

# Museum storyline to reflect tribal struggles, successes

The purpose of this storyline/interpretive plan is to provide an overall setting using the entire Warm Springs Reservation and ceded area to reflect the cultures and cultural values of the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute Tribes that have survived the on-rush of westward expansion of European influence and adaptation of those tribes to modern technology and economic forms that influence their current lives.

In final form the museum/cultural center is intended to promote, preserve and protect the tribal cultures and resources, stimulate education and research for tribal members and the public, and provide entertainment through living history demonstrations, presentation and cultural activities.

The primary goals of this storyline is to highlight the rich, colorful and sometimes tragic histories of the tribes of the Warm Springs reservation, and various attempts and methods to disintegrate their cultures and assimilate the tribal members into the predominant non-native society.

The minimum objective of this endeavor is to involve members of the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute tribes in the interpretation implementation and the ongoing operation of the museum/cultural center. This will be accomplished by inviting their participation in interpreting the following key areas:

1. Culture
2. History
3. Contemporary

This will be achieved to the satisfaction of the three tribal groups by providing separation of tribal histories, cultures and contemporary evolution as sub-sections of the key areas.

Additional objectives are:

—providing a "hands on" environment that enables residents and visitors to interact with the settings, displays and activities under monitored conditions provided by tribal member guides.

—Utilizing wayside (outdoor) exhibits, story boards, audio visual techniques and other media forms to achieve the desired results.



Over 1,600 items have been gathered for the pending museum/cultural center.

Setting aside native American involvement for the moment and dwelling on the visitor to the Warm Springs reservation, the visitor's interest should be stimulated upon entering the reservation. This is best achieved using displays that enlighten the visitor to the fact that a unique and sovereign area is being entered—that a pocket of Native American culture exists beyond the display that includes:

1. Distinct, existing Native American Cultures
2. Human resources with unique adaptability (bi-cultural existence)
3. Natural resources of incredible beauty
4. Entertaining and educational cultural activities
5. Application of modern technology in developing tribal economic bases
6. A reservation government that provides the wisdom to maintain the delicate balance between technology and culture while maintaining high levels of rapport with state and other governments.

Historical and cultural areas are key to a pleasant and rewarding visit to any reservation, but to a greater degree on the Warm Springs reservation in that many are in current use, accessible and inextricably linked to the histories and cultures of the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute.

Outdoor wayside exhibits that blend with the environment are recommended. Brief, tasteful copy will familiarize the visitors and residents with the significance of each of these areas to the tribes and tribal members and generally invite the respect of the visitor.

The industrial areas, sawmill, Kah-Nee-Ta and other recent economic development should use the wayside exhibits to emphasize the fact that the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute Tribes have achieved a high degree of economic self-sufficiency without further loss of culture and that continuous effort is being made on the part of tribal leaders to maintain a delicate balance between two major forces on the reservation, culture and technology.

A museum cannot, and should not, attempt to interpret the entire history of culture of a tribe. Nor should it attempt to appeal to the morbid curiosity of a few that find human remains, burial materials and sacred objects amusing. In fact, human remains and burial goods should be forbidden in the museum and sacred objects displayed only with specific approval of tribal leaders and elders. Any human remains presented should be returned to the grave along with any burial materials as a matter of policy. The storyline at the museum should reflect the stories of the Warm Springs Wasco and Paiute Tribes in the following four exhibit areas.

**Exhibit Area I**  
**Theme: Orientation to the Warm Springs reservation**

By the time visitors reach the museum/cultural center, they have passed through the vastness and beauty of much of the reservation.



The artifact display case Kah-Nee-Ta draws many visitors. The items displayed are from the MOIHS collection.

Additionally, they may have opted to view or read the wayside exhibit. To the native it may not be important, but to visitors it is important to know where they have been and where they are going. In short, visitor orientation is important.

#### Recommendations

Orientation is best achieved using a scale model of the reservation reflecting all points of interest, rivers, highways, population centers and other things deemed important by tribal members. Label copy could include the Indian names or terms as well as English. Personal interpretation by museum staff is preferred and will be the most effective but not always available.

Audio (utilizing Indian narrators) will compliment or substitute for personal interpretation when deemed necessary.

The area should reflect warmth, hospitality and allow maximum traffic flow to avoid congestion.

**Exhibit Area II**  
**Theme: Pre Contact Era**

#### Recommendations

Text and audio, illustration or dioramas on a small scale, a detailed map covering historic territories and origins of the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute tribes as closely as they can be identified.

Illustrations, maps and dioramas will include villages, subsistence areas where our languages were spoken; interpret Celilo Falls, trade scenes on the Columbia River and a Paiute hunting scene. It is important that the illustrations, dioramas or scanamurals and their label copy focus on the existing economy of that era and the many trade routes established with other tribes. Life was not an entirely peaceful existence, for there were tradition inter-tribal conflicts.

Selected artifacts should include fishing gear, pounding rocks, arrowheads, baskets, shells and trade items. Artifacts would be rotated or

facsimiles created to avoid further damage to fragile pieces.

Introducing the languages on the detailed map would point out their existences. They can then be acknowledged throughout the exhibit by presenting all label copy in the native languages and English.

**Exhibit Area III**  
**Theme: Contact Era**

#### Recommendations:

This exhibit area should reflect the changes and pressure brought upon the tribes of the Warm Springs reservation by the on-rush of European civilization.

The three areas of focus are exploration, trade and treaties. Exploration would deal with Lewis and Clark and others. The absolute truth of the exploration is best revealed in the documentation of explorers and supportive illustrations. Of equal important and not to be excluded is the reaction of the native population to the European. Trade brought positive changes as well as negative and items of trade became sought after, adapted, valued and quite visible.

The contact era disrupted the way of life of the Indians of Middle Oregon and culminated with the acceptance of the treaty on June 25, 1855 and the removal of the people to the reservation, and the adaptation to the reservation, life-style. Special emphasis should be placed on treaties and the executive order with visible copies on display. Historic photographs, large and small, will compliment the documents and artifacts such as trade items. All would reflect the visible change from the pre-contact era.

**Exhibit Area IV**  
**Theme: Adaptation and Survival**

#### Recommendation:

The current trends and changes from early reservation days on should include the legislative laws enacted and their effect on the tribes. Strengths of tribal leadership and government,

education, economic development, futuristic plans of the Warm Springs tribes should reflect survival and adaptation.

In addition to displays of contemporary items and illustrations and text a slide presentation would be most efficient and effective for interpreting contemporary events.

Examples of items: Contemporary baskets, beadwork, clothing. Photos of Indian Cowboys, the people, occupations, structures (office, business and homes).

Other suggestions:

An increasing number of museums are providing galleries for changing exhibits (trade fairs, historic photos,

clothing), living history demonstrations, art forms and interpreting historic and contemporary events. This provides the museum flexibility to respond to the changing needs of the people, and should include sufficient space to allow for massive exhibits and designs.

To achieve maximum capability of a museum, an amphitheatre or auditorium is worthy of consideration. It invites human involvement in the museum in the form of legend telling, creative expression, dancing, theatrical and musical performances and general meeting area.

Other suggestions include:  
traditional life styles, family life

trade and relationships with other tribes  
traditional government and village organization  
transportation systems, including introduction of the horse, trails and river transport  
influence of Coyote, Indian Doctors and tribal superstitions  
chaotic things that happened during Treaty era  
qualification and selection of spokesmen  
tie in traditions pageant or play based on tribal customs and history  
dedicate museum to our ancestors and elders  
life size teepees, wickiups, mannequin displays (diorama)

## Museum displays reviewed

As a visitor enters the lobby, he is drawn to a large sloping orientation map and aerial slide show along the railing. The viewer sees a large diorama of the village, a water fall, tools and crafts area.

#### Pre-Contact Exhibit

Moving to the right and ramping down, you will see a primitive art piece along the wall identifying the first room called "Pre Contact." This dimly-lit room will introduce the Warm Springs and Wasco tribes through a series of illustrations, copy and artifact showcases. Along the center curved wall is a painting of what the tribal village looked like hundreds of years ago. Along the outside wall is a graphic depiction of the creation story.

Entering into the cove, the viewer will enjoy a small rock diorama of a coyote interpreting some of the legends of the tribes. A showcase for artifacts will support the storyline. Across the room is an audio/fiber optic map depicting historic tribal territories of the tribes. The native language and English will narrate the storyline.

#### Contact Exhibit

Ramping down to the next room, the viewer will learn of the many social distinctions of the Tribe (men vs. women birth, adolescence, etc). At the bottom of the ramp is an introductory panel to the Paiute tribe.

Upon entering the "Contact" exhibit, and exhibit sets the theme of early white man contact. A series of angled walls will depict the contact of Lewis and Clark. Around the back side of this exhibit is an artifact pool displaying some of the positive and negative trade items the Indians received from the intruders. Along the back wall will be two murals telling of the white man's movement out West and their contact as well as their encroachment into the Indian territory.

A sloped console will deal with the "Treaty Era" highlighting some of the major events. In front of this console is a large blow-up of the Executive Orders to move to the reservation. This exhibit has a large mural depicting early reservation life.

Leaving this room and ramping down, the viewer will enjoy a wonderful view of the area as inset showcases along the wall displaying additional artifacts of this period.

#### Tools and Crafts Exhibit

Entering this large room will change the scale, mood and volume of information. The sights, smells and sounds of this area will draw the visitor through a series of life-size experiences depicting some of the tools and crafts the tribes used in daily life.

A bow hunter on horse back displayed in indigenous vegetation, hand-tied nets for trapping, a sweat lodge, food preparation and plant and root harvesting will all be authentically depicted along one side of the exhibit trail.

Along the other side, the rushing water back dropped by an acrylic mural of the area will set the stage for some of the water-related artifacts. The visitor will see salmon and drying racks, fish cutting tools, spears, a weir, dip nets, fishermen, a dugout canoe and many other tools and crafts in this area.

#### The Village

Ramping to the lowest level, the visitor will experience a series of village structures and artifacts to simulate the village. A teepee and thatched longhouse will be recreated allowing the visitor to view into the village with artifacts and a simulated fire inside. Other displays on trapping rabbits, a tribal shield and hide tanning racks will support the story.

#### Adaptation and Survival Exhibits

Ramping up to the next room, the viewer will be introduced to early-reservation life. This will help set the stage for "Adaptation and Survival Today." As the visitor enters, they will

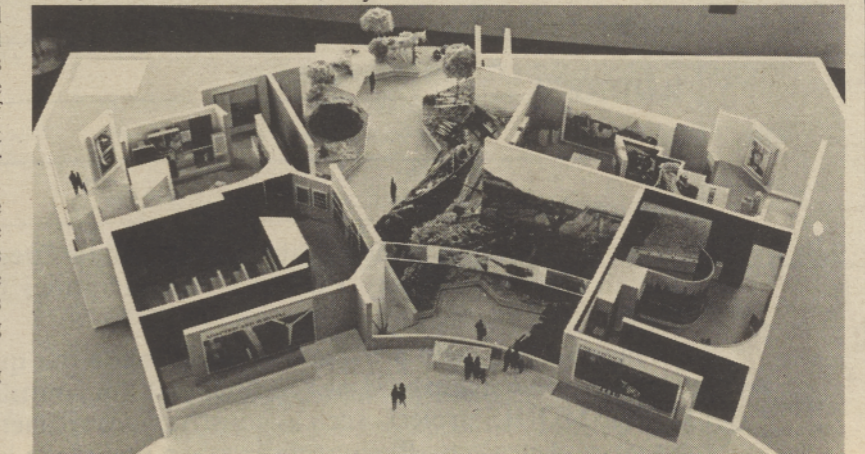
view a layered photomural of many of the tribal members in a large "family picture." Placed in front of this mural is a series of graphic cubes displaying the many levels of responsibilities of tribal government today as well as some of the leaders through the years.

The next exhibit is a multi-layered unit explaining how diverse the Tribe is today dealing with their life styles, occupations and education. This unit, along with the adjacent showcase showing many of the tribal products, its diversity and a section devoted to many of their cultural activities will show how the Tribes are actively responding to their needs. As the viewer ramps up the hallway, some future projects are detailed out as well as additional products in the inset showcases.

#### Changeable Exhibit Gallery and Theatre

A large cove will be dedicated to changeable arts and exhibits allowing a forum for fine arts displays as well as cultural activities to rotate in this space.

Adjacent to this area is a forty-seat theatre designed to pull all the information that the viewer has learned into a strong and lasting impression. This theatre will act as the common thread to weave all of the time periods and differences between tribes into understandable closing statement. Regardless if the visitor enters and first views the movie and then the exhibit, or the opposite, the experience will be richly rewarding.



Scale model of proposed museum