

QIN: Potlatch'ing on at Hunishu Point

Local News

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TAHOLAH, WA (8/5/13)—The Paddle to Quinault continues in its fifth of six days today, as tribal nation after tribal nation shares song and wisdom passed from generation-to-generation with a gathering of approximately 10,000 people gathered at the newly named Hunishu Point just south of Taholah on the Quinault Reservation. On Sunday, 22-foot motorized canoes raced at the mouth of the Quinault River, in a demonstration worthy of two worlds coming together—that of the first peoples whose lives and legacies enrich the land and waters of the Pacific Northwest far beyond that of contemporary countries, and that of the automobile, jet plane and even the hydro-style boat races akin to Seattle’s Sea Fair. Hunishu Point has been dedicated to Quinault elder Phillip Martin Sr., the Quinault elder who in 1989 captained a crew of women pullers (paddlers) in a cedar canoe from Quinault to the Paddle to Seattle—the first of the modern canoe journeys. Since then, the construction of the beautiful, traditional cedar canoes has been resurrected among the tribes of the Northwest, and beyond, and the paddles have become annual events. Participants have come from Oregon, California, Idaho, Alaska, California, Washington and other states, including Hawaii, Canada and even New Zealand. As the potlatch draws to a close tomorrow, the final words and songs will be shared by the Bella Bella First Nation of Canada (host of next year’s paddle) and the Quinault Indian Nation. Hunishu is Martin’s Indian name, meaning “Elk That Thunders.” This year’s Paddle to Quinault attracted a total of 89 of the 30 foot plus canoes to the Quinault Reservation. Most arrived Wednesday, and the tribal potlatch has been in full swing ever since. Tomorrow is the final day. The public is invited. More information on the event is available at www.PaddleteQuinault.org.