



Courtesy photo by John Harrington Photography

Charles Wilkinson (above left) leads a discussion on the Siletz Tribal history book, *The People Are Dancing Again*, published in November 2010.

Courtesy photos by Tina Retasket

Siletz dancers Bud Lane, Halli Skauge, Clarinda Black, Tim Stuart, Tiffany Stuart and Kathy Robinson (above) gather with a group of visitors from the Amazonian region of eastern Colombia at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.



A group of dancers from Colombia demonstrate a welcome dance for visitors to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C.

## North-South Dialogue at Colombia Program

by Emilienne Ireland, Research Collaborator, NMNH (the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History); originally posted July 11, 2011, on the Smithsonian Folklife Festival website – [festival.si.edu/2011/north-south-dialogue-at-colombia-program/](http://festival.si.edu/2011/north-south-dialogue-at-colombia-program/)

Participants in the Colombia program include ritual leaders, musicians, weavers, potters, carvers and other skilled tradition bearers from the Amazonian region on the eastern side of Colombia. While visitors during the first eight days of the Festival conversed with the diverse participants and admired the many traditions being shared, visitors on July 10 were privileged to witness an unplanned and extraordinary event that, for many, will not be forgotten.

Just before 2 p.m., 10 dancers from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon entered the festival grounds, where 10 dancers from indigenous Amazonian communities in Colombia, including the Yucuna, Matapí, Uitoto, Andoque and Nonuya, awaited them. The two groups lined up facing one another

and took turns formally dancing their welcome and their joy at the encounter.

The Amazonian dancers joined together in close formation and moved as a group while dancing. Then the men played a flute song. At last, Uldarico Matapí Yucuna, a Matapí elder and shaman who hails from a long line of shamans, took the microphone and gave a formal welcome on behalf of the Colombians, speaking in Spanish: "From this day forward, let our peoples be together and let us never be separated again." To this, Siletz Elder and ritual leader Bud Lane responded with deep appreciation for both the dance and the words, concluding, "Welcome to my country."

The Siletz dancers performed both men's and women's dances, with the bells and hollow beads of their regalia creating music as they moved. At the conclusion of the dance, the Siletz Elder wordlessly offered his own dance drum to the Amazonian Elder, who a few moments later, returned the gesture, giving Bud Lane a fine shaman's stool. The Colombian Elder said the drum would be kept in the

National Museum of Colombia and displayed as a gift to all the people of that nation. Bud Lane said that the stool would likewise be kept in the Siletz museum, along with other sacred objects.

Silvia Salgado, who had been facilitating throughout this encounter, conveyed the message that the indigenous people from the other side of the mountains (the Pacific Coast of Colombia), also wished to greet their relatives from the United States, which they then did.

As it happened, the indigenous people who so movingly expressed this bond between north and south had met only a few hours before. Earlier in the day, Smithsonian Research Collaborator Emi Ireland and former Folklife Festival Curator Phil Tajitsu Nash had arranged with Festival staff and José Montaña of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) to give the indigenous Amazonian people from Colombia a brief tour of NMAI.

As the Colombian visitors entered NMAI's Great Hall, they encountered rep-

resentatives of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians from the Pacific Coast side of Oregon, who were hosting a display of their dance regalia. They met Bud Lane, Tribal Vice-Chairman of the Siletz, who is also a celebrated basket weaver and tradition bearer of Siletz culture. In 2006, he had worked with the Folklife Festival's "Carriers of Culture" program to celebrate Native basketry traditions.

The Colombian visitors expressed their admiration at the beautiful workmanship and materials of the dance regalia and asked Mr. Lane how the regalia was used. Immediately overcoming the language barrier, Mr. Lane held a dance quiver and began to intone a song by way of explanation. The Colombian visitors responded by carefully holding the same object and softly singing a short segment of one of their songs.

In a spontaneous gesture, Mr. Lane gave each of the 10 Colombian visitors a beautiful hand-made Siletz bag. One of the

Continued on next page