

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thurston County Superior Court:

Quinault Indian Nation Retains Lake Quinault

OLYMPIA, WA (3/7/16)—For the second time in less than a year, a suit challenging the Quinault Indian Nation’s ownership of Lake Quinault has been dismissed. On Friday, the Thurston County Superior Court granted a motion for summary judgment rejecting an attempt by some landowners to deprive the Quinault Nation of jurisdiction over the lake. These property owners filed a similar case in federal court against the Quinault Nation and State, which was dismissed last year.

In dismissing the case, which was filed last September by North Quinault Properties against Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark and the Department of Natural Resources, Superior Court Judge Anne Hirsch recognized the Quinault Nation’s interest in Lake Quinault and concluded that the case could not proceed.

"Lake Quinault always has been and always will be part of the Nation's Reservation. The Nation will always take every step necessary to protect its land and its rights and oppose any attempt to diminish or undermine our interests," said Quinault Nation President Fawn Sharp.

"We wish to acknowledge the many land owners who support Quinault Nation's ownership, jurisdiction and management of the lake. We deeply appreciate their support and value the positive relationship we have with them," she said.

North Quinault Properties, a non-profit established late in 2014, alleges Lake Quinault is a "public trust resource" owned by the State of Washington pursuant to the State Constitution. From that, they alleged the State, instead of the Nation, has a duty to ensure unlimited access to the Lake.

“The Quinault Nation has done an excellent job of managing and protecting Lake Quinault. It is sacred to us and although we are willing to share it, we will not tolerate abuse or misuse of it. Lake Quinault is an essential component for the survivability of our salmon species including the Quinault Blueback. We will always fight to keep Lake Quinault, and to keep it open as long as it is safe to do so,” said President Sharp

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