August 8, 2023

Mayor Bruce Harrell
600 4th Ave
Seattle, WA
Via email to bruce.harrell@seattle.gov

RE: URGENT—Honor the Snoqualmie Tribe’s request to preserve the Culturally Modified Tree in Wedgwood

Dear Mayor Harrell:

Birds Connect Seattle is an environmental conservation organization that advocates and organizes for cities where people and birds thrive. Seattle’s urban forest is critical habitat for birds and decreased canopy has profound environmental-justice implications in the face of rising temperatures due to climate change. On behalf of our community of more than 4,000 local members, we urge you to preserve the Western Redcedar at 3849 NE 88th St in Wedgwood as soon as possible.

The tree is a landmark and a living piece of history. The Snoqualmie Tribe and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation recognize the tree as Culturally Modified. Its boughs were shaped by the first peoples of Seattle as a marker to guide their travels.

Without your help, this tree will be destroyed. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections approved a permit to remove this tree. At the time of permit issuance, the fact of its cultural modification was not known.

This discovery of its archeological and cultural significance is a substantial change in circumstances. The Snoqualmie Tribe has since called on the City to revoke the removal permit and to preserve the tree. We ask you to honor the Tribe’s request.

Provisions in some portions of the Seattle Municipal Code authorize departments to suspend or revoke permits based on substantial changes in condition (e.g., SMC 25.09.080.F) or on the basis of inaccurate information (e.g., SMC 22.808.090). The City should reserve the right to revoke tree removal permits on these bases as well.

Please, honor the Snoqualmie Tribe’s request to preserve the Culturally Modified Tree in Wedgwood.

Sincerely,

Claire Catania
Executive Director

Joshua Morris
Urban Conservation Manager