

Annual trip featured 14 Tribal members

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spiritual strength before a hunt.

Modern-day Grand Ronde members dipped cedar boughs into rose water to cleanse Tomanowos and also, perhaps, reconnect some of the spirituality that was lost in the mid-1850s when Tribal members were removed to the Reservation.

The annual Tribal trip to visit Tomanowos featured 14 Tribal members, including two Tribal youth interns working at the museum for three weeks. The ceremony was led by Youth Prevention Coordinator Cristina Lara, who also was chaperoning the youths, in the Frederick and Sandra Priest Rose Center for Earth & Space.

Deputy Press Secretary Sara Thompson ferried the cedar boughs from Oregon while Lara provided rose water and tobacco.

The Grand Ronde contingent also included Tribal Council member Denise Harvey, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, Tribal Police Lt. Tim Hernandez, Tribal youth Desirae Hernandez, Tribal Elders Marion Mercier, Penny DeLoe and Dorothy Leno, Museum Interns Kailiyah Krehbiel and Isabelle Grout, and Manhattan resident and Chief Tumult descendant Jennifer Weiss and her children, Charlotte and Spencer.

Lara requested that the ceremony remain private and that no pictures or audio recordings be taken.

Tribal members held the 43-minute ceremony and communed with Tomanowos in their own, personal ways at Lara's encouragement.

When the ceremony was complete, the Tribal contingent gathered outside the American Museum of Natural History for a group photo and then dined at Maison Pickle.

Tomanowos' history

Tomanowos is the iron-nickel core of an early planetoid that orbited the Sun millions of years ago. After that planet was shattered, perhaps in a collision with another protoplanet, the core fell at approximately 40,000 miles per hour to the Earth's surface, landing somewhere in southwestern Canada.

The meteorite eventually found



Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Desirae Hernandez, 7, interacts with Tomanowos before a ceremony the Grand Ronde delegation held on Monday, June 17, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

its way to present-day West Linn in the Willamette Valley as a passenger in the Missoula Floods that carved out the Columbia River Gorge. The Clackamas Chinooks named it Tomanowos and revered it as a spiritual being that healed and empowered the people since the beginning of time. The rainwater that collected in the meteorite's crevices and pockmarks served as a powerful purifying, cleansing and healing source for the Clackamas and their neighbors.

But that connection was broken when the Clackamas and other Tribes were removed from the West Linn area and relocated to the Grand Ronde Reservation in the 1850s.

With the Native peoples gone, Tomanowos' story grew more complex and convoluted. In 1902, it was kidnapped by part-time miner Ellis Hughes, who moved it off land

owned by Oregon Iron and Steel Co., and he charged people 25 cents to view it.

Eventually, Oregon Iron and Steel won a lawsuit to regain ownership of the meteorite, which was then purchased in the early 20th century by a wealthy New York City philanthropist, who moved it across the country and donated it to the American Museum of Natural History, where it sat patiently for almost 100 years for its Native peoples to find it.

In 1999, the Grand Ronde Tribe submitted a claim to the museum

seeking return of Tomanowos under the provisions of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The museum countersued and eventually the two parties reached an agreement that Tomanowos would remain in New York City provided that Tribal members had annual access for religious ceremonies and the museum sponsored an internship program for Tribal youth to spend three weeks working at the muse-

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Tribal members Marion Mercier and Kailiyah Krehbiel take a selfie with Tomanowos before a ceremony with the Grand Ronde delegation held on Monday, June 17.

Tribal member Kailiyah Krehbiel can't contain her joy as she holds a replica of an ocean canoe in the archive of Native American textiles in the American Museum of Natural History on Tuesday, June 18, in New York City.