

SIUSLAW FOREST SEEKS DATA

Siuslaw National Forest Seeks Data on Siletz Religious Practices

The Siuslaw National Forest which manages more than one million acres in coastal Oregon is concerned that its land practices do not adversely affect religious practices of American Indians who reside in the region. The Forest Service is presently carrying out a study to ascertain traditional and continuing religious practices of the many different tribes who lived in the area from Tillamook Bay to Coos Bay.

Researching and writing this report are Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham, historian, of Lewis and Clark College, Portland; and Rick Minor and Kathryn Anne Toepel, anthropologists, of the University of Oregon, Eugene. They have made extensive use of the field notes of J. Owen Dorsey, Leo J. Frachtenberg, Melville Jacobs, Elizabeth Derr Jacobs, and John Harrington. These anthropologists worked with Siletz informants in the period between 1885 and 1935.

Of particular interest to the researchers is information known by present tribal members about sites where religious practices were carried out, especially if these sites were on or closely adjacent to Forest lands. The types of such activities might have included: spirit quests, shaman preparation observances, sites of 'first salmon' ceremonies, or the locations of the special dances such as those associated with the Warm House religion.

The researchers have learned about the location of an important site near Cape Perpetua where the Siuslaw once found red ochre paint with which they painted their faces in some of their ceremonies.

If tribal members are able to identify any sites they would be relevant to this study they are urged to report them to:

Siletz Tribal Council
Confederated Siletz Tribes
Buford Street
Siletz, Oregon

The council will then share the information which it thinks is appropriate with the researchers who will incorporate it into their report for the Forest Service.

Other aspects of this study include the writing of a general narrative history of settlement in the lands today held by the Siuslaw National Forest and pulling together all known information about the prehistoric record of this area as well. When this study is completed the Siuslaw National Forest staff will have a fuller understanding of the lands and resources which it has to administer.