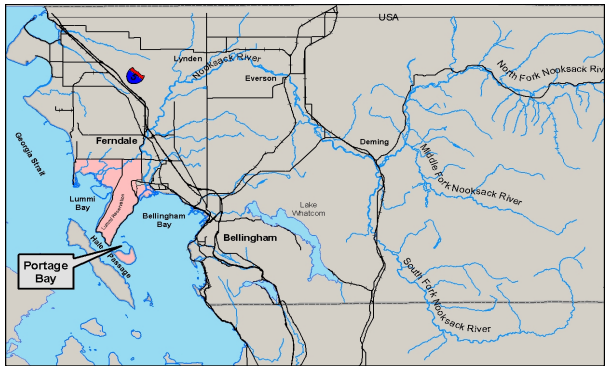
The Lummi Reservation occupies approximately 12,500 acres of uplands and 7,000 acres of tidelands located between Georgia Strait and northern Puget Sound. Because of its location at the interface between the Nooksack River and the two largest inland bodies of salt water in the northwest, the Reservation is at a strategic location in the Pacific Northwest ecosystem. The rich feeding grounds of the Nooksack and Lummi River deltas and the 7,000 acres of tribal tidelands attract large numbers of fish, shellfish, waterfowl, and marine mammals.

The 80-mile long Nooksack River originates in three forks flowing off Mount Baker and the Twin Sisters. It drains an 835-square mile watershed and discharges through the Lummi Reservation.

Comprehensive Water Resources Management Program (CWRMP):

The purpose of the CWRMP is to ensure that the planning and development of Reservation water and land resources are safeguarded against surface and ground water degradation. The CWRMP consists of the development and implementation of the following programs:

- **Wellhead Protection Program.** Protecting Reservation ground water from contaminants.
- **Storm Water Management Program.** Protecting all waters and tidelands from contaminated storm water, and downstream property owners from adverse impacts of new development.
- **Wetland Management Program.** Protecting the on-Reservation ground water supply, surface water resources including tidelands and estuaries, and the protection of wetland functions and property owners.
- **Water Quality Standards Program.** Attaining fishable and swimmable waters within the Reservation, and the adoption and implementation of rules to protect and enhance public health. The Lummi Nation water quality standards apply to all surface waters of the Reservation.
- **Nonpoint-Source Management Program.** Effectively and efficiently controlling nonpoint sources of pollution on the Reservation.



Other On-Going Projects Include:

- **Reservation Surface Water Quality Monitoring:** Approximately 40 stations are monitored and analyzed monthly or more frequently.
- **Nooksack Estuary Recovery Project:** An effort is underway to evaluate and restore the Nooksack/ Lummi River estuary.
- **Flood Damage Reduction Plan:** The purpose of this program is to reduce flood related hazards and damages on the Reservation.
- **Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan:** Evaluating risks from natural hazards on the Reservation to identify and implement actions to reduce or eliminate the hazards.
- **Ground Water Monitoring:** Regular monitoring of ground water levels and water quality at 28 wells.
- **Environmental Permitting Support:** Work closely with the Lummi Planning Department and other LIBC departments to ensure that water resources are protected whenever development projects are undertaken on or near the Lummi Reservation.
- **Tidelands and Coastal Zone Management:** Provide technical support to implement the Lummi Nation Tidelands Ordinance (Title 13) and the Lummi Nation Coastal Zone Management Plan.
- **Shellfish Bed Protection:** The Lummi Nation is contributing to an intergovernmental effort to identify and correct pollution sources that threaten tribal shellfish beds.
- **Stream Gaging:** The Lummi Nation is working with the U.S. Geological Survey and others to ensure operation of a stream gaging network in the Nooksack River Watershed.
- **WRIA 1 Watershed Management Project:** An effort is underway to allocate water for instream flow and out-of-stream uses, to protect water quality, and to restore and protect fish habitat in the Nooksack River basin and certain adjacent watersheds.
- **Water Rights Negotiation and Litigation:** Provide technical support to efforts to quantify and protect on– and off–Reservation water rights through negotiation if possible and litigation if necessary.