

A vision for the Lummi-led pilot project to save *qwe 'lhol mechen*

Qwe 'lhol mechen will go extinct if we do not take immediate action to feed and protect them. We are in communication with, and are guided by, our ancestors and *qwe 'lhol mechen*. It is our *Xa xalh Xechnging*. All phases will be done with spiritual and cultural protocols.

Phase 1: Continued spiritual feedings

Lummi has held three ceremonial feedings to date, and will continue to spiritually feed *qwe 'lhol mechen* with Chinook from hatcheries and/or Chinook that is ceremonially caught. Out on the water, fish are offered with prayers and blessings to our starving relatives. *Qwe 'lhol mechen* know that we are responding to their call for help. What happens to them will happen to us; in saving them, we save ourselves. We are called by our ancestors to fulfill this sacred obligation.

Phase 2: Lummi fishers following spiritual and cultural protocols

Organized Lummi fishers will follow spiritual and cultural protocols in harvesting Chinook. They will hold and transport the fish in our aerated fish totes, and then ceremonially release the Chinook into the usual and accustomed territory of *qwe 'lhol mechen*. This territory mirrors that of the Lummi people and our ancestors, and does not recognize the Canadian/US border. This coordination and deployment of the Lummi fishing fleet mirrors the successful effort by Lummi fishers to clean up the fish farm spill of lice- and virus- infested Atlantics.

When *qwe 'lhol mechen* are nearby, we will feed them directly. This will be done without NOAA's interference, and with the input of scientists who know how best to locate and get the fish to *qwe 'lhol mechen*. Lummi will also be in direct communication with *qwe 'lhol mechen*, by both physical and spiritual means. The physical communication will be facilitated by a "pinger" playing a Lummi sacred song whose pitches has been modulated to best be heard by will prevent any confusion on their part, so that they will not associate boats (or any particular boat) with the Chinook; rather, they'll associate the song with a community offering.

The fishers will be *hy'shqe-d* for their time and their expenses will be paid.

Phase 3: Sustainable harvest stations

With the input of scientists and allied agencies, one or more sea-pens will be set up in known foraging grounds. This facility will be properly blessed before it opens, and each release of Chinook will be blessed. These harvesting stations will provide sustainable supplementation to what *qwe 'lhol mechen* can forage in the wild until such time that the Salish Sea again provides adequate Chinook for both ourselves and our relations' survival and *schelangen*.