

A Diary of the Walk to Preserve and Protect the Salish Sea

The following is a diary of experiences and people that Ingrid Carmean encountered in her walk from Seattle to Tacoma to preserve the Salish Sea.

I had many cross-cultural experiences during this walk. Throughout the whole weekend the importance of people and gratefulness for the generosity of others superseded the importance of timeliness. One of the leaders of this march was a Two Spirit (trans) person. Her easy inclusion by the group is traditional within the first people culture.

On Friday, July 7th we started the walk at Myrtle Edwards State Park, just north of Pikes Place Market.

Our route took us by the entrance to the Mariners stadium and past some street preachers of Jesus. One preacher increased the volume of his speakers trying to drown us out with his Christian message. In response one of our elder women became angered. Historically Christians have mistreated the first people (throughout the Americas—probably the world) disrespecting their religion. She clearly did not want this to take place on this walk.

Our greeting and honoring the Duwamish people at the door to their longhouse must have lasted about ½ hour. The doors were held open during this entire greeting. We had walked 9 miles. I'm sure I was not the only one with sore feet, but greeting and honoring the Duwamish people who were welcoming us into their long house was far more important than our sore feet.

We were given a wonderful nourishing dinner of wild rice and broccoli with or without chicken, plus plenty of drinks to rehydrate our bodies. We all slept on benches and on the floor in the Duwamish Long House that night. The elder women this first night and throughout the walk were honored by giving them the first places in the line for food.

Our second day began with a wonderful breakfast of wild rice and fruit (blueberries and bananas). Early in our walk we encountered two homeless First People grandmothers. We honored them by singing to them. They were clearly touched and cried. We also shared our wild rice meals & some fruit with them.

We went to one Arco convenience store where the person on duty pointed out the public rest room and then kindly opened up the employee's restroom for us. We purchased well over \$200 worth of snacks from him.

At the next convenience store, a Shell, the person told us there was no restroom and then called the police. The police came in 4 or 5 vehicles and after delaying us for about 20 minutes told us we could use the rest rooms in their precinct, if we walked past it.

At a Wells Fargo branch in Burien we created a "flash mob". The bank employees, mostly looking amused, continued working despite our loud singing. We left about the time the police

came. A few of our group stayed to talk with the Bank Manager about the problems the DAPL (Dakota Access Pipeline) and about Wells Fargo's part in helping finance it.

On our arrival at the beach at Saltwater State Park we held a ceremony blessing the water. Here again, this ceremony of blessing the water was far more important than our sore feet. During the ceremony we added the water we carried to the water of the Salish Sea. We had walked 14 Miles that day.

About 20 minutes after the ceremony we arrived at the Saltwater Unitarian Church in Des Moines. It was obvious their greeter was uncomfortable with our half-hour long ceremony honoring and blessing the Unitarians and their church and their generosity before we entered the church. At one point the Unitarian greeter stepped forward enthusiastically shaking our leader's hand and welcomed him into the church. We continued singing. The members of the church served us a delicious potluck-style meal and we slept in the sanctuary. In the morning, we again had the wonderful wild rice & fruit for breakfast.

On the third day, our last, we left the Unitarian Church about 10:00 a.m.

We passed a wooded area; with signs showing it was designated to be torn down for commercial use. We stopped, sang to and honored the trees that were to be removed.

A few of us went into a Mall and purchased some items, we were customers. Spontaneously we decided to again have a flash mob. We went in, drummed and sang for a few minutes filling the Mall with our song. After we left, one family hurrahed us, a couple people had no reaction and then a couple young men gave us a thumbs up. Overall a very positive reaction from the sparse Sunday morning crowd.

The police stopped one of our escort cars, probably because she was driving very slowly with only the driver in the car and in the diamond lane. A little later the police changed the route we were taking to a shorter and safer route.