

Quinault Tribe reopens Lake Quinault to swimming, water quality still a concern

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : July 3, 2013 at 7:13 am

TAHOLAH, Wash. (AP) — The Quinault Tribal Nation has reopened Lake Quinault to swimming, although the tribal president says she remains concerned about water quality. The tribe closed the Olympic Peninsula lake last month to swimming and other non-tribal activities, citing pollution problems, unsafe activities, invasive species issues and diminished fish runs. Non-tribal boating and other recreational activities remain banned at the tribe-owned lake. Quinault Nation President [Fawn Sharp](#) said Tuesday in a statement that the tribe intends "to manage our sacred lake in a way that preserves its natural integrity for generations to come." "We remain concerned about the health and safety of those who choose to swim in our lake," said Quinault Nation President Fawn Sharp. "We cannot recommend it, as we have found water quality problems associated primarily with non-tribal businesses and residences. Our Tribe cannot assume any responsibility or liability for those who choose to swim there. But we have now lifted the formal ban against it, and advise people who choose to swim there to do so at their own risk.

Sharp has said tribal leaders are concerned that leaky septic tanks owned by non-tribal residents in the area may have caused untreated sewage to get into the lake. She also says boats from outside the area can bring invasive mussel species, which she calls "lake killers."

The Quinault Tribal Nation opened Lake Quinault to swimming Tuesday, (by passage of the resolution by the Quinault Business Committee). "We remain concerned about the health and safety of those who choose to swim in our lake," said Quinault Nation President Fawn Sharp. "We cannot recommend it, as we have found water quality problems associated primarily with non-tribal businesses and residences. Our Tribe cannot assume any responsibility or liability for those who choose to swim there. But we have now lifted the formal ban against it, and advise people who choose to swim there to do so at their own risk," she said. The lake was closed to swimming and other non-tribal activities by resolution last month due to pollution problems, unsanctioned and unsafe activities, invasive species challenges and diminished fish runs.

"Our intent is to manage our sacred lake in a way that preserves its natural integrity for generations to come," said Sharp. "Although this might cause some inconveniences for some people, the long term values are most important. We did not cause these problems, but we will do what is necessary to remedy them," she said. Non-tribal boating and other recreational activities are still banned until further notice. "People need to realize that one of the biggest challenges we face is invasive species, a very real problem that is spread by boats coming from outside the area. Challenges such as zebra and quagga mussels may seem like remote problems to some people. They're not remote at all. They're here. They're real. They're lake killers, and the state has done little to stop their spread. Educating people about these problems will be part of the solution included in the comprehensive plan that will result from this closure," she said. "It is not our intent to inconvenience anyone. It is our intent to save our lake for future generations," said Sharp.