

Port of Port Townsend
Jamestown S’Klallam presentation: FLUPSY and upland use at Point Hudson
at the Regular Commission Meeting on September 23, 2020

Members of the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe (JST)* gave a presentation on the idea of a FLUPSY – a high-level overview of the tribe’s aquaculture operations and a proposal to return tribal seafood culture and commerce to Point Hudson. After the presentation, Commissioners asked questions posed by constituents via email.

* Kyle Johnson, Executive Director for the economic authority for the JST;
Kurt Grinnell, JST Councilman & CEO of Aquaculture program;
Ralph Riccio, shellfish biologist for JST;
Nathan Tsao, General Manager of the JST oyster operation in Kona, Hawaii

Q: to Nate Tsao in Hawaii: is what JST doing in Quilcene the same thing as Coast Seafoods with Spat and Algae farming?

A: Coast is just up the bay from JST’s site in Brinnon. We grow seed in Kailua Kona, HI, and ship it to Brinnon where it continues to grow to the spat stage.

Q: So, you get the shellfish to nickel size and then it goes to others to raise. Who are the partners in this enterprise?

A: Our shellfish enterprise is purely tribal – just JST.

Q: which Critical Area Ordinances (CAO)s and Shoreline Management Plans (SMP)s would apply to this project - County’s, City’s, or Port’s?

A: This would fall under the City’s Shoreline Management Plan.

Q: Are the tribes exempted from anything in the permitting process?

A: No – the permitting process is exactly the same for us as everyone else.

Q: Your sorting – grading for size – is this done only during the daylight hours?

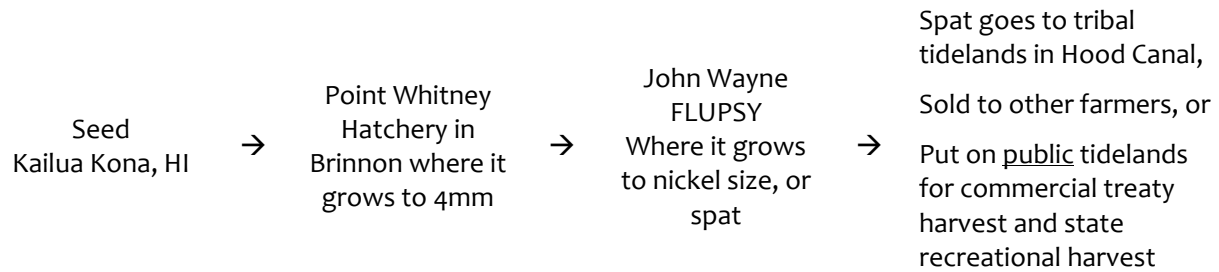
A: Yes – only during daylight hours. No noisier than big boats in the marina, so noise is not an issue.

Q: This was labeled a pilot program in the paper. Does JST have plans to expand the project at Point Hudson?

A: Point Hudson would be a demonstration facility where we do produce product for later sale, but we have no plans to expand beyond what we are proposing here. The educational component is very important to us. We feel it is good to know where our food comes from. We want to inspire young people to go into the sciences. We would train the crew in Point Hudson in public outreach and education to work towards this goal.

Q: Please explain the process again – from seed to FLUPSY to tidelands to table?

A: It is a specific Department of Health requirement that shellfish must spend at least 6 months on a natural tideland before being eaten.



Q: Tell us about your Oyster Project in the Olympic National Wildlife project.

A: This was DNR owned; the tribe bought it in the 1990's and operated it for 15 years until the water quality deteriorated and it was closed. The Tribe is working to improve water quality and hopes to take spat from the John Wayne Marina in Sequim Bay to tidelands Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge in 2021.

Q: The FLUPSY size is roughly 20' x 80' and there will be noise. What additional equipment is needed for day to day operations?

A: An electric hoist to lift bins out of the water; an electric scale that weighs the bins of seed when screening; a small cart to move seed, one person at high/median tide to meet a buyer's truck; 2 employees, who will be driving there and parking on site; pickup truck for transporting seed (people bring their own coolers) – buyers and tribe transporting spat to tidelands.

Q: What is your regional/world footprint? Where do your oysters start and where to they go after leaving the FLUPSY?

A: They are trucked on ice to farmers locally and most go to California.

Q: You talk about culture and education. Are you currently educating people at the Sequim FLUPSY – working with any schools?

A: We don't have a formal or regularly established program in place there. We do have a few tours each year and interact with curious public informally. We aspire to a more formal outreach program at Point Hudson and feel that the Marine Science Center would be a natural partner in educating the public and working with schools there. We'd love to teach the next generation about where their food comes from, and the value of clean water.

Q: What type of oysters do you grow – Pacific, Olympias?

A: Currently we are growing Pacific and Kumamoto oysters at our Sequim facility. The native Olympia oysters are being restored, and we'd love to grow Olympias in Point Hudson – eating is educational! However, we'd probably start with Pacific until everything is operational and then move to Olympias. We have access to brood stock from around the state.

Q: Tell us more about the seafood outlet – you envision a restaurant and local tribes selling wholesale, or retail?

A: Part of the experience of learning about seafood is in enjoying them as food, and we'd sell crab, oysters, and fish seasonally. The seafood outlet where folks could buy locally would be retail only, since it's small scale.

Q: What partnerships do you have? JST is part of the Northwest Aquaculture Alliance (NWAA), Cooke Aquaculture is part of that same alliance, promoting black cod and steelhead trout.

A: JST members are on the NWAA; they are looking for a natural spot for pen-raised steelhead and sablefish.

Q: There has been some contentious press about net pens at Cypress Island and how Cooke Aquaculture handled that. Can you address the relationship between the tribe and Cooke?

A: First of all, our shellfish operations are Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe only. We don’t make excuses for the way Cooke handled the Cypress Island pens that were in disrepair. JST has been raising fin fish in pens since the 1980’s. Aquaculture is a way of the future; 80-90% of our seafood in the US is imported, and the world’s wild fish stock is declining. The JST sees aquaculture as sustainable using best practices. We finally have the technology and know-how to raise fish, and it keeps our foot in the door with our culture. Pen-raised fish don’t eat from the natural food chain, and don’t have the toxins that wild fish can have. We keep 7 generations in mind with all our work, and we have a parallel program to help bring wild fish stock back. JST’s Point Whitney ventures are strictly in-house.

Q: How much of the product you make goes overseas?

A: We use the least amount of packing possible, and ship the product on ice, in trucks, which is the smallest footprint we can have. Most of our product goes to California. We distribute through Key City to Seattle, Sequim, and Port Angeles. The middlemen are tough in the oyster world; having an outlet locally at Point Hudson would lower our footprint. Our goal is to cut out the middleman: go with the culture, lower the footprint, and consume them right here.