

Gabriel R. Angulo

Weekly Journal: 5

I have really enjoyed this past week being out and camping in the field! I enjoy the feelings and the satisfaction obtained from being isolated from service or wifi for several days. I appreciated and fell in love with the beautiful attractions of the Olympic Peninsula. I was able to reflect on different sides to certain contexts, such as the perspectives of outside scientists compared to those of the indigenous community.

We first arrived at the Quinault Indian Nation to learn about the history and current practices of the tribe. During these few days, we were sheltered at the community center and were allowed into their community with lots of kindness and respect. The Quinault community has been struggling to maintain their culture and does not have to abide with most state laws. They are really close with one another and have a great amount of knowledge about their land. We visited a forest that provides habitat for massive trees for ocean-going canoes, and incomes and livelihoods for tribal members. Considering the rapid effects of climate change, we learned how they are working to create sustainable ecosystems and wildlife populations on the reservation. During the last day, we were invited to join a community dinner! Not only was I able to enjoy on some delicious clam chowder, elk, and salmon, but I was also able to interact with many of the elders and youth of the community.

We were also able to visit the Elwha River and witness the recovery of its ecosystem, after the removal of two dams. Dr. Joshua Chenoweth, Director of the Elwha Restoration Project, walked us through the Elwha river banks and elaborated on the costs and the benefits of dam removals. In addition, we listened to the perspective of Robert Elofson, who is a native of the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe. He is a Native Biologist and is Director of the River Restoration Project. One of the hydroelectric dams on the Elwha River limited tribal fishing and clam harvesting because it stopped salmon from traveling upriver and also reduced their beaches. He helped tell us how the tribe works to protect, enhance, restore land, air, and water resources. To finish off the week at Olympic National Park, we hiked with UW PhD Candidate Korena Mafune, who helped us explore on the biodiversity the park holds with its high precipitation and elevation.

I am fortunate to have a clearer scope of my acknowledgment towards the indigenous communities that flourished the lands. By recognizing their importance and the importance of many other minority communities, scientists and people in power are better able to adapt their methods with respect to these communities. I really enjoyed this week and am excited to continue on my growth during these next weeks!

