

čə'q^w burn

Chu kenntch
Tchk-a-nuts
Chuckanut
x^wčəq^wənəč

The Bay With The Burn

Linguist Wayne Suttles noted the name “Chuckanut” (spelled many ways by the first white writers) contains Coast Salish references to a forest fire and a bay. Like the extensive bards or meadows formerly widespread on islands like Orcas and San Juan, the largely unwooded west face of Chuckanut was visible for miles by water. It was a prominent landmark and a useful reference feature with a readily shared name used far and wide. There would have been other, more local names for various Chuckanut places and landforms too, but their speakers are gone. Like meadow lands across North America, the bards are disappearing with changes in the use and control of fire by humans and the loss of grazing animals like elk. This ca. 1912 photo shows Douglas-firs closing old openings that were likely maintained for generations by native people, who acted to encourage specific patterns of game movement and vegetation for human use.