

[Quinault Nation to warn some Lake Quinault landowners by mail](#)

Local News

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[UPDATE: Quinault Tribe reopens Lake Quinault to swimming, water quality still a concern](#)

LAKE QUINAULT, Wash. - Some landowners on Lake Quinault will be getting letters in the mail soon advising them that they are either intruding on Quinault Indian Nation property, or that their septic systems are polluting the lake. Quinault Nation President Fawn Sharp tells KBKW they are developing a more intense water quality sampling process to pinpoint polluters. Emphasis patrols are also planned to enforce non-tribal restrictions on everything from fishing, to swimming, or boating on Lake Quinault. "Closure of the lake was a decision made by the Quinault government after many years of disregard toward our resources, rights, regulations and policies." Quinault Nation President Fawn Sharp Earlier this month the Quinault government added the swimming and boating restrictions, after an April decision to close the lake to non-tribal fishing citing pollution and encroachment issues with non-tribal land owners.

Asked when restrictions would be lifted, Sharp said "The lake is closed until further notice, and reopening is at the discretion of the Quinault Business Council." Sharp added "If the decision is made to reopen the lake to non-tribal use, it will be due to the cooperation of the non-tribal public and the remedial actions by lakeside property owners, e.g., in removing unpermitted intrusions, [and] addressing sewage problems.

First, we will preface these responses by saying that Quinault Nation owns and manages Lake Quinault. We have no obligation to explain this action, however we respond to your questions as a matter of courtesy and respect, and we will of course expect similar treatment in return. Closure of the lake was a decision made by the Quinault government after many years of disregard toward our resources, rights, regulations and policies. A far better approach will be to realize the error of treating our lake as a sewer, building unpermitted docks, violating reasonable safety standards, etc. and committing in a formal sense to recognizing the jurisdiction of the Quinault Nation over its lands and waters.

1. Are tribal members also banned from activities on the lake?

No. The lake belongs to the Tribe and to Quinault Tribe members and as long as they follow Quinault rules and regulations they are within their rights to use the lake.

2. What is the extent of the ban on lake activity?

The ban involves all uses of the lake itself. That includes all boats and all non-tribal fishing. Tribal fishing is still allowed, as long as it is within tribal regulations. Yes swimming was recently banned, as well as boating. We don't want people exposed to raw sewage. Boats can introduce invasive species to the lake and we don't have the resources to do boat inspections at this time.

3. Will swimming in the lake also be banned, and if so when?

Quinault Business Council approved a resolution on June 4th, 2013, prohibiting swimming and boating. Also, please see answer number 2

4. Has the QIN been able to locate the source of the pollution, and is there any plan in place to eventually lift the bans?

That work is in progress. We are developing a more intense water quality sampling process, letters will be sent soon to land owners where intrusions have been detected, and we have planned for emphasis patrols on the lake. The lake is closed until further notice, and reopening is at the discretion of the Quinault Business Council. If the decision is made to reopen the lake to non-tribal use, it will be due to the cooperation of the non-tribal public and the remedial actions by lakeside property owners, e.g., in removing unpermitted intrusions, addressing sewage problems, etc.