

Culture and Heritage moves forward

The Tribe's Culture and Heritage program is moving forward with several important goals and activities in the coming months, all of which are important to creating a strong foundation for the museum/cultural center.

The immediate goals are:

- To create a solid governing foundation in which roles and relationships are clarified and strengthened.
- To develop professionally sound policies and procedures governing all collections and functions.
- To complete the architectural and interpretive master plans and two feasibility studies.
- To implement a fund-raising plan as needed.
- To have a professionally trained program staff.

To accomplish these goals, the following activities will take place, each of which is identified by area:

Governance

- Develop charter and by-laws, values and codes of conduct which include confidentiality statements.
- Determine and, if necessary, file for 501c3 nonprofit status and articles of incorporation.
- Create a new board of directors.
- Refine mission statement.
- Clarify roles and strengthen relationship between Cultural Resources Protection.
- Address proprietary and copyright issues.

Stewardship

- Create and implement collections policies for artifacts, photographs, oral histories, linguistic research and historical documents.
- Inventory existing collections.
- Acquire additional storage space for current collection needs.
- Work closely with General Services on electronic archiving system for cultural center needs.
- Collaborate with Cultural Resources Protection to develop a shared electronic database.
- Plan and implement a community-wide collections acquisition campaign.

Planning for the cultural center

- Develop an architectural master plan.
- Develop an interpretive master plan.
- Plan and implement a community-focused consultation process.
- Evaluate potential sites.
- Select the site.
- Begin design phase for the building and exhibits.
- Conduct a fund-raising feasibility study.
- Develop fund-raising plan and begin implementation as needed.

Financial planning

- Conduct a marketing and financial viability study.
- Research revenue generating options.

Staff Development

- Hire a curator.
- Hire a cultural education specialist.
- Identify and implement training work plans for professional staff.
- Identify services and programs we can realistically provide now for tribal community dependant upon adequate staffing and available funding.
- Begin implementing cultural education programs wherever possible.
- Determine how best to use volunteer work teams.
- Establish policies and procedures for work teams.
- Professional staff lays out their activities for calendar year 2000.



"All of these activities are important, and we want to do everything right away. We have to slow down and evaluate what we can do realistically in relation to the staff and funding we have. All of this work will get done, it is a matter of when, not if."

~ Lisa Watt, Executive Director of the Culture and Heritage Program

If you have any questions or would like to comment on any aspect of this plan, please call Lisa directly at 879-2076 or stop by for a visit. The Culture and Heritage office is located at 28840 Salmon River Highway. Your input in the development of the museum/cultural center is most welcome.

Artifacts due for return to Grand Ronde Tribe

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — In a glass case full of bowls and arrowheads at Champoeg State Park, a simple digging handle made of elk antler caught Ryan Heavy Head's eye. It had belonged to a woman of the Grand Ronde Tribe. It would have been a gift from her mother. It would have been with her when she married. It should have been buried with her.

"That kind of thing is sitting out there on a display, and it doesn't even have a label to say what it is," said Heavy Head.

"People will look at it and say, 'That's a piece of antler with a hole in it.'"

Digging handles are among the thousands of artifacts that are expected to come back to the Grand Ronde in the next two years from museums and universities across the country. The Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 allows tribes to take back sacred artifacts and human remains. Under the act, museums receiving federal funding must return artifacts upon request to the descendants of the owner or the owner's tribe. It can take two years to get an item back because of a complex federal process. But the Tribe expects that 70 percent of the artifacts they want back will be at the reservation within two years.

The Tribe plans to build its own museum. Some objects were taken in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when the looting and desecration of Indian burial sites was common. In 1868, Army officers shipped Indian skeletons to the surgeon general for studies that purported to prove white superiority based on cranial size.

Heavy Head and his wife, Adrienne, have entered 2,000 objects in a database for the Grand Ronde, and more inventories are coming in every week.

Tribal members looking for a particular ceremonial item will be able to find out which museum has it and what it was used for.

The Heavy Heads are Blackfoot, hired by the Grand Ronde to help them claim objects from museums, universities and public agencies.

The Grand Ronde Tribe sent 4,000 letters to museums around the United States, asking for lists of tribal artifacts.

Willamette University and the Museum of Natural History at the University of Oregon are among institutions working with the Grand Ronde.

Many artifacts are considered so sacred that outsiders aren't allowed to photograph or display them. At the U of O museum, thousands of obsidian blades, stone objects and human remains are locked away because of sensitivity to the feelings of American Indians.

Some museums with such sacred objects still offend Native peoples by storing them poorly. Heavy Head finds Grand Ronde artifacts stashed in paper bags, or crammed in back rooms. At one university collection, rodents apparently had gnawed through the boxes and nested among the artifacts.

Just as the university is being required to return these relics, DNA testing and chemistry have advanced to the point where the artifacts would be of immense value, said Professor Mel Aikens, director of the museum.

Such tests could determine how Native people lived, what they ate or what afflicted them, he said. Once the remains are returned and reburied, that chance will be lost. Aikens would like to keep the remains long enough to test them — or to be able to borrow them back for testing.

Reservation roads get new signs

Have you ever taken a trip up to the reservation and wondered if you were really on tribal land or not? Well, have no fear! Reservation road signs are here! Yes, that's right, the Timber and Roads Department of the Natural Resources Division (NRD) has put up "Entering" and "Leaving" reservation signs. These signs are placed along roads wherever a road crosses the reservation boundary. The "Entering" signs are white with red lettering and a black Tribal logo. The "Leaving" signs are white with green lettering and a black tribal logo.

Jeff Kuust, Timber and Roads Coordinator, informs us that "these signs will help gatherers, hunters, fisherman, and other recreationists know when they are on tribal land and when they are not. It should really help avoid confusion. For instance, many people like to know when they are on tribal land rather than Hampton Tree Farms land, because Hampton does not allow camping or firewood gathering."

Thanks to this latest effort of the Timber and Roads Department of the NRD, tribal members can get to know their reservation a little better now!

