



Watchlist: ‘Cahokia’s Celestial Calendar (Woodhenge)’

(Editor’s note: It is estimated that there are approximately 149 billion videos on YouTube, and the number continues to grow. Grand Ronde Tribal member and Social Media/Digital Journalist Kamiah Koch sifts through those myriad videos twice a month to recommend a worthwhile Indigenous video to watch. Follow her bimonthly recommendations and enjoy!)

By Kamiah Koch

Social media/digital journalist

In the Dec. 15, 2022, Watchlist, we looked at the origin stories told during the winter solstice on Dec. 21.

Dec. 21 is the day of the year with the least amount of daylight in the northern hemisphere and is an important time of year for many Tribes. Ever wonder how Tribes knew when a solstice would occur?

The answer to that question is found in a PBS video published four years ago. PBS runs a series called “Native America” covering stories from Indian Country.

The video follows archaeologist Timothy Pauketet through a corn field in southwest Illinois. Above the rows of corn tower large mounds called the Cahokia Mounds.

“The mounds are positioned in various ways to reference something,” Pauketet says. “They are not arbitrarily, randomly placed.”

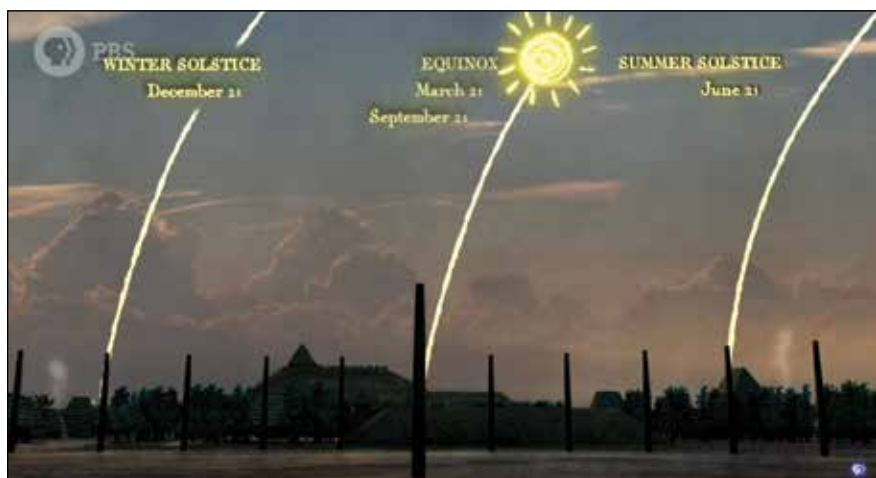
The video’s narrator says research suggests the Cahokia Mounds are similar to the ancient Mayan city Teotihuacan and are laid out on a celestial blueprint.

The video explains the data Pauketet and his team are collecting, using a gradiometer to find holes in the ground that would be consistent with post holes.

Where those holes are found suggests a circle of posts with one post at the center. It’s now known as “Woodhenge.”

“Woodhenge is a large ring of sizable cedar posts,” Pauketet says. “If you look from across the post to perimeter posts, you can watch the sun rise and set, and you’d know when the solstices were.”

If you’d like to watch the rest of the video for yourself, you can visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=on6JybDqLRc or find it linked in the *Smoke Signals* “Watchlist” playlist. You can also read more if this story on Newsweek’s website, <https://www.newsweek.com/winter-solstice-native-american-ritual-ancient-religious-ceremonies-cahokia-1263001>. ■



Smoke Signals screenshot

Post holes at the Cahokia Mounds in southwest Illinois line up with when the winter and summer solstices occur, as well as the equinoxes. The mounds are similar to the ancient Mayan city Teotihuacan, which also is laid out on a celestial blueprint, and help explain how Native American Tribes knew when those events were occurring.

Tribal nonemergency text line

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department has a nonemergency text line at 541-921-2927.

“If you have a nonemergency situation or question, feel free to contact my officer via text through this line,” said Grand Ronde Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight. “When one of my officers receives the text, they will call you back when they have time.”

McKnight said that emergency situations still require calling 911. For more information, contact McKnight at 503-879-1474. ■

Grand Ronde Editorial Board position openings

The Grand Ronde Editorial Board, a Tribal board assigned the duty by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (“Grand Ronde”) of overseeing its independent Tribal press (*Smoke Signals*), invites applications to serve on the Grand Ronde Editorial Board. There will be two (2) open board positions occurring in March 2023.

The five-member Grand Ronde Editorial Board is responsible to the Grand Ronde Tribal Council. It oversees the editor of *Smoke Signals* to ensure the independent Tribal press reports news free from any undue influence and free from any political interest, and that Tribal news employees adhere to the highest ethical journalistic standards.

The Editorial Board meets monthly. From time to time, additional special meetings may be held. Board members are expected to attend all meetings in person, although participation by telephone or video will be permitted. Each board member receives a monthly stipend for attending meetings. Travel reimbursement is limited to travel within the six counties of Polk, Yamhill, Marion, Tillamook, Multnomah and Washington.

Board members must be 18 years of age, have qualified experience in management and/or publications, be of good character and integrity, and certify that he or she will adhere to the standards of accepted ethics of journalism as defined by the Society of Professional Journalists and endorsed by the Native American Journalists Association. Experience with and knowledge of Native American organizations is also preferred, as well as dedication to protecting and advancing a free press for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Applicants will be interviewed by the Grand Ronde Editorial Board before a recommendation is forwarded to Tribal Council. Terms run for three years.

Preference will be given to qualified Tribal members.

Submission deadline: Friday, Jan. 13

Interested individuals should submit a letter of interest describing their qualifications, a résumé and three references to:

Grand Ronde Editorial Board

c/o Smoke Signals

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

9615 Grand Ronde Road

Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Phone: 503.879.1463

E-mail: editorial.board@grandronde.org

Oregon State archaeologists find oldest points

CORVALLIS – Oregon State University archaeologists have uncovered projectile points in Idaho that are thousands of years older than any previously found in the Americas.

The 13 full and fragmentary projective points, razor sharp and ranging from about half an inch to two inches long, are from approximately 15,700 years ago, according to carbon-14 dating. That is about 3,000 years older than the Clovis fluted points found throughout North America and 2,300 years older than the points previously found at the same Cooper’s Ferry site along the Salmon River in Idaho.

The Salmon River site where the points were found in on traditional Nez Perce land, known to the Tribe as the ancient village of Nipehe.

The newly discovered points are part of the Cooper’s Ferry record, where OSU archaeologists have previously reported a 14,200-year-old fire pit and a food-processing area containing the remains of an extinct horse. The projectile points were uncovered over multiple summers between 2012 and 2017. ■