



Home Fields: Under Construction

The area is rich with recent Indian history, and projects will keep history alive.

By Ron Karten

The Grand Ronde that started as a place of exile has become home, and the old culture is rising from what were ashes a century and a half ago.

Thanks in particular to two land purchases in the area, the Tribe is now "reestablishing a cultural presence" in the place where the Trail of Tears ended 150 years ago, according to Cultural Resources Specialist Eirik Thorsgard.

The series of projects in this area surround what once were Molalla Tribal campgrounds. Starting when the 1855 Trail of Tears brought Indians from many tribes and places to Grand Ronde, the campgrounds were used by the Molallas through the 1870s.

Tribes that had been marched to Grand Ronde from the north camped on the north side of the South Yamhill River that goes through the property and Tribes brought up from the south camped on the south side of the river, said Tribal Cultural Collections Coordinator Lindy Trolan.

A plankhouse and the development of a new pow-wow grounds, background work for a museum interpretive center and ongoing development of the Fort Yamhill State Park are all part of the rebirth, Thorsgard said.

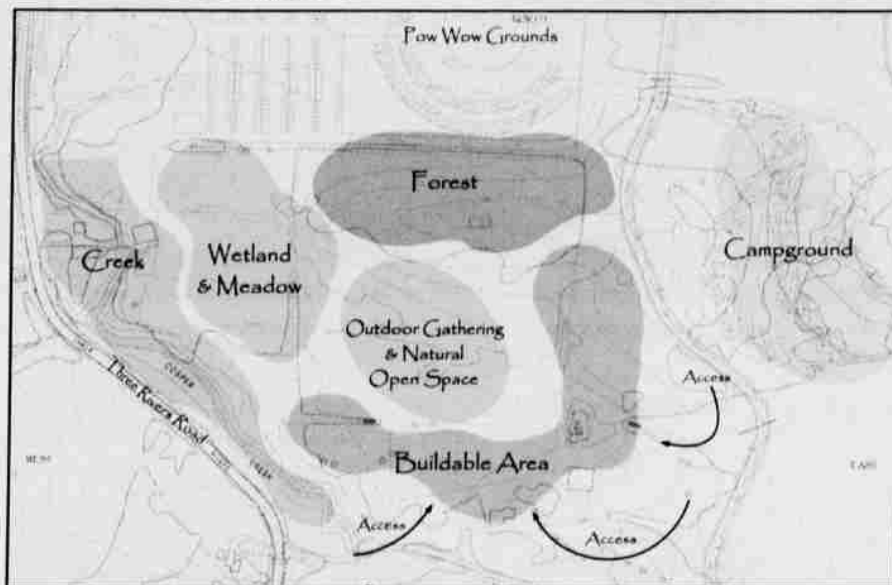
Pow-wow Grounds

The new, \$650,000 pow-wow grounds will be located to the right side of the road now accessing the new Fort Yamhill State Park. It will replace the grounds at the governance center

campus, and provide showers and rest room facilities.

Tribally-owned Round Valley Construction is working on some drainage issues now, adding culverts, said Tribal Engineer Eric Scott. The site power design has been completed and "as soon as weather permits," bids will go out for the highway part of the project.

"We're working feverishly to get it done for the summer," said Scott. All right-of-way, environmental, roadway design and traffic study issues have been settled, though the Tribe continues to work with the Oregon Department of Transportation on an access permit. Signage and a utility crossing are also still to be completed.



Above and below, work continues on the new pow-wow grounds. At left is a map of what the area will look like as development continues. Note that the pow-wow grounds at the top of the map.

Photos courtesy of Cultural Department

