

The Quinault Indian Gaming and Casino Operating in the 21st Century

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Summary: Although there are mythical notions about tribal gaming and casinos, this paper will call your attention to the truth about the Quinault Nation and the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino in particular, by providing facts in regards to the cultural, political, and economical aspects.

Introduction

The people of the Quinault Indian Nation are among the small number of Americans who can walk the same beaches, paddle the same waters, and hunt the same lands their ancestors did centuries ago. The word Quinault evolved from kwi'nail, the name of the tribe's largest settlement. The Quinault Indian Nation consists of the Quinault and Queets tribes and descendants of five other coastal tribes: Quileute, Hoh, Chehalis, Chinook, and Cowlitz. Remarkable salmon runs, abundant sea mammals, wildlife and forests provided substantial material and spiritual wealth to the ancestors. There were a great source of knowledge about plants and their uses that provided for the Quinault people. Salmon and steelhead fishing was the major economic activity of the Quinault people. The rich supply of timber played an important part in their lifestyle. They lived a rich existence with in hunting, fishing, and ample supplies of timber for building and firewood (N.A., 2013). The sovereign Quinault Indian Nation is located on the Olympic Peninsula, west of the city of Seattle, Washington. " The QIN is the largest Indian reservation on the Olympic Peninsula, and also the largest Indian reservation on the West Coast of the United States" (Quinault Indian Nation)". The Quinault Beach Resort & Casino is Washington's premier coastal destination.

Findings

Culture: Canoe People, the Quinault Culture Continues

There seems to be a conflicting issue in regards to tribal gaming for the Quinault Indian Nation. It looks as though they are torn between balancing their heritage and operating in the 21st century.

"Games played by the Quinault people; slaha, slahallam, shinny, tug-of-war, wrestling, rock lifting, horse racing, canoe races, laughing game, field and war sports, swinging and the fern game 'pala pala' (Chubby, 2002)".

Those were some of the traditional games played by Quinault people pre contact. “We are Canoe People, the people of the cedar tree (Sampson, 2003)”. The western red cedar provided logs for canoes, bark for clothing, split boards for houses, and more. People are their most important resource and it takes educated people to fill Quinault Indian Nation’s jobs and to pass on cultural traditions. “Nearly a third of the Quinault Reservation has been alienated and is own largely by timber and saw-milling companies (Ruby & Brown, 1986)”. The Quinaults homelands were the Quinault River valley and the coast between Raft River and Joe Creek. The Quinault’s were the southernmost people along the coast who hunted whales. Today most Quinault people are members of the Quinault Tribe, Quinault Reservation, Washington, and live on the tribe’s reservation, which lies on a coastal plateau extending east from the Pacific Ocean to the Olympic Mountains. Most of the people of the reservation live in the towns of Taholah and Queets. A few families live on allotments, and some live off the reservation.

“In the evening, people made large bonfires in the open air and challenged other tribes to play the stick game. Lively songs were sung by both sides, and each team tried to distract the other while it was trying to hide the bones (Mullis, 2000)”.

This was an example of tribal gaming practices of the Okanogans. Although this is a different tribe’s cultural practice, it shows evidence that there were tribal gaming practices that did not involve alcohol and no foul language. The Quinault Beach Resort and Casino seemed to not lack any reference about culture on the homepage of the casino. There was only a glimpse of the tribe’s history found on one of the hyperlinks on the homepage. Historical or present cultural practices and traditions are not prevalent on either homepages. Social media is a primary element for the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino, including Facebook, Twitter, and an RSS feed. The tribe’s presence on social media sites is rather limited. Using a content analysis of tribal and



casino websites and social media to study online messages, this study focuses on cultural communication. Specifically, how do the Quinaults talk about culture in separate gaming and tribal contexts, both to internal and external audiences? This picture depicts the deficiency of social media use by the

tribe. The last tweet was December 2011. The tweet did not note an upcoming culture event or anything related to Quinault traditions. These pictures represent the fact that tribal culture is not prevalent in the casino. Online presence is extremely limited for the Quinault Indian Nation, but for the Casino it is widespread. There is a commonality of this seen throughout my fellow Washington team’s tribes and casinos. There are limited mentions of the casino on the tribes’



websites, which was striking. It is difficult as an outsider looking in to define another group of people’s culture. Not all tribal cultures are the same; even through assimilation all tribes retain their own practice, traditions, and values. Tribal Gaming in modern day for the Quinault people seems not to focus on traditional

gaming practices, but rather focusing on operating in the 21st century to maintain a large financial income. The revenue from the casino allows for the improvement of living conditions

for people within the community or just in other ways to help the members of the community. Indigenous cultures seem to be vanishing in tribal gaming practices. Traditional gaming does not take place at the casino, but do take place at the tribe's place of gathering. I might need to take into consideration that these traditional games are sacred or religious and are only practiced in private environments. Throughout the casino are excerpts of tribal history and culture and visitors are also encouraged to visit the Quinault museum, which is in the Quinault Cultural Center located in Taholah. This past 2013 summer, Quinault Indian Nation hosted Canoe Journey, which is a cultural tradition of Washington and Canadian tribes to paddle the traditional canoes. The Quinault homeland is the cradle of Quinault culture.

Policy & Politics: Quinault Gaming Faces Oppression by Legalities

The United States finds ways to implement laws and procedures that forces American Indians to waive their sovereign immunity to an extent, especially in regards to casino operations. The Quinault Indian Nation and the casino combined is one of the largest employers in Grays Harbor County. The Quinault Beach Resort & Casino has become a way for the Quinault Nation to grow economically, financially, and even more independently. It has allowed for the Quinault to fund tribal government programs, provide general welfare of the community members, donate to charitable organizations, and fund for operation of local government agencies. Gaming revenue is used to improve its infrastructure.

“The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act passed in 1988 has led to conflicts of jurisdiction between the tribes and the states (McCulloch, 1994)”. As tribes became even more autonomous, states began to intervene to try and gain some control. While at times overstepping their boundaries, the states did what they could but did not quite succeed.

“Indians in Florida and California began to raise revenue by offering bingo with larger prizes than were allowed under the state law. The state threatened to sue if the tribes did not stop their gaming” (Mullis, 2000).

As soon as the tribes show that they are more than competent enough to self-govern and be independent, the US government feels the need to step in. The Oneida Tribe of Indians v State of Wisconsin was a good example of the state’s overstepping boundaries. They have no jurisdiction when the gaming is being done on Indian land, but they try and interfere regardless of past treaties. This is one of the ways in which American Indians still face oppression. Even after the IGRA had been passed the government found a way to reveal their dominance by having some control over tribal gaming. “States lobbied for the legislation in an effort to establish control over tribal gaming (Anders, 1998)”. Since the states did not have the power or authority to stop the tribes from closing down their operations they went to a higher power, the federal government, which led to the IGRA being passed along with other laws and regulations in regards to tribal gaming. These laws were limited, but still overreaching in a sense.

In 1996, Indian gaming exceeded \$5 billion, accounting for approximately 10 percent of total U.S. gambling revenue. “Currently, 124 out of 557 federally recognized tribes operate gaming facilities (Anders, 1998)”. Casinos became a trend amongst tribes to have and operate. It was a clever move; they had overcome adversity and found a way to improve their tribal economy amongst other things. “For 124 Indian tribes, casino gaming has become an important source of revenue as a result of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (Anders, 1998)”. Tribal gaming has allowed for there to be an economic growth within the tribe. Not only that, higher education is a possibility for those who wish to pursue it. There is even money allocated to charitable organizations, so not only does tribe help their people, but also others outside the tribe. Some might argue that it is within the tribal-state compact and they are legally bound to do so, but they

must not forget, both parties agree upon the compact so the tribe could have declined. Since Class III gaming has brought in massive revenue for tribes, the government felt that there should be operational requirements. The requirements include, limited hours of operation, licenses, certifications, monitoring, and access to records. Within the tribal-state compact between the Quinault Indian Nation and Washington state it mentioned that: 1) the maximum number of hours of operation could not exceed 112hrs/week and after six months could move up 140/hrs. a week 2) all gaming employees shall be licensed by Tribal Gaming Commission and Certified by State 3) the state should have access to tribal gaming operations. These are just a few of the regulations set forth in the compact.

States design these compacts purposely to reap the benefits. By forcing these regulations on tribes, it enables the states to obtain some proportion of money because the tribe's revenue

J. Fees for State Certification. Fees shall be as follows:

Gaming Employee (in-state)	
Initial Certification	\$ 200.00
Gaming Employee (out-of-state)	
Initial Certification	\$ 250.00
Gaming Employee - Renewal	\$ 125.00
Management Entities, Suppliers, Manufacturers or Financiers (in-state)	
Initial Certification	\$1500.00
Management Entities, Suppliers, Manufacturers or Financiers (out-of-state)	
Initial Certification	\$5000.00
Management Entities, Suppliers, Manufacturers or Financiers	
Renewal	\$ 500.00

was beginning to succeed that states. This chart exemplifies the ways in which states benefited from intervening. "The Nation shall reimburse the State Agency for all reasonable costs and expenses actually incurred by State Gaming Agency in

carrying out its responsibilities as authorized under the provisions of this contract”(Quinault Indian Nation, 2013). The state is the one that inquired about monitoring the tribal gaming so it is unnecessary for the tribe to pay for their intervening. The fees for certifications and licenses are just a way for the state to make money off the tribes. Within the Quinault Indian Nation and Washington State Compact, there is a 2% Net Sales Tax that is allotted for the impact on local communities, included is medical services as an example. The state must get money wherever possible. Quinault Indian Nation works with other tribes in Washington State to overcome some of the legal barriers they otherwise would not succeed. American Indians are sovereign nations, by law they should be able to practice gaming however they choose, but yet again the U.S. government must overreach. Through court cases and treaties, it was established that tribes had the rights as sovereign nations to conduct gaming on Indian lands. This meant that states had no authority to regulate gaming on Indian lands. Although tribes are autonomous, the federal government sought out to balance Native American legal rights with the interest of the states. Even though it was seen by the government that tribes were able to operate on their own, there was the National Indian Gaming Commission established to oversee tribal gaming. Tribes are limited by these compacts between the state and nation that somewhat waive their sovereign immunity. It is evident that the talk about all American Indians being greedy, receiving money from their tribes for just being Indian, and being self-indulgent are all socially constructed myths.

Economics: Myths and Misunderstandings of the Quinault Indian Nation Gaming

Although the Quinault Indian Nation is mandated by the IGRA to use revenue to benefit the Quinault people, they also assist and donate to local communities. Many non-Indians seem unaware of the positivity of casinos and how they do not primarily help Indians, but also non-Indians as well. The Quinault Indian Nation has aggregate resources. The Quinault Indian Nation

opened the Quinault Indian Beach Resort and Casino in the year 2000. The Quinault Indian Nation tried to establish a business that would bring in revenue for the casino so that the community could benefit economically and so they could also become even more self-sufficient so that there was no need to depend on the United States Government for any reason.

“There are plenty of advantages of working with the Quinault, these include, working with a mature business organization, quality aggregate product, largest undeveloped sand and gravel resource on the West Coast, and Tribal Tax Advantages (Quinault Indian Nation)”.

The Quinault people are business oriented. The Nation works to bring economic development to their people, and to non-Indians as well.

“The Nation operate several enterprises: Land and Time (to manage the extraordinary timber production operation on the reservation), Quinault Pride Seafood (which produces a variety of products including Salmon, Dungeness crab, Halibut, and Black Cod), as well as Quinault Beach Resort, and the Mercantile, all of which promote the growth and develop the potential of the reservation (Quinault Indian Nation)”.

The Quinault Indian Nation generates massive revenue, and those non-Indians who are uneducated and quick to generate myths that are believed and accepted by society without even becoming knowledgeable of the facts, overlook the positive impacts that the Nation’s revenue and generosity has on other business or organizations. What are the common myths and misunderstandings about Indian Nation governmental gaming? The most common myths and misunderstanding from non-Indians are: 1) Indians do not pay taxes 2) Indian Nations are rich because of casinos 3) Tribal members receive per capita 4) Indian culture is being destroyed by gaming (Mullis, 2000). All these myths are just that, myths. Indian Nations pay federal income tax, property taxes, and unemployment insurance, among others. Some Indian reservations are in poverty, and are some of the lowest income communities. Only some tribes give away per capita and that must be approved with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is extremely far reaching for a non-Indian to make an assumption about Indian culture being destroyed. That is something only

and Indian or Indian community can know for a fact. The CEO of the Quinault Nation informed me that Quinault tribal members do not receive per capita.

Tribal use of revenues is used primarily for improving life for tribal members, diversifying assets, and building sustainable communities. The revenue used to improve life for tribal members includes things such as health clinics, elder housing, education, and job training. Diversifying assets makes for good business by bringing in different groups of people by attracting a variety consumers based on their likings. Building sustainable communities involves money that goes into communities and charitable organizations (police stations, roads, fires stations, freeway access, health clinics, clean water).

The Quinault Beach Resort and Casino brings in a substantial amount of revenue that not only benefits the Indians, but also the non-Indians. The revenue funds tribal government and provides general welfare of Quinault people. The revenue is also donated to charitable organizations, community and local agencies, Gray's Harbor Sheriff's Office, and these are just a select few. But, with all the good it does, there are still false notions told by non-Indians that there are crime and moral decline, sleaze and filth surrounding casinos, and internal corruption. In the article, "As Native American Casinos Proliferate, the Social Costs of the Gambling Boon are Ignored", the author ties casinos to street crime, DUI related incidents, home robberies, mail theft, suicide, bankruptcy, and divorce (Walker, 2013)". The main concern brought on by non-Indian community is the idea that with casinos there is crime. All Indian Nation governmental gaming is mandated by the IGRA, but the Nation must agree with the terms and conditions. There are percentages of earnings that are designated to certain laid out areas, such as economic development, workforce development, business development, infrastructure development, collaborative partnerships, charitable organizations, and state economy. What the government

and community do not understand is that Nation governmental gaming benefits not just Indians, but not Indians as well. Without these casinos, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and health rates would rapidly decrease. “With Indian nation governmental gaming, everyone wins” (Mullis, 2000). To some extent I find this statement true. American Indians still have to get up some of their sovereignty to have casinos up and functioning. It is unnecessary for the federal government, state government, or local communities to have such outrageous accusations and concerns about the way in which tribal revenues are dispersed. American Indians found a way to economically benefit their communities while also giving back to the general public. The Quinault Indian Nation is the largest employer within Grays Harbor County. All Washington state tribal government are investing in public safety, culture, education, jobs, environment, and communities. Many of the tribes work together to accomplish these goals.

Conclusion

The Quinault Indian Nation and the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino is just one of many Nations and Casinos that continue their resistance and fight to preserve their rights as sovereign nations, while at times forced to give up some of that sovereign immunity for the progression of their businesses. “We remember our past while employing modern principles in a marriage that will bring hope and promise to our people now and in the future” (Sampson, 2013). Future scholars might study how tribes and casinos find ways to become less mandated to waive their sovereign immunity in order to run a successful and peaceful business without so much intervening of the US government.

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