Kilisut Passage
Jefferson County - New Name

Township: 29N
Range: 1E
Section: 8

USGS Quad: Nordland

Location Description: Channel; approx. 400 ft. wide; located between Marrowstone Island and Indian Island, 7.2 mi. SE of the City of Port Townsend at 48°1’6.002”N, 122°42’0.069”W in Jefferson County.

Proposal Summary: Kilisut Passage: Channel; approx. 400 ft. wide; located between Marrowstone Island and Indian Island, 7.2 mi. SE of the City of Port Townsend at 48°1’6.002”N, 122°42’0.069”W; the name references Kilisut Harbor and how Native Americans and fish would use the feature for "passage" during high tide; Jefferson County, Washington; Sec 8 T29N R1E, Willamette Meridian; 48°1’6.002”N, 122°42’0.069”W USGS map - Nordland 1:24,000.

The feature was used as passage for Tribal canoes and fish before being filled in to allow land access between Indian Island and Marrowstone Island. The proponent chose the name in reference to Kilisut Harbor and that fact that the feature was used for "passage".

In 2019, the passage was opened after having been blocked for almost 100 years to allow water to mix with the southern waters of Kilisut Harbor.

Proponent:
Janet Welch
178 Baldwin
Nordland, WA 98358

Proposal Received: 3/14/2022
Initial Consideration: 4/26/2022
Final Consideration: 7/26/2022

WA Committee Decision: Deferred for Final
WA Board Decision: 
US Board Decision: 

Opinions:
David Brownell - OPPOSED
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe - OPPOSED
Proposed Name: **Kilisut Passage**  
County: **Jefferson**  
Township: **29 N** Range: **1E** Section(s): **8**  
Lat. **48.0206 N**, Long. **122.6993 W** (Begin)  
Lat. **48.0179 N**, Long. **122.7045 W** (End)

**Description**

Type of feature (lake, stream, etc.): **Saltwater Passage**

Description of feature (location, length, depth, height, size and/or area covered): A 2000-foot long waterway connecting Kilisut Harbor (to the north) and Oak Bay (to the south). The width of the flow varies from 100 to 400 feet, and depth varies from negligible to 8 feet depending on tidal level.

If a stream, number of months it flows on a yearly basis: **N/A**

Is this feature identified by other names or spellings? Please list variant names: The passage had been blocked for almost 100 years and was opened in 2019 to re-establish fish passage. Thus it is a new, unnamed, feature.

Has it ever been signed, posted, or publicized? If so, when? **No**

**History**

Please provide a brief history of the feature and its immediate surroundings. This might include information on the following: 1 Native American; 2 First settlers; 3 Historical background pertinent to feature; 4 History on how the land is/was used; 5 Natural disasters (floods, fires, etc.) 6 Any significant cultural events. If appropriate, geology, flora and fauna. Cite sources. Use additional pages if needed.

Origin of name: Native American name **"Sctaq"** translates to **"Passage Through"**. Passage was used to access Kilisut Harbor at high tide and to voyage to Port Townsend Bay if elsewhere. It was a key feature for migrating juvenile salmon to access protected rearing areas in Kilisut Harbor. Restoration of the flow has allowed cold, clean saltwater to mix with once stagnant waters of at the south end of Kilisut Harbor.

If a commemorative name, provide a brief summary of the ENTIRE life of the person including how and the length of time he/she was associated with the proposed feature: **N/A**

**Note:**

As signage in the region begins to reflect original names, the use of the term **“Passage”** in Kilisut Passage would provide the opportunity to include the translation **“Sctaq”** in the signage, thereby commemorating the original residents of this area.
Justification of Proposed Name

What is the usage of feature? It had been a high tide passage for fish, tribal canoes and early commerce before being blocked to provide land passage from Indian Island to Marrowstone Island. Restoration of the passage allows juvenile salmon migrating north to access Kilisut Harbor.

Kilisut Passage honors the tribal name “scstáq” which translates to “passage through” while referencing Kilisut Harbor which it provides passage to. It would allow for additional signage of scstáq beneath the English version.

Please list all sources of information used for your research: (maps, books, articles, periodicals, etc. for background history relating to proposed name; “scstáq” described by Sturmy Purser of the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe (email 8/4/21) and by Nikki Venneman, also Pastel (email 8/3/21). “Kilisut” Chinook term coined by Lt. Wilkes, in 1841, meaning “protected waters.”

What type of support is there for the proposal?

List all groups and persons who are familiar with the proposed feature and its usage. Please provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and his/her association with knowledge of the geographic feature:

North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Kevin Long (project manager@NOSC.org) @360.301.9261
US Navy, William H. Kelina2.civ@Navy.mil
WA State Dept. of Transportation (Project Partner) Dan McKernan, McKernan4.usa@wadot.wa.gov
James Town S’Klallam Tribe, Neil Harrington at Harrington@jamestowntribe.org
Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, Paul McCollum paulm@pstn.net

Application submitted by:

Name: Janet Welce
Address: 178 Baldwin
City: Normandy
State: WA Zip: 98358
Phone #: 360.385.6709 Email: aloha@olympus.net

I am aware that all information submitted is considered to be public information.

Printed Name: Janet Welce
Signature: Janet Welce

Please mail completed form along with copies of any additional materials to:

WA State Board on Geographic Names
PO Box 47030
Olympia, WA 98504-7030

(Phone: 360-902-1280 - Fax: 360-902-1778 - Email: bogn@dnr.wa.gov)
Hi Caleb,

I regret that I didn’t find a way to submit my application in a ‘typed’ version. Alas, my computer distain bites again. I take responsibility for the lack of readability of the application.

There is a point on my application that wasn’t reflected in the summary. I believe that it is an important point to draw attention to the connection between the proposed name “Kilisut Passage” to the Salish word used for the locations: scłəqʷ. I believe application was made previously by the Port Gamble S’Klallam tribe, but it clearly doesn’t meet the naming criteria. While their English translation of the Salish term, “Passage Through” is a bit redundant, I thought it appropriate and legitimate to retain the term “Passage”. This would potentially allow the Salish term to be placed on signage in the future.

I plan to bring this up at the meeting, but thought I’d let you know in case you thought it would be helpful to give this information to the Board in advance.

Thank you so much,
Janet Welch
Hi Caleb,

My apologies again for not noticing the second page of the PDF that had the login information for the meeting!!

In response to questions at the meeting, I’ve done some followup. I contacted the author of the small book *Marrowstone* by Karen Russell and Jeanne Bean (speaking with Karen). That was where I had seen the translation of ‘Kilisut’. Unfortunately Karen could only recall that she learned that from a pamphlet by the Jefferson Historical Society. This would have been decades ago.

But I also searched the Chinook Dictionary and found the translation kilitsut, almost the same spelling, as Chinook for “flint”. I’ve attached a screenshot of the citation. I don’t recall the details of the word that was being discussed at the meeting; perhaps it was the same word. I would certainly consider modifying my proposal to “Kilitsut Passage”, although most people would think it had been misspelled.

In support of assuring that place names are as historically accurate and non-perjorative as possible, has anybody considered renaming the nearby “Indian Island”? If a respectful indigenous name were given to the island, it would make sense to also use that name to describe the passage on its banks. I don’t want to open a can of worms, even though it appears that the committee regularly dines on a menu of potentially controversial ‘worms’! Since the can is open, and there will be efforts by BOGN to get input from the Port Gamble tribe, if the tribe were inclined to be pro-active in local place names, perhaps they would have suggestions for a name for the island and for the adjoining passage??

Just a thought.

Thank you again for your good work and, again, my apologies for some momentary incompetence this morning.
Janet Welch
Fry, to, mamˈ-oo-k la po-elˈ  
Frying-pan, la po-elˈ 
Full, pahˈt
Fundament, oˈ-poots

Gallop, to, kwa-lalˈ-kwa-lalˈ 
Gather, to, haˈ-ku-mahˈ 
Get, to, isˈ-kum
Get out, mahˈsh
Get up, get-upˈ, -or ket-apˈ 
Ghost, skooˈ-kum
Gift, culˈ-me potˈ-latch
Give, to, potˈ-latch
Glad, kwann
Go, to, klatˈ-a-wa
Gone, isˈ-ga-wa
Gold, piˈ chikˈ-a-min
Good, klasˈe, or klasˈhe
Good-bye, klaˈ-howˈ-ja
Goods, ikˈ-jah
Goose, whiˈ-whiˈy; kalˈ-ak-a-lahˈ-ma
Grandfather, chope
Grandmother, chitsˈ 
Grease, laˈ-kiˈesˈ; glesˈe
Green, peˈ-chugˈ 
Grey; a grey horse, le glay
Grizzly bear, siˈ-amˈ 
Ground, tiˈ-la-he
Gun; musket, zikˈ-wa-lal

Hair, yakˈ-so
Half, sitˈ-kum
Hammer, le mahˈ-to
Hand, le mahˈ 
Hand (game o), itˈ-la-kum
Handkerchief, hakˈ-at-shum
Comments

Received
Good Morning,

I am writing regarding the proposed name “Kilisut Passage” for the Channel between Marrowstone Island and Indian Island. The proposed name, “Kilisut”, is a Chinook Jargon term applied to the area by Charles Wilkes with the United States Exploring Expedition in 1841, and is no relevant or connected in anyway to the history and culture of the Chimakum and S’Klallam indigenous inhabitants of this area. A more appropriate name would be an anglicized or tribe-approved variation of the S’Klallam place name for this site, scəɬəqʷ (Passage Through):

"The term scəɬəqʷ literally means “a passage through” (Montler 2012:697). This is the area at the terminus of Scow Bay that at high-tide separates Indian Island from Marrowstone Island. Louise and Cy stated that “the Reason why they called it this is that the canoes use to go through there, they use to wait till high tide and then go through” (Harrington 16:434). While Mrs. Sparks indicated that it was described as a thoroughfare: “scəɬəqʷ, a passage through. When a young girl I use to go through there with my father. A whiteman use to fill up the opening so he could drive his cows across and my father use to have to dig a ditch through, so as to get his canoe through.” Mrs. Sparks says that there is an artificial up the west side of Scow Bay, and even big steamers can go through there."

This is the only place name recorded by T.T. Waterman for Indian Island: Stuxaqw L. (Waterman Clallam site No. 87). Waterman’s citation for this site is as follows:

87. A narrow isthmus connecting Marrowstone Island with the mainland, Stuxaqw L. “Plowing through with reference to a canoe”. The term refers to the fact that the Indians used to shove their canoes over this peninsula to avoid paddling them around a large body of land. Waterman’s translation and identification for the use of the site is consistent with the information recorded about the site by Harrington in 1942. This was a significant travel route for S’Klallam and Chemakum people during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and presumably much earlier based on the archeological record, until non-Indian development obstructed the tidal flow between Scow Bay and Oak Bay.

The proposed name, Kilisut Passage, would continue the erasure of S’Klallam history and culture from the landscape, rather than, as the proponent states, “honors the tribal name”. Chinook Jargon was used by non-Native explorers to name features on the landscape that they were unfamiliar with, without any consultation of the local tribes, and the Committee should not continue this outdated and culturally inappropriate practice. Chinook Jargon originated with the Chinook people along the Columbia River, who are not linguistically or culturally related to the Coast Salish S’Klallam.

Thank you,

David Brownell
(954) 465-4799
Dear Washington State Committee on Geographic Names,

I am writing in regard to the proposed name “Kilisut Passage” for the Channel between Marrowstone Island and Indian Island. The proposed name, “Kilisut”, is a Chinook Jargon term with no relevance or connection to the history and culture of the indigenous inhabitants of this area. The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe proposes a Tribe-approved variation of the S’Klallam place name for this site, sdxəqw̓ (Passage Through).

The currently proposed name, Kilisut Passage, would continue the erasure of S’Klallam history and culture from the landscape. Chinook Jargon was used by non-Native explorers to name features on the landscape without any consultation of the local tribes. Finally, Chinook Jargon originated with the Chinook people along the Columbia River, who are not linguistically or culturally related to the Coast Salish S’Klallam.

The following excerpt from the “Evaluation of S’Klallam and Chemakum Places of Historical and Cultural Significance at Naval Magazine Indian Island, Jefferson County, Washington” explains the connection between the S’Klallam term sdxəqw̓ (Passage Through) and the Channel between Marrowstone Island and Indian Island further:

"The term sdxəqw̓ literally means “a passage through” (Montler 2012:697). This is the area at the terminus of Scow Bay that at high tide separates Indian Island from Marrowstone Island.

Louise and Cy stated that “the Reason why they called it this is that the canoes use to go through there, they use to wait till high tide and then go through” (Harrington 16:434). While Mrs. Sparks indicated that it was described as a thoroughfare:

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the site by Harrington in 1942. This was a significant travel route for S’Klallam and Chemakum people during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and presumably much earlier based on the archeological record, until non-Indian development obstructed the tidal flow between Scow Bay and Oak Bay.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this naming proposal.

Sincerely,

Allie R. Taylor  
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe  
1033 Old Blyn Hwy  
Sequim, WA 98382  
Phone: 360-681-4638  
Cell: 360-461-8191  
Email: ataylor@jamestowntribe.org

References:

Harrington, John Peabody  
1942 Papers of John Peabody Harrington in the Smithsonian Institution. Elaine Mils Editor.  

Montler, Timothy  

Waterman, T.T.  

Wisniewski, Josh  
Kilisut Passage - JEFFERSON COUNTY

Channel; approx. 400 ft. wide; located between Marrowstone Island and Indian Island, 7.2 mi. SE of the City of Port Townsend at 48°16.002”N, 122°42’0.069”W in Jefferson County.

The feature was used as passage for Tribal canoes and fish before being filled in to allow land access between Indian Island and Marrowstone Island. The proponent chose the name in reference to Kilisut Harbor and that fact that the feature was used for "passage".

In 2019, the passage was opened after having been blocked for almost 100 years to allow water to mix with the southern waters of Kilisut Harbor.
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