

### Pacific Sámi Searvi

#### 2025 Heritage Sustained Support

**Application Contact**

Mary Brandt, President

**Mailing City** Seattle

**Organization Director**

Mary Brandt, President, Board of Directors

**Council District** 6

**Website**

[www.pacificsamisearvi.org](http://www.pacificsamisearvi.org)

**Incorporated** 01/25/2018

**Mission**

"honoring, cultivating, and expanding understanding of Sámi culture, heritage, and contemporary issues"

**Short Organization Description**

PSS honors and supports the Indigenous Sámi of Scandinavia and strives to build connection and community in the Sámi diaspora and to the homeland.

**Community**

The Sámi are the Indigenous people of Europe. Their homeland, Sápmi, spreads across northern Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kolt peninsula of Russia. Culture is the most powerful conveyor of identity. Through rituals of birth, life and death, celebrations, food, craft and the daily skills of survival, we come to know who we are and form the bonds of human relationship. Like many Indigenous peoples, the Sámi conveyance of culture was disrupted by colonialization, border disputes, residential schools, loss of language, destruction of habitat and livelihood. Many Sámi emigrated in the last 100+ years, fleeing persecution that continues to this day. Cultural identity was often left at the border as immigrants assimilated. This left their descendants, the Sámi diaspora, to discover their history and reconnect to their relatives and their heritage.

Our audience is comprised of the diaspora within our membership in King County, on Turtle Island (North America) and in Sápmi:

- individuals who know their heritage, can trace their ancestry, know their families in Sápmi;
- individuals who are seeking to find their roots, have reason to believe they are Sámi, may possess a cultural object (a letter, article of clothing, or craft item) and believe their birth right is to learn who they are;
- Sámi who reside in Sápmi and wish to build connection to this large group of Sámi descendants here; and
- anyone who supports our mission, "to honor, cultivate, and expand understanding of Sámi culture, heritage and contemporary issues."

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We have formed partnerships with organizations that share a goal of cultural understanding, including:

- Those of Scandinavian heritage who attend shared Sámi programming: exhibitions, concerts, book readings, presentations of craft, and films at National Nordic Museum, The Swedish Club, Sons of Norway, and other similar institutions.

We collaborate with institutions of higher education sharing our resources while accessing their research and expertise:

- Graduate and undergraduate students, professors of world music, language, history, anthropology and Indigenous studies at University of Washington, Pacific Lutheran University, The Evergreen State College.

We have joined with the local Indigenous community, coordinating a cultural exchange between Sámi duodjars and Coast Salish weavers. Board members have represented PSS in the Salmon Jump, paddling with the Kootenai Tribes, and as guests of the Tribal Canoe Journey. Another member presented at the 2024 international meeting of the North American and Indigenous Studies Association in Bodø, Norway, her topic the Sámi American diaspora and PSS.

And finally, our audience are those who follow us through digital media: Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Discord.

We maintain a website featuring a comprehensive presentation of information about the Sámi for English speakers; our site frequently appears in top results when searching for topics related to the Sámi in English. Others read our newsletter and essays or watch videos.

We believe our podcast series "Rájehis Sápmi" (Borderless Sápmi) is the only podcast addressing issues of the Sámi diaspora. Freely available to the world, it was conceived in and is directed from King County and often features local voices.

### **Programming**

The face-to-face interaction between an elder or master of craft holds a power that transcends barriers of language; it creates a transmission of knowledge through presence and interaction, be it the vocalization of a yoik or the hands of the weaver demonstrating the movement of yarn through the warp of an indigenous loom. Many in our audience may never have the opportunity to visit Sápmi, but these two programs were attended by hundreds and achieved the following goals:

Deepening roots of personal connection in Sápmi.

Expanding community partnerships, finding new ways to create content.

Creating new revenue sources through sponsorships and individual donors.

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Growing our audience in diversity and number. Creating programming with cross-generational appeal, infants to elders.

Reciprocity, an emphasis on cultural exchange.

### Sounds of Sápmi in Seattle

The week long, multiple venue event featured Áillos, master of yoik, musician, actor, poet, and respected elder culture-bearer. Yoik (also spelled joik) is the ancient vocal, musical form of the Sámi. Once used to call the wild reindeer and celebrate and honor the natural world as well as specific humans and events important to them, it has remained relevant, adapting to modern musical forms. Áillos teaches that yoik is the most basic of human expression; it holds the moment before creation and reveals the essence of persons, objects or landscape. To paraphrase him, "one does not yoik about, one yoiks what is." Workshops were held at the National Nordic Museum, University of Washington and Camp Long. The highlight of the week was the concert "Interplay with Áillos." His performance with four Sámi-American classical musicians crossed geographic and stylistic borders, melding cultures through arranged and improv pieces. At the finale, the audience exploded into applause, expressing surprise at the mix of classical with Indigenous forms. Days later, the same joyful wonder arrived as children, parents and grandparents yoiked, rattled and drummed around a campfire into the night.

### Sámi Plant and Natural Handicrafts Collective: A Cultural Exchange

This in-person, multi-week cultural event was a collaboration between PSS, four Sámi textile artists, the Coast Salish Weavers, s'g'wig'wi?altxw: House of Welcome at The Evergreen State College and the Center for Climate Justice at The Evergreen State College.

For two weeks Sámi and Coast Salish artisans exchanged ideas, skills, craft and materials. The Sámi could not bring the natural materials they work with and spent time foraging locally, finding replacements, noting similarities and differences. PSS and Salish tribe members were invited to be a part of the exchange. Classes included use of native plant materials to dye yarn, weaving with roots and bark and working with reindeer leather. The Cultural Exchange culminated in a day long event on climate change and its effect on land and culture, including duodji (craft).

We are proud of the deepening of cultural bonds, organizational growth and the recent event at NNM inspired by and in response to our programming. In April 2024, Áillos returned Seattle to perform Joiggus, a history of yoik, with the full Sami National Theater company.

### Management

Founded in 2012 by a handful of people sharing a goal of discovering their heritage, for years the group met informally, accessing programming already available locally or online. Then we began to strive for goals that required the scaffolding of administration beneath

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us. Today we are a nonprofit corporation with tax exempt status meeting local, state and federal requirements, and we are one of the leading English-language sources making information and programming available online as well as in person. This growth has left us at a critical juncture.

We continue to work towards fulfilling our programming goals. We have maximized the resources of our partnerships, and have garnered the support of both the local community and many individuals and organizations in Sápmi. To allow our eight board members to more effectively focus on the functions they have the greatest interest in, we recently created three board committees or Lavvus\*: Advisory Lavvu; Governance Lavvu; and Events, Programming, and Membership Lavvu. This has decreased the number and length of meetings that each member must attend and also allows the committees more freedom of function. Total revenues have grown from \$2K in 2021 to \$28K in 2023. Our in-person attendance grew to 1,000 participants last year, which was thrilling and rewarding. However, success has consequences, and we are struggling with the administrative burden of growth.

The time needed to maintain the organization has increased beyond the capacity of a volunteer working board. We are seeking ways to provide administrative support to the board, to allow them to focus on PSS's mission. It is crucial that we locate funds for administrative services, or an arrangement with an umbrella nonprofit, to keep the board's energy available and thriving.

Sustainable Practice Goals for 2023:

- to fund and hire a part-time administrative assistant to handle the time-consuming tasks of record keeping, maintaining social media platforms and our website, organizing details of events and assistance with grant writing and fundraising;
- to fully implement Microsoft Teams to streamline communication between board members and committees and keep the calendar etc;
- to seek internships from local institutions of higher learning to help facilitate our programming goals;
- to create a fully functioning volunteer committee; and
- to utilize the Advisory Board, comprised of Sámi masters and local community experts, in the recruitment and training of new board members and maintain the succession of leadership.

Our partners at NNM, The Swedish Club, PLU and UW have given in-kind support including venues with staff, marketing, hospitality services, and access to audience. We could not have achieved programming success without them. They have advised us to move forward in hiring staff, stating it is the next step in the growth of a nonprofit.

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\*The lavvu is the portable shelter of the Sámi. It is hardy, flexible, able to be erected or struck quickly depending on the variable conditions of the tundra. It serves as a place of community with hearth and fire at its center.

### Future

In 2025 PSS will continue to host signature events. At the Annual Meeting, through the website and social media, we receive multiple requests for more cultural content. These are evaluated and voted on at the Annual Board Retreat. Language, yoik and duodji are always top requests.

Programming for 2025 includes:

The Sámi Film Festival with National Nordic Museum and Scandia House in New York, presented online and in person. Curated by a Sámi director, it addresses topics relevant to modern Sámi: changes in climate, reindeer husbandry, abuse, emigration, etc. In 2024 the in-person festival expanded to include a sold-out Friday night showing, both days averaged 200 movie-goers.

Sámi National Day Celebration honoring Sámi sovereignty and the creation of the Sámi Parliament.

Multiple learning circles on duodji (craft): band weaving, wood carving, reindeer leather work, Sámi knitting.

New episodes of our podcast series "Rájehis Sápmi." Native Sámi speaker Maien Gaup Sundberg, a PSS member and Norwegian Sámi culture bearer, will produce 1-3 podcasts on the vitality of Indigenous languages. University of Washington Department of Scandinavian Studies with Department of Arctic Studies has also invited us to exchange podcasts to share relevant content and audience.

Áillos's visit last year fostered a deep interest in yoik. Website and social media requests frequently ask for a series of classes, a path to proficiency. Áillos has offered to teach a six-week course of two-hour weekly classes. Depending on the response, it can be expanded. This could become a regular offering, with sections divided into beginning, intermediate and advanced.

We are prioritizing language classes in 2025. We receive 2-3 emails a month inquiring about Sámi language learning. Language defines a culture, makes meaning of daily life and is unique to landscape, livelihood, cosmology, myth and ritual. The Sámi language group is no different, boasting hundreds of words to describe reindeer and the quality of snow. There are a variety of Sámi languages, distinct enough to be classifiable as separate languages rather than dialects of a single language. Some have gone extinct, and others are hovering on the edge of that precipice. North Sámi, spoken in northern Norway and Sweden, has the largest number of speakers, between 20-30,000. A member fluent in North Sámi held a class last year and created a few online, interactive materials, again members wanted more.

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We are excited to partner with the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the UW, which is sponsoring a paid internship for PSS in Fall 2024 through Spring 2025. The intern is a native North Sámi speaker and UW graduate student, who, under the direction of an expert North Sámi teacher in Alta, Norway, will create a curriculum and rubric for a beginning language class for PSS. We are charting unknown territory and are grateful to UW for supporting our language goals.

The Coast Salish Weavers Association and PSS are planning another day of cultural exchange, to share the form and style of our weaving traditions.

### **Economic Impact**

The economic impact of PSS, a cultural organization headquartered in King County whose membership is spread across North America and Europe is difficult to quantify, yet it is the uniqueness of the Sámi population and its historical significance regionally that draws an audience here and abroad. During the 1890's, Sámi reindeer herders were recruited to Alaska to teach Native Alaskan tribes reindeer husbandry. Their travel route passed through Seattle. Upon completion of their service, many chose to remain in Alaska or settled here and along the coasts of WA and OR. Some of those descendants are our members and travel to King County to attend our functions.

Economic impact is generated through PSS events and programming. Tourist dollars spent while visiting King County, include lodging, food and transportation; also the dollars spent on additional local attractions: museum admissions, the ferris wheel, tickets to attend major league sports or musical concerts. The Sámi Film Festival, The Sounds of Sápmi in Seattle, Sámi Plant and Natural Handicrafts Collective, drew people from across the US: Alaska, California, Oregon, Minnesota, Idaho and Virginia Visitors arrived to participate in Sámi culture but stayed for the beauty and diverse experiences Seattle offers.

The Sámi artisans, weavers, duojarers, musicians, authors and film directors often come for a longer timeframe, teach or take classes at local universities and spend money on multiple-day lodging, buy food, use transit, visit historical sites, travel the region and purchase souvenirs.

PSS spends money leasing venues when necessary, renting performance equipment, serving food, buying insurance and providing the materials for arts and duodji craft.

Using the Economic Prosperity 6 - AEP6 | Calculator, the \$22,500 spent by PSS in 2023 generated additional spending of \$41,000 by our audience and patrons. Many of those goods and services also generated tax dollars increasing our economic impact

Providing access to Sámi culture, an underexposed but historically significant population that helped shape King County and the Seattle region, also has economic impact. We offer

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memberships or programming at below market value, on a sliding fee scale or at no cost. Classes by internationally renowned yoik artist Áillos can cost \$200-400/day. We offered ours at \$25/day or for free. A group of young adults who follow PSS on Discord came to Camp Long to “check Áillos out.” They weren’t registered, nor had they paid, but we welcomed them and made space in the circle. We are grateful for the 4Culture funding that allows us to offer participation to all who are interested.

### Support Materials

*Support materials may include lists of Board of Directors/Commissioners, Staff, and/or Events in addition to other attachments.*

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS/COMMISSIONERS

The PSS Board of Directors is comprised of volunteers who commit to meeting once a month and to chairing or co-chairing a standing committee: The Board holds elections every three years (or as needed) based on term dates of current members. PSS Board members serve a three-year term. Members are allowed to serve two consecutive terms before reaching the term limit; they may return to Board service after one term off.

#### Mary Brandt, Board President

Current Board Service Second Term: Jan 2024 – Dec 2026. Current President Term: Jan 2022 – Present.

Mary is a nonprofit management professional and has worked as the Executive Director of the Children's Museum of Spokane and the Exhibits Director of Mobius A Children's Museum. She is skilled in all aspects of outreach and community building, public speaking, grant writing and grant management, event planning, project development, and more. She holds a BS from Washington State University and resides in Seattle and Spokane.

#### Joelle Pfeiffer, Board Vice President

Current Board Service Second Term: Jan 2024 – Dec 2026. Current Vice President Term: Jan 2023 – Present

Joelle has more than 25 years of experience with non-profits and cross sector consulting in HR, organization development and organization effectiveness. She currently serves as the Chief Human Resources Officer for Landesa. Joelle holds a Master's in Org Development & Leadership from Seattle University and resides on Camano Island.

#### Ariel Hansen, Board Secretary

Current Board Service Term: Feb 2024-Dec 2026 Current Secretary Term: Feb 2024 - Present.

Ariel is a fifth-generation Pacific Northwesterner. She has served on the board almost since joining PSS in 2018, including several terms as secretary and a partial term as president. She is a professional writer and editor with two decades of experience in journalism. She holds a BA from Haverford College and a Master's in Science Writing from Johns Hopkins University, and resides in unincorporated King County.

#### Ryan Monahan-Sundberg, Board Treasurer.

Current Board Service Term: March 2023 – Dec 2025. Current Treasurer Term: Jan 2022 – Present.

Ryan is a Senior Network Administrator who specializes in network architecture, technology deployment, and optimizing hardware and software solutions. He holds an MBA from Seattle University and resides in Seattle.



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Meredith Brooks Current Board Member

Service Second Term Jan 2024 – Dec 2026.

Meredith is a professional development strategies and natural resources consultant with experience in non-profit management, grant and technical writing, education, and Indigenous advocacy. She owns her own consultancy and is affiliated with several natural resource organizations on the Pacific west coast and across the Pacific Islands. She holds BAs from USC and resides on the Olympic Peninsula.

Amy Swanson King, Current Board Member

Service Second Term: Jan 2024 – Dec 2026

Amy is a professional editor, copy editor, writer and proofreader, as well as an accomplished classical musician. She has been a Searvi member since 2013 and has served two previous terms on the Board, including as President, Treasurer, and Secretary. She holds several degrees including 3 Bachelors' from UW and a Masters from Seattle University, and resides in Seattle.

Ellen Hillborn, Current Board Member

Board Service Term: June 2023-December 2025.

Ellen is a Chief Park Ranger who designs and runs educational programs, is in charge of public outreach to media outlets and educational institutions, and writes grants for funding projects at the park. She has a B.S. from the University of Minnesota and resides in Virginia.

Indie Audra O'Sidhe, Current Board Member

Board Service Second Term: Jan 2024– Dec 2026.

Indie is an anthropology professional with experience in Historic Preservation, Cultural Resource Management, and Indigenous Advocacy. She holds a Bachelors from Oregon State University and resides on Whidbey Island.

### STAFF

PSS has no paid staff

### EVENTS

Event title, short description if not evident from the event title, date, location if different from organization's main location, attendance

2022

- June 6: Rájehis Sápmi podcast released Guest: Aillos (part 1) Online
- June 25: Na Nu festival, Day 1 In-person celebration of Sámi culture: genealogy, food, joik and craft Camp Long, Seattle Attendance 40
- June 26: Na Nu festival, day 2 Online Zoom classes from Sámi elders and experts in Sápmi on yoik, gakti, drum making, horn hats and history. Attendance 50

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- July 7: Rájehis Sápmi podcast released Guest: Áillos (part 2) Online
- Oct. 26: Release of video tour of Sámi Pavilion at the Arte Biennale Venice, Italy. Hosted by Maïen Gaup Online
- Dec. 6: Learning circle - how to joik the Sámi National Anthem Online Zoom Attendance 10
- Dec. 9: Opening "Mygration", an exhibition of Sámi immigration. National Nordic Museum. Seattle December 2022 to March 2023 Co-sponsors with NNM Opening attendance-300, Exhibition attendance-

### 2023

- Feb. 5: Streaming gameplay: "Skábma: Snowfall" A game of Sámi culture with interaction and explanation by the creators. Online Attendance 20
- Feb. 6: Sámi National Day Celebration Scandinavian Cultural Center, Pacific Lutheran University 20
- Feb. 9-12: Sámi Film Fest (with Scandinavia House and National Nordic Museum). In-person festival at the National Nordic Museum, with guest curator Katja Gauriloff: Feb. 11 Attendance 400 Streaming online: Feb. 9-12
- Feb. 25: Sámi language learning circle Online: Zoom Host: Member Petter-Anne Hutchings Attendance 15
- March 13: Presentation by Barbara Sjöholm on her book From Lapland to Sapmi National Nordic Museum, Seattle Attendance 200
- March 17: Rájehis Sápmi podcast released Season 2 Episode 1 Guest: Ann-Helen Laestadius Online
- March 31: Sámi rapper Slincraze Concert National Nordic Museum, Seattle Attendance 40
- May 17: Marched in Syttende Mai Parade, Seattle Member participants 8
- Aug. 7-9: Sámi Plant and Natural Handicrafts Collective: In-person cultural exchange between 4 Sámi textile artists from Sápmi and the Coast Salish Weavers. Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA Attendance 50
- Aug. 18: Arctic Highways exhibit opens National Nordic Museum, Seattle Attendance 300
- Sept. 6: Rájehis Sápmi podcast release Season 2 Episode 2. Guests: Marjaana Auranen and Sahin Sengiz, creators of the Sámi video game "Skábma - Snowfall"
- Sept. 10: Full day joik class with Áillos National Nordic Museum, Seattle Attendance 30
- Sept. 10: Interplay with Áillos: concert with classical musicians National Nordic Museum, Seattle Attendance 250
- Sept. 15: Joik workshop with Áillos Camp Long, Seattle Attendance 30
- Sept. 16: Sounds of Sápmi - the Final Note: potluck and gathering with Áillos Camp Long, Seattle Attendance 50
- Dec. 3: Hanna Pylvainen speaks about her novel The End of Drum-Time National Nordic Museum

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2024

- Feb. 5: Talk with authors Linnea Axelsson (AEdnan), Sasha LaPointe (Rose Quartz) and PSS member Amy King Elliott Bay Book Company, Seattle Attendance 75
- Feb. 6: Sámi National Day Celebration Swedish Club, Seattle Attendance 30
- Feb. 9-10: Sámi Film Fest in partnership with National Nordic Museum Majestic Bay Theatre, Seattle Attendance 400
- April 12-13: Beaivváš - Sami National Theatre presents Juoiggas, the story of yoik National Nordic Museum, Seattle Attendance 400
- May 16: Exhibit opening: "The Sámi: The Indigenous People of Northern Europe"
  - o Swedish Club, Seattle Opening presentation Attendance 25
- June 26: Release of Crossing North podcast episode in partnership with University of Washington Guests: Barbara Sjöholm and Amy Swanson King Online
- July 11-14: Special reporting from Riddu Riddu International Indigenous Festival Kafjord, Norway
- July 28: Leather keychains learning circle Camp Long, Seattle Attendance 15
- Aug. 17: Bandweaving learning circle Camp Long, Seattle Attendance Attendance 5