



CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
425-587-3000

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jim Lopez, Deputy City Manager
Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Manager
Daniel Lazo, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator

Date: November 3, 2025

Subject: **2025 Native American Heritage Day Proclamation**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, proclaims November 28, 2025, as "Native American Heritage Day" in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Native American Heritage Day is a national observance that honors the history, culture, and contributions of Native peoples in the United States. This day, observed the day after Thanksgiving, serves as a time for respect, remembrance, and education, recognizing the diverse cultures and achievements of Native Americans.
- The City of Kirkland acknowledges that the Southern Salish Sea region lies on the unceded and ancestral land of the Coast Salish peoples, the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Snohomish, Suquamish, and Tulalip tribes and other tribes of the Puget Sound Salish people, and that present-day City of Kirkland is in the traditional heartland of the Lake People and the River People. We honor with gratitude the land itself, the First People – who have reserved treaty rights and continue to live here since time immemorial – and their ancestral heritage.
- This proclamation is part of the City Council's adopted 2025-2026 proclamation schedule.

BACKGROUND:

Each year, many Americans observe Native American Heritage Day as a civil holiday observed the day after Thanksgiving to honor the history, culture, and contributions of Native peoples in the United States. This day serves as a time for respect, remembrance, and education, recognizing the diverse cultures and achievements of Native Americans.

In the early 1900's, Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the director of the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Rochester, New York, asked for the "First Americans" day to be set

aside by the Boy Scouts of America, which it did for three years. Later in 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association directed its president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapaho Indian minister, to call the entire nation to observe this day. A person by the name of Red Fox James, a Blackfeet Indian, rode on horseback from state to state seeking support to observe a day to honor American Indian People and ended his trip delivering 24 state endorsements to the White House on December 14, 1915.

New York was the first state to honor the American Indian People when Governor Charles S. Whitman declared "American Indian Day" on the second Saturday in May. Since then, many state and local governments provided similar acknowledgements. In 1979, Congress passed a joint resolution calling for a "Native American Awareness Week." In 1986, President Ronald Reagan declared November 23 – November 30 as Native American Heritage Week.¹ In 1990, President George H.W. Bush dedicated the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month. In 2008, President George W. Bush signed a joint resolution by Congress designating Friday, November 28, 2008, as Native American Heritage Day.² Two years later, President Barack Obama proclaimed November 2010 as Native American Heritage Month and called for the country to celebrate the day after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day.

In June 2013, President Barack Obama established the first White House Council on Native American Affairs through an executive order to promote and sustain prosperous and resilient Native American tribal governments. In that Executive Order 13647, President Obama recognized that, as Americans working for a brighter future, we cannot ignore the history of mistreatment and destructive policies that have hurt tribal communities. The executive order established coordinated and effective efforts in national policy to engage and establish lasting relationships with federally recognized tribes.

In March 2021, President Joseph Biden confirmed the first Native American Cabinet Secretary in U.S. history when he appointed Deb Haaland, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna as the Secretary of the Interior. That was an especially meaningful confirmation, as the agency was historically often used as a mechanism to oppress Indigenous Peoples.

In 1999, Washington State joined other states across the nation in acknowledging Native American Heritage and formally recognized the fourth Friday of November as Native American Heritage Day.³

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The City of Kirkland stands on its values to be an inclusive, welcoming city where everyone feels a sense of belonging. Throughout 2025, the City continues to invest in its Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) work and staff continue meeting with groups to reaffirm these values and to listen to how community members are being impacted by the political climate.

¹ <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/proclamation-5577-american-indian-week-1986>

² <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/10/20081030-3.html>

³ <https://goia.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Native%20American%20Heritage%20Month%20%26%20Day%202024.pdf>

This proclamation supports Kirkland's goals, including those expressed in:

- Resolution R-5693 (2025) – reaffirming the City's commitment to being a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where all people belong
- Resolution R-5434 (2020) – committing to improving the safety and respect of Black people and to examining and dismantling interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in Kirkland
- Resolution R – 5548 (2022) – adopting the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging 5-Year Roadmap
- Resolution R-5686 (2025) – declaring Kirkland as a welcoming, inclusive, and safe city for the Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people and recognizing their human rights and well-being

As part of the City's efforts around Resolution R-5434, the City compiled a hyper-local Native history of Kirkland in collaboration with local tribal leaders and Native experts and in consultation with a variety of historical sources. This document serves as a guide to the City to make informed choices on practices, policies, official documents, and public signage. Additionally, as part of the historical document project, the City Council has adopted a formal local land acknowledgement⁴ and local land acknowledgement usage guide⁵ for City personnel.

The City of Kirkland acknowledges that the Southern Salish Sea region lies on the unceded and ancestral land of the Coast Salish peoples, the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Snohomish, Suquamish, and Tulalip tribes and other tribes of the Puget Sound Salish people, and that present-day City of Kirkland is in the traditional heartland of the Lake People and the River People. We honor with gratitude the land itself, the First People – who have reserved treaty rights and continue to live here since time immemorial – and their ancestral heritage.

Community members are invited to celebrate Native American Heritage Day at the following events in Kirkland and region:

- In recognition of Native American Heritage Month, Story time with the Sammamish Children's Librarian and guest storyteller Bethany Fackrell at Sammamish Library (825 228th Avenue SE, Sammamish WA 98075) on Sunday, November 23 from 1- 2 p.m.⁶
- Native Art Market at Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center in Discovery Park (5011 Bernie Whitebear Way, Seattle, WA 98199) from Saturday-Sunday, November 22-23 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.⁷
- November Native Art Market at Duwamish Longhouse & Cultural Center (4705 West Marginal Way, Seattle, WA 98106) from November 29 – December 1 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.⁸

⁴ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/City-Managers-Office/Local-Land-Acknowledgement>

⁵ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/city-managers-office/pdfs/local-land-acknowledgment-usage-guide.pdf>

⁶ <https://kcls.bibliocommons.com/events/68f68083b864f02900205074>

⁷ <https://unitedindians.org/nativeartmarket/>

⁸ <https://www.duwamishtribe.org/events/2024/11/29/november-native-art-market>

NEXT STEPS:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Native American Heritage Day Proclamation



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Native American Heritage Day November 28, 2025

WHEREAS, the City acknowledges that the Southern Salish Sea region lies on the unceded and ancestral land of the Coast Salish peoples, the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Snohomish, Suquamish, and Tulalip tribes and other tribes of the Puget Sound Salish people and that present-day city of Kirkland is in the traditional heartland of the Lake People and the River People, and we honor with gratitude the land itself, the First People – who have reserved treaty rights and continue to live here since time immemorial – and their ancestral heritage; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1900's, Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, New York, asked for the "First Americans" day to be set aside by the Boy Scouts of America, and in 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association called on the entire nation to observe this day; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, Washington State joined other states across the nation in formally recognizing the fourth Friday of November as Native American Heritage Day; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, President George W. Bush signed a joint resolution by Congress designating Friday, November 28, 2008, as Native American Heritage Day. Two years later, President Barack Obama proclaimed November 2010 as Native American Heritage Month and called for the country to celebrate the day after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day.

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland values the many contributions made to our community through the knowledge, labor, technology, science, philosophy, arts, and deep cultural contributions from the First People of this region, who have substantially shaped the character of Kirkland; and

WHEREAS, the Kirkland City Council has developed a hyper-local Kirkland Native History Document and formal local land acknowledgement in collaboration with the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, and Suquamish Tribes; and

WHEREAS, Kirkland joins the state of Washington and governments across the nation in celebrating Native American Heritage Day on the Friday following the fourth Thursday in November, honoring the unique heritage, achievements, culture, and contributions of our region's First People and reaffirming a commitment to respect each tribe's sovereignty and cultural identity.

NOW, THEREFORE, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, does hereby proclaim November 28, 2025, as Native American Heritage Day in Kirkland, Washington, and encourage all community members to observe this day to honor and celebrate the thriving cultures and unique heritage of the First People of our region.

Signed this 18th day of November, 2025

Kelli Curtis, Mayor