

Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail PROGRESS REPORT - Fall 2021

ADMINISTRATOR'S CORNER

Edward S. Curtis, renowned photographer in Indian Country described his life's mission: "I want to make them [American Indians] live forever. The passing of every respected elder man or woman means the passing of some tradition, some knowledge of sacred rites possessed by no other... And therefore, we are delighted to share that we are of this same belief and are working with the help of NATIVE Act funds to do tribal oral interviews, thanks to Toby Bloom in our Washington Office and our being able to apply for the first time a project under the NATIVE Act. This bill helps support our program that assists Native American communities prosper through the creation and promotion of cultural and heritage tourism. We can do the much-needed work to use this knowledge as we also work to interpret the history of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail (NPNHT) through interpretive panels, storyboards, and tribal presentations.

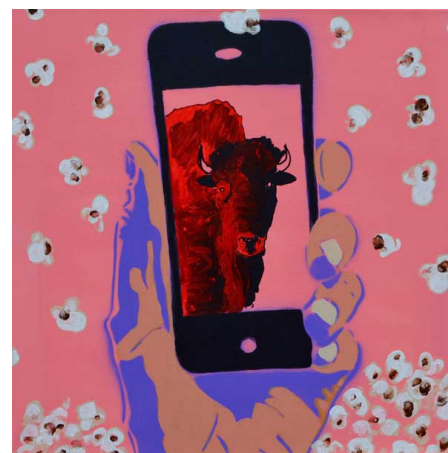


Broncheau-McFarland riding in the We'nikise Horse Parade, Photo: Jon Yearout

Many Nez Perce, including myself, can track an ancestor who was in the Flight and War of 1877. Numerous Tribes of which the NPNHT travels through can do the same. Our efforts to reach out utilizing these funds will help with this goal to capture as much information as possible before it is too late. The project will empower Native American communities to increase coordination and collaboration between Federal Tourism assets and expand heritage and cultural tourism by showcasing history and culture as accurate, appropriate, and sensitive. Read more about this on page 7-8.

To this day the effort of the National Park Service (NPS) and Indian Tribes all deserve credit for the Memorials where at key locations along the Trail and at places such as Ft. Vancouver NPS, Nez Perce Cemetery in OK, and Ft. Leavenworth KS, tribal members and people are invited to share a pipe ceremony, and empty saddle to pay homage to those who perished in the 1877 Fight and War. Not just to tribes, but all combatants. These are open events that all can bear witness at as a reflection on history. Our thanks to all who keep these events alive.

While some museums and visitor centers are still operating with limited hours, and events are held using virtual platforms, others are fully operational. Our partners at C.M. Russell Museum at Great Falls, MT recently shared an event especially for contemporary American Indian art on Onondaga/Nez Perce Frank Buffalo Hyde's "I-Witness Culture" which ran through September 13. The art blends the past with the digital age. Be sure to stop in and support our partner museums and visitor centers.



Bison Selfie, Frank Buffalo Hyde

A big thanks to Kristine Komar with the Bitter Root Cultural Heritage Trust who stepped up to help with getting this Fall Progress Report out the door. I have witnessed us all leaning on each other this past year through Covid and extensive fire season. Yes, we continued the growth of trail work and interpretation. We recognized the need to continue together. We need you to know that every volunteer hour you gave can change someone's life. I know that compassion doesn't come at a cost. Compassion and understanding for one another is important.

"The life of a man consists not in seeing visions and in dreaming dreams, but in active charity and in willing service."
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Respectfully and thankfully yours,
Sandra Broncheau-McFarland
Administrator, NPNHT

NEZ PERCE RENAMING CELEBRATION: Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Return of the Spalding-Allen Collection

Renaming Celebration Shines a Spotlight on Nez Perce Artifacts



On June 26, 2021, the Nez Perce Tribe (Tribe) commemorated the 25th anniversary of the return of the Spalding-Allen Collection (Collection) with a renaming celebration at the Nez Perce National Historical Park (Park) at Spaulding, ID; the original place of acquisition by Reverend Henry H. Spalding. The Spalding-Allen Collection is now known as the Wetxuuwíitin Collection, which means "returned home after a period of captivity".

Nakia Cloud-Williamson, Nez Perce Tribal member and Director of the Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Resource Program explains, "The renaming of this collection was a significant step to reclaiming ownership of one of the most significant ethnographic collections in existence. More importantly, renaming helps us in rejecting colonialism and its impacts on our 'way of life'."

The Nez Perce will always be a people deeply rooted to the land from which they come. The Wetxuuwíitin Collection demonstrates how embedded even the material items of the Nez Perce, those that traveled the longest of colonial journeys, will eventually find their way home.

From 1836-1846 Spalding acquired 21 Nez Perce artifacts traditionally worn, or used by, men, women, children, and horses, which were later sent to Spalding's benefactor Dr. Dudley Allen. In 1893, after Dr. Allen's death, his son donated the Collection to Oberlin College, who later loaned most of the collection to the Ohio Historical Society, now known as the Ohio History Connection (OHC). In 1976, Bill Holm, Curator of the Burke Museum at the University of Washington informed the curator at the Park about the Spalding-Allen artifacts at the OHC. The Park reached out to the museum and after some negotiations, OHC agreed to loan the collection to the park with an annual loan renewal agreement starting in 1980.

In 1993, OHC demanded the return of the collection. Rather than donating the items to the Tribe, OHC eventually agreed to sell the collection at its full appraised value of \$608,100. The Tribe was given a six-month deadline to provide the money. With the help of thousands of donors, the Tribe was successful in raising the full amount, and on June 26, 1996 the Tribe brought home the oldest, largest, and most well preserved artifact collection of the Plateau people. "These items traveled extensively before finally returning home 25 years ago. We want to honor that journey and recognize the tremendous amount of effort that was required to make it happen. Without the help of thousands of people, the reacquisition would not have happened. We look forward to presenting this collection with a name that is representative of our culture and way of life," stated Nez Perce then Tribal Executive Committee Chairman, Shannon Wheeler. "We know there are other lost artifacts out there; hopefully they can return home someday as well."

The Wetxuuwíitin Collection, owned by the Tribe, is physically stored by the park in a dedicated space designed to meet

museum standards and requirements for the best preservation, protection, and accessibility of the collection. The majority of the collection was on display at the Park's Visitor Center from June 19, 2021 to September 19, 2021. Although the exhibit is concluded, you can see images of the objects in the collection in the [Media Kit](#) for the Renaming Celebration.

Ohio History Connection Reimburses Nez Perce Tribe's Purchase of Wetxuuwiitin Collection

Current representatives from the Ohio History Connection were able to attend the Renaming Celebration. "As delighted as I was to learn about the renaming of the Wetxuuwiitin collection, the invitation was also a painful reminder of the shameful mistreatment and marginalization of American Indians since the arrival of Europeans on the North American continent," said Burt Logan, Ohio History Connection Executive Director and CEO. "Our leadership, including myself and current staff and Board, was not aware of the Wetxuuwiitin Collection and its purchase by the Nez Perce Tribe until I received the kind invitation."

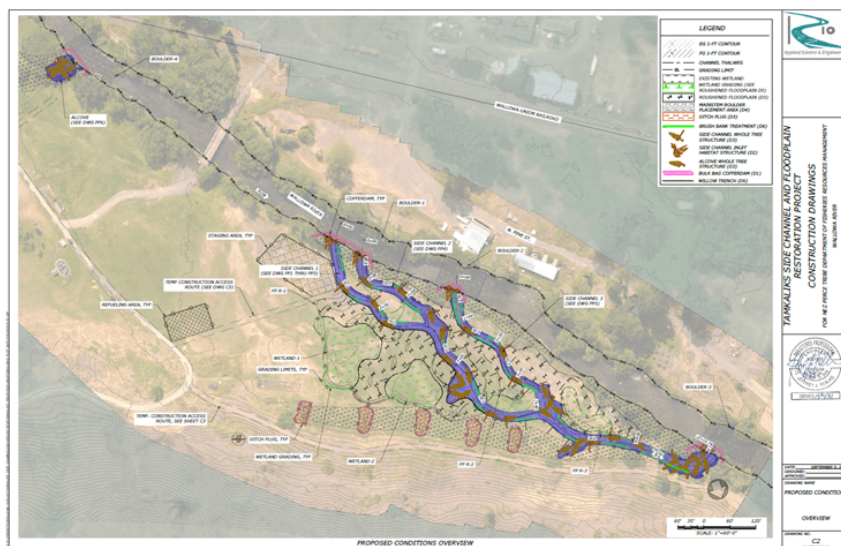


OHC presents check to Samuel N. Penney, Nez Perce Tribe Chairman
Photo: Nez Perce Tribe

The Ohio History Connection followed up their participation in the June celebration with a return visit to the Nez Perce Reservation on November 23, 2021 to return the \$608,100 the Tribe raised in 1996 to purchase the Collection. The funds came from Ohio History Connection's Foundation. "This summer we diligently sought to learn as much as possible, and to process what this means to our organization. If the Wetxuuwiitin Collection was in the possession of the Ohio History Connection today, we would freely return these items to their rightful home. With this clear conclusion, our Board of Trustees voted at its September 2021 meeting to return \$608,100 to the Tribe," said Logan.

SIDE CHANNEL BLESSING, WALLOWA HOMELAND

On Saturday, October 9, 2021 Indian elders helped dedicate the "side channel project" on the Nez Perce Homeland grounds in Wallowa. The Wallowa River, Nez Perce Fisheries workers told us, had been shoved to a side, channelized decades ago, probably in the 1940s and 50s, so that more land would be free for pasture and crops. This narrowed, straight flowing river has scoured the river bottom and eaten the banks, and in so doing destroyed places for fish to rest while migrating, and places for them to spawn.



The side channel does not change the course of the main stem but allows water to drift to and through some of the river's old territory. In spring runoff, water will spill over the side channels and recreate marshlands, where tule and other native plants can grow. There have already been fish and lamprey in the side channel waters.

Fred Hill, from the Umatilla Reservation and Homeland Board Member, emceed the dedication. Jeremy Red Star Wolf



joined him in an opening song. Long-time board member and Fisheries worker Joe McCormack introduced tribal elders, Nez Perce Fisheries technicians, and others instrumental in the project. Nez Perce Tribal Chair Samuel N. Penney talked about the work of Nez Perce Fisheries and his delight in seeing the fruits of their work. Allen Pinkham Sr. and Bobbie Conner told the crowd that the people who lived here first are still here, and that we must remember the past as we address today and plan for the future. Both also reminded us that we are one human race, that divisions are harmful, but that reconciliation of people—and of people’s relationship to land and water, can occur. *This work on this small river—which flows into the Big River, shows us that.*

There was more singing, Longhouse leader Armand Minthorn said a prayer, Joe went to cook salmon, and the rest of us toured the project. And then we gathered in the Tamkaliks dance arbor and ate together. Later there were drums and dancers.

- Rich Wandschwneider
Joseph Center for Arts & Culture

Editors’ Note: An additional story from the Wallowa Valley Chieftain can be found at this [link](#). Another from the Statesman Journal [here](#).

LAND ACQUISITION, WALLOWA HOMELAND, JOSEPH, OREGON

The recent Nez Perce reacquisition of 148 acres near the town of Joseph was a big event. Scores of walkers and riders with their horses gathered at the school on the hill on one side of Joseph and made the journey through town and onto the airport road to the place just west of the city they now call *Am’sáaxpa*, or “place of boulders.” Drummers and singers in a “long tent”—a longhouse—prayed, sang, and spoke to scores of tribal people and local supporters, and reporters.

Newspapers and journals from Enterprise, Portland, and Salem in Oregon, Lewiston in Idaho, Spokane and Seattle in Washington State and on USA today and US News nationally, covered the story of Nez Perce return to a land they had been forced to leave in 1877. Eastern newspapers had covered that 1877 journey away from the Wallowa into war and through the 1200-mile fighting retreat that left the Indians 40 miles short of sanctuary in Canada.

Many Easterners followed and even supported the Nez Perce during the press-covered war. We should remember that most American Indians from east of the Mississippi had been moved west with the Removal Act and 10 years of forced relocation beginning in 1830. East Coast people could safely root for Indians from afar; their own lands and towns were safely removed from the ubiquitous “Indian question” and Indian Wars of Westward expansion.

The 1877 Nez Perce story began with the Nez Perce’s assistance to Lewis and Clark in 1805. An 1855 treaty that “reserved” seven million acres for them had shrunk to 750,000 acres with the discovery of Idaho gold and a new treaty in 1863. The new treaty divided the tribe into “treaty” and “non-treaty” bands, signers and those who refused to sign. And the War began with General O.O. Howard’s demand that the *wal’wá-ma*, the non-treaty band that lived in the Wallowa Country under the leadership of Young Chief Joseph, *hinmato-wyalahtqit*, leave their homeland within 30 days.



Photos by Rob Kemp, Joseph Oregon



The *wal'wá·ma* tried to comply, made it across the spring-flooding Snake River on their way to the diminished reservation at Lapwai in Idaho, but confrontations with settlers there hurled the Indians into war. Other non-treaty bands joined the *wal'wá·ma* and led four US Armies over and across some 1200 miles of rugged, mountainous territory threaded by the Salmon and other rivers—including the Yellowstone. Yellowstone was already a national park, making the war even more newsworthy for eastern followers.

Eventually, the Indians were ground down by travel, fighting, loss of leaders, cold and hunger. It ended at Bear's Paw in Montana, forty miles short of sanctuary in Canada. Joseph, managing the last days and promoting survival of his people, stalled a few days at Bear's Paw, allowing about 150 Nez Perce to make it to Canada. They were mostly from White Bird's band.

After the War, the remaining survivors were not allowed to return to Idaho as promised, but herded by horse, boat, and train to Bismarck in North Dakota, Leavenworth in Kansas, and eventually to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. The Nez Perce call it still the "hot country," where many died.

Joseph, badgering the War Department, Congress, and the White House, with help from local and national Presbyterians, won his way back to the Northwest in 1885—but not to Oregon or Idaho. There was in fact a warrant out for his arrest in Idaho.

War and Hot Place survivors made their way by train to Wallula Junction in Washington. Some went to Lapwai; Joseph and most of his *wal'wá·ma* band went to the Colville Reservation in north-central Washington. Division didn't stop with War and Hot Country exile but followed the path of government assaults on tribal culture and unity across the country: boarding schools, the Dawes Allotment Act, Tribal Termination and Indian relocation continued to take Indian lands, languages, and culture away, attempting to assimilate, or blend them into the mythical American soup.

Miraculously, Indians, and in our case the Nez Perce Indians, have not become part of the soup, but have stubbornly fought to save land and ways of life. Split by treaties and war, by relocation and the needs of life to hold onto land, language, family, and tradition, the Nez Perce now—many still tracing ancestry to a specific band, live on the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho, the Umatilla Reservation in Oregon, the Colville Reservation in Washington, and on other reservations and in cities across the country. Some still live in Canada!

Indians in all those places trace heritage to Joseph and the *wal'wá·ma* band, but land transactions are made by tribal governments, not individual tribal members. Almost 100 years ago, Nez Perce from Umatilla played a prominent role in the reburial of Old Joseph at the foot of Wallowa Lake. In 1939 and 1940, an all-Indian CCC camp from Umatilla built the wall around that site. From 2007-2009, all three tribal governments cooperated with the state of Oregon to buy the land that is now called *Iwetemlaykin*— "the edge of the lake," which includes the Old Joseph gravesite.

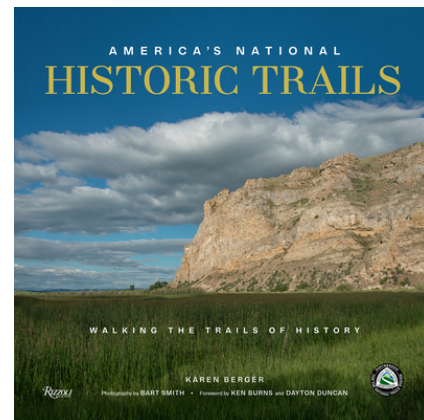
The Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho acquired 16,000 acres of Wallowa country they call Hété'wits Wétes, "Precious Lands," in 1997, and they recently added an easement at Wallowa Lake Lodge to provide spawning grounds for an anticipated return of Sockeye Salmon to the lake. And the old Methodist Church in the town of Wallowa donated itself to the tribe. There are surely some tensions with land reacquisition among individuals and groups in the wide and complicated Indian community of people who call themselves Nez Perce, or *Nimiipuu*. But those tensions can mostly be traced back to the ways that we, mostly white Americans, through our government, have forced and contributed to division. The hope is that healing—among tribal peoples and communities; and with the non-Indian community as well—will come swiftly and naturally with the return of sacred lands, and the drums, songs, and prayers that celebrate again these ancient connections.

- Rich Wandschneider, Library Director
Joseph Center for Arts & Culture



NEW BOOKS

A most deserving book, *America's National Historic Trails, Walking the Trails of History*, by Karen Berger, Rizzoli New York, has won the highest award in the outdoor literary community; the History Book of the Year in the Foreword 2020 INDIES Book of the Year Awards.



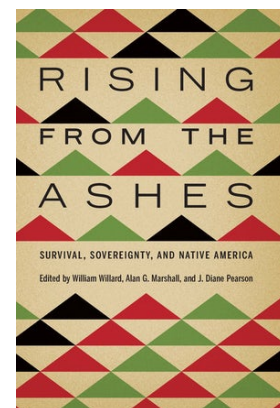
"Let this book inspire you to take a journey back in time. Follow the ancient pathways of Native Americans, the river routes of Lewis and Clark, or the winding wagon roads of the early pioneers. That's just a sampling of the journeys you can take. In fact, there are over 37,000 miles of historic trails, and while this book can't guide you on all of those miles, it will help you get started. Author Karen Berger handily describes the trails' history and what to expect when on your own exploring expedition. What adds to this book's appeal is the photographic artistry of Bart Smith and an abundance of his sumptuous images that capture the old byways and the surrounding scenery."

— 2021 National Outdoor Book Award Winner

Editor's Note: Proceeds from this book benefit the Partnership for the National Trail System, so help spread the word.
#RizzoliBooks

Rising From the Ashes, Survival, Sovereignty, and Native America, edited by William Willard, Alan Marshall, and J. Diane Pearson, University of Nebraska Press.

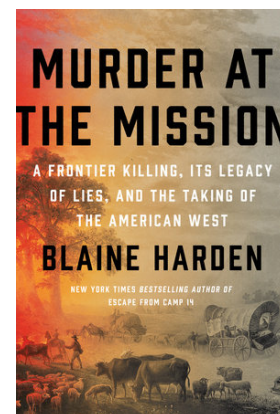
Rising from the Ashes explores continuing Native American political, social, and cultural survival and resilience with a focus on the life of Numiipuu (Nez Perce) anthropologist Archie M. Phinney. He lived through tumultuous times as the Bureau of Indian Affairs implemented the Indian Reorganization Act, and he built a successful career as an indigenous nationalist, promoting strong, independent American Indian nations.



Rising from the Ashes analyzes concepts of indigenous nationalism and notions of American Indian citizenship before and after tribes found themselves within the boundaries of the United States. Collaborators provide significant contributions to studies of Numiipuu memory, land, loss, and language; Numiipuu, Palus, and Cayuse survival, peoplehood, and spirituality during nineteenth-century U.S. expansion and federal incarceration; Phinney and his dedication to education, indigenous rights, responsibilities, and sovereign Native Nations; American Indian citizenship before U.S. domination and now; the Jicarilla Apaches' self-actuated corporate model; and Native nation-building among the Numiipuu and other Pacific Northwestern tribal nations. Anchoring the collection is a twenty-first-century analysis of American Indian decolonization, sovereignty, and tribal responsibilities and responses.

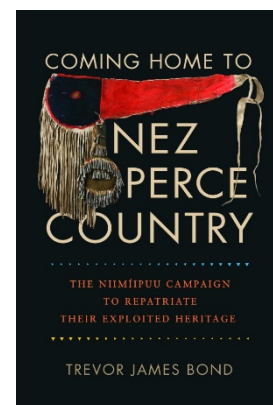
Murder at the Mission: A Frontier Killing, Its Legacy of Lies, and the Taking of the American West, by Blaine Harden, Viking.

In 1836, two missionaries and their wives were among the first Americans to cross the Rockies by covered wagon on what would become the Oregon Trail. Dr. Marcus Whitman and Reverend Henry Spalding were headed to present-day Washington state and Idaho, where they aimed to convert members of the Cayuse and Nez Perce tribes. Both would fail spectacularly as missionaries. But Spalding would succeed as a propagandist, inventing a story that recast his friend as a hero, and helped to fuel the massive westward migration that would eventually lead to the devastation of those they had purportedly set out to save.



Coming Home to Nez Perce Country: The Nimiipuu Campaign to Repatriate Their Exploited Heritage, by Trevor James Bond, WSU Press.

In 1847, missionary Henry Spalding shipped two barrels of “Indian curiosities”—exquisite Nez Perce shirts, dresses, baskets, horse regalia, and more—to an Ohio friend. Given just six months in 1993, the tribe launched a brilliant grassroots campaign and raised \$608,100 to reclaim their exploited cultural heritage. The author draws on interviews with Nez Perce experts and extensive archival research to tell the fascinating story of the Spalding-Allen Collection. He also examines the ethics of acquiring, bartering, owning, and selling Native cultural history.



NATIVE ACT

Place Name Initiative Honors Nez Perce History of Local National Forest lands

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests recently received \$50,000 in funding from the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act that will be put towards the implementation of the Place Name Initiative, a collaborative project proposed by the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and Nez Perce Tourism, LLC of Lewiston. The project will identify and sign certain areas within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests with their Nimiipuu (Nez Perce) place names.

For countless generations, the Nez Perce have shared an intimate relationship with the land and the life sources it provides. Place names often assigned a special significance to sites. The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests contains many culturally significant locations for the Nez Perce people, as it encompasses 4 million of the 7.5 million acres of Nez Perce Tribe homelands ceded to the United States in 1855.

As the area was settled, many places were renamed and signed by newcomers. The new signs created through the Place Name Initiative will co-exist with modern signs and provide historical context that many forest visitors seek while giving recognition to the Tribal history of these special places.

The idea for the Place Name Initiative came from a recommendation made to Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Supervisor Cheryl Probert by a tribal member during a 2020 meeting with the Nez Perce Tribe’s General Council. The suggestion was to identify and sign some of the historic Nez Perce place names on National Forest System lands within the Nez Perce Tribe’s homelands. Nez Perce Family passes down songs from generation to generation to honor the land from which they come.

Stacia Morfin, member of the Nez Perce Tribe and founder of Nez Perce Tourism, LLC, heard the tribal member’s request during the meeting and was eager to offer her assistance in the project.

“The request to initiate a place name project across our homelands will add a deeper layer of connection to the places Nimiipuu call home—not only for future generations of Nimiipuu, but with hopes to provide educational and authentic experiences for our traveling guests,” said Morfin. “It’s an honor to be a part of this cooperative.”



Nez Perce family passes down songs from generation to generation to honor the land from which they come.

Photo: Jennifer Rapoza

“While we regularly work with Nez Perce Tribal leadership and technical staff, we don’t have as many opportunities to work this closely with the Nez Perce people on matters so close to their hearts,” said Probert. “This is an exciting opportunity to partner with a local Certified Indian Business on a project suggested by a tribal member that will benefit everyone.”

Morfin will be working closely with the Nez Perce Tribe, Circle of Elders, and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests to ensure sacred and undisclosed place names remain protected, while those appropriate to share with the public are promoted.

“We are looking forward to seeing this project completed. It has been needed for some time and will add significant context that has been missing on the history of this area,” stated Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Chairman Samuel N. Penney.

The NATIVE Act was established to enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States. To learn more about the Act, visit <https://www.ainta.org/understanding-the-native-act/>.

For more information about the Place Name Initiative, please contact NATIVE Act Project Coordinating Team members Christine Bradbury, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (208 816-6822) or Stacia Morfin, Nez Perce Tourism, LLC (208 790-8873).

NATIVE Act Funding Supports Tribal Tourism

And if one NATIVE Act grant is good, two are better!

The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT), administered by the Northern Region of the USDA Forest Service, has also received a \$130,000 grant from the Agency’s Washington Office through the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act.

Nez Perce Tourism, LLC is partnering with the Forest Service to plan and implement the grant under a Participating Agreement. Projects will advance interpretive efforts including an assessment of the Nez Perce (Nee-ME-Poo) National Historic Trail route and Auto Tour to identify the best places to update and/or install new interpretive signs. Interpretive sign preparation will include recorded interviews and professional photography with tribal elders and members. Tribal artists will work with the Agency to prepare artwork for the signs and will write interpretive messages for the signs that will feature traditional Nez Perce names and the Nez Perce language. Once signs are fabricated, Tribal youth will help install them. And finally, traditional presenters will support the installation of the signs with appropriate ceremonies.

“Updating interpretive signs with Nez Perce language is an important step in asserting the Tribe’s presence and history in this area,” said Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Chairman Samuel N. Penney. “These places were often named based on their features or attributes, and the names do not come from historical figures, but rather our people were often named after these places.”

Project leaders are Sandra Broncheau-McFarland, administrator of the 1,170-mile NPNHT and the 4,161 miles of roads, trails, and routes along the NPNHT Auto Tour Route, and Stacia Morfin, CEO of Nez Perce Tourism, LLC.

Broncheau-McFarland has been working with strategic partners for years and recognizes that what is being learned from



Nimiipuu elder raises fox fur while sharing stories of the landscape.

Photo: Brad Stinson



this project can be applied to other segments of the trail.

"We are so pleased to be working with two tribes on this project, the Nez Perce Tribe, whose homeland is the Forest Service's Northern Region, and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes who traditionally used the area," she said "The two tribes have important history in this region, and this project seeks to support each tribe's need to further document their experiences on this landscape as well as share their heritage and stories with current inhabitants and visitors." Morfin, whose business in Lewiston, Idaho, shares Nez Perce heritage through interpretive events and excursions created to connect visitors to Nimiipuu culture.

"Now is the time for tribal people to come together. It is important to uphold our inherent responsibility as the original inhabitants of this wéetes (land) and kuus (water)," she added.

Morfin will be working closely with the Nez Perce Tribe, Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, both tribe's Circle of Elders, the NPNHT, and local forests and additional partners to ensure sacred and undisclosed areas remain protected, while those appropriate for sharing can be interpreted with signage and programs that visitors can experience.

SMOKEY BEAR FLIES IN 2021 MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE



Photo: US Forest Service

Smokey Bear once again floated down the streets of New York City for the 2021 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The star of the longest-running public service advertising campaign reminded viewers about his important message: Only you can prevent wildfires.

Smokey's original balloon first appeared in 1966 to promote a Smokey cartoon special airing Thanksgiving night and it last appeared in 1993. His new version first appeared in 2019 to celebrate his 75th birthday. The balloon measures 16 feet long, 25 feet wide and 51 feet tall!

The USDA Forest Service's wildfire prevention symbol launched in August 1944 and is under the joint auspices of the agency, Ad Council and National Association of State Foresters. Smokey's message is no less important today than it was in 1944. In fact, Smokey received so much mail that the U.S. Postal Service gave him a personal zip code. Smokey still receives mail each year, often simply addressed to Smokey Bear 20252. His website, smokeybear.com, has information about his history, as well as educational materials for teachers and kids.

USDA NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Rising to Meet this Moment in History: Forest Service & Tribal Land Stewardship

Yesterday, at the White House Tribal Nations Summit, Secretary Vilsack issued a Joint Secretarial Order with the Department of the Interior, "[Joint Secretarial Order Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters](#)." In the order, USDA and the Forest Service are being challenged to aggressively incorporate indigenous values and knowledge into our federal stewardship practices, to fully incorporate shared stewardship (co-management) practices wherever authorized, and to restore lands to tribal stewardship where appropriate. USDA also announced "[New Initiatives Serving Indian Country](#)."



Additionally, the White House announced its commitment to "[Building a New Era of Nation-to-Nation Engagement](#)," as well as interagency MOUs that Secretary Vilsack signed—the "[Interagency Coordination and Collaboration for the Protection of Indigenous Sacred Sites](#)" and "[Interagency Coordination and Collaboration for the Protection of Tribal Treaty and Reserved Rights](#)." The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and Council on Environmental Quality also issued a memorandum yesterday to all agencies on "[Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Establishment of Interagency Working Group on Traditional Ecological Knowledge](#)."

This is our moment. No agency is naturally better aligned with indigenous values and traditional ecological knowledge than the Forest Service. The time has come where incorporation of indigenous values and traditional ecological knowledge is not simply the right thing to do, it may be the only path forward. To fundamentally stop and reverse climate change and the compounding environmental disasters federal, state, and private lands are now facing, we as a nation must embrace indigenous ecological understandings.

We must each rise to meet this moment in history—a moment of re-institutionalization of indigenous ecological values. Tribes stand by eager to share their knowledge, expertise, and values.

This is our moment to integrate our tribal consultation policies fully and to aggressively follow our trust and treaty responsibilities, and to pursue co-stewardship (co-management) and tribal stewardship to the full extent of our authorizations. I join with you eagerly in this historic moment.

- Reed Robinson, Director
Office of Tribal Relations
US Forest Service



Photo: US Forest Service

THE 2021 USDA NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH THEME: "TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW"

November was the month to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. It is an opportune time to educate the public about tribes, to raise a general awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and in the present, and the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges. Practically though, this is everyday work.

The USDA Forest Service has the responsibility and privilege of administering the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. Sharing important dates in the month of November 1877 after the final days of the War which ended on October 5, 1877.

- November 9, 1877: Nez Perce prisoners left Fort Buford Dakota Territory for Fort Lincoln, Nebraska, Dakota Territory
- November 13, 1877: General Howard and his officers were honored at a gala event in Portland, Oregon
- November 19, 1877: Citizens of Bismarck, North Dakota welcome Nez Perce prisoners
- November 23, 1877: Nez Perce prisoners of war in 1877 were loaded onto box cars for a train trip to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
- November 26, 1877: Nez Perce prisoners of war arrive at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, they were then exiled to Oklahoma.

During National Native American Heritage Month and all the year round, we also honor our Native Americans veterans and service members who have courageously served and continue to serve in our Armed Forces — including the brave Native American Code Talkers in World War I and World War II. Interesting fact, did you know that some tribes were



serving our country, but still had no right to vote? For over 200 years, Native Americans have defended our country during every major conflict and continue to serve at a higher rate than any other ethnic group in the Nation.

- Sandra Broncheau-McFarland

AIANTA'S TAKE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) shared this way of recognizing Indigenous People's Day and we wanted to re-share it with you. It can really apply to every day.

Indigenous Peoples Day reimagines Columbus Day and changes a narrative about colonialism into an opportunity to discuss historical truths about the genocide and oppression of indigenous peoples in America and to celebrate indigenous resistance.

Let us honor all our Indigenous brothers and sisters today and celebrate their ingenuity, fortitude and accomplishments.

ELDER LEROY SETH SPEAKS ABOUT THE HISTORY, IMPORTANCE OF NEZ PERCE FLIGHT

Courtesy of Patrick Johnston, Havre Daily News

The Blaine County Museum recently hosted Nez Perce elder LeRoy Seth and Montana artist Terry Ball to talk about the importance of the Nez Perce Flight of 1877 which ended with the Battle of Bear Paw in what is now Blaine County.

The event was in conjunction with this year's Sugarbeet Festival and was called "Hear Me, My Chiefs," which is also the name of a limited-edition Pendleton blanket Ball designed commemorating the event, which part of the talk was about.

Over 80 people were in attendance filling the conference room of the Blaine County Library where the talk was held and blankets were raffled off.

Normally, that first Saturday in October would be the day the battle is commemorated by the Nez Perce, but the event that would normally be held at the battlefield itself was canceled this year due to COVID-19.

After a brief introduction by Museum Director Samantha French and Ball, with Ball saying proceeds from the blankets being raffled off at the event would go to the Nez Perce Boys & Girls Club, Seth began a presentation about the flight, its battles and the Nez Perce.

He said that final battle and the surrender of Chief Joseph that followed are well-known historical events, but the flight itself was made up of many battles from Salmon River to Yellowstone to the Bear Paw Battlefield.

Seth said he and his cousin have taught college courses on the flight, wanting to teach students not just about the events, but about the Nez Perce people, and in that respect the Battle of the Big Hole was very important.

"We wanted them to understand the humanity and inhumanity of the things that were done," he said.

Seth said Nez Perce warriors, one of whom, Peo Peo Tho-lekt, Seth is a direct descendant of, were always told by their leaders never to harm non-combatants, especially the elderly and children, but that philosophy was not held or practiced by the U.S. Army on that day.

He said the Army, frustrated by a series of defeats at the hands of the Nez Perce despite significantly



Nez Perce elder LeRoy Seth speaks during the "Hear Me, My Chiefs" presentation at the Blain County Library in Chinook, MT. Photo: Havre Daily News

outnumbering them, took them by surprise that day, shooting low into the teepees or setting fire to them, killing many non-combatants in an effort to wipe them out completely. He said the Nez Perce were able to drive the Army off, but this genocidal zeal by the army took its toll on them.

During the questions section of the talk a professor from Aaniiih Nakoda College asked Seth why so many of the events that took place along the Nez Perce's path were called "skirmishes," or "incidents," given that so many were simply the sites of war crimes on the part of the U.S. Army.

Seth said he didn't write the history books and suggested that if he had the terminology used may be a bit different.

By the end of the war, Seth said, as the Nez Perce reached what would become Bear Paw Battlefield, the cold was setting in and ammunition was low, and though the Nez Perce won many battles, often against great odds, they were eventually defeated.

He said some, including his ancestor Peo Peo Tho-lekt, managed to flee to Canada, but the war ended with the famous surrender of Chief Joseph.

He said the military put a price on the head of those who fled, but they found refuge with the Sioux, a tribe the Nez Perce were often in conflict with but then united with in opposition to the Army which they disliked far more.

Ultimately, Seth said, despite everything that happened, the Nez Perce endured.

"I don't think we lost the war because we're still here," he said.

Peo Peo Tho-lekt would later return and help historians piece the story of the battle back together, Ball said, and that history would live on.

Ball said the story of the flight was something he always found compelling, and he remembers the profound feelings he experienced standing on those battlefields, especially the spot where Chief Looking Glass was killed.

His Pendleton blanket "Hear Me, My Chiefs" was designed to commemorate the flight and he collaborated with Seth and other Nez Perce elders during its design to make certain it was culturally appropriate.

He said he and Seth have since become friends and he's happy to be able to raffle off some of his blankets for a good cause.

Blaine County Commissioner Delores Plumage, who attended the talk, said she's known Seth for many years and said she's glad they had an opportunity to have him speak.

Plumage, who represents Fort Belknap, said it's important for people to understand that for Native Americans something as long ago as the Nez Perce Flight seems like yesterday in their cultural memory and remembering these events is very important for everyone.

She thanked French and the museum for hosting the event and said she hopes the museum will see increased involvement from the community.

"We need to have a vision for our children and grandchildren about what story we're going to tell them about Blaine County," she said.



NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Big Hole National Battlefield

Hello from Big Hole National Battlefield! Since our last update, the entire Big Hole National Battlefield staff and many, many supporting characters have had a trying but productive season. It was definitely not a summer that could be considered normal.

We launched into our busy summer routine with the visitor center reopening on May 29th. We brought in two new seasonal park rangers, Brady Millen, and Kevin Lloyd and one new seasonal Student Conservation Association (SCA) Education Specialist Intern, Emily Sage to assist with our busy front desk and work on a backlog of projects. July 3-4th for our Summer Speaker Series we welcomed cultural demonstrators Billy Maxwell and Don Price who gave fascinating programs on pony and mule gear and spinning and braiding of bison hair ropes. On July 10-11th Don Safford demonstrated the art of flintknapping. Sadly, the remainder of our speaker series was canceled with the beginning of the Trail Creek Fire.



Caused by lightning, the Trail Creek Fire began on July 8th and by July 17th the visitor center and entire park were closed for public safety. Our viewing room in the visitor center became a command post for the Trail Creek Fire operations and our daily lives were consumed by the events surrounding the fire. Staff from the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and state and local operations came together to protect our resources. It was a team effort to protect the parks highly sensitive areas and inform all fire personnel why this site is so significant. Park staff wrapped the soldier monument in the Siege area, replica howitzer on the hillside, and the twin trees with structure fire wrap to help protect these significant values at risk. The park's fire suppression system hydrants and hose lays were set up for structure protection of the visitor center and park housing, ready to be charged at a moment's notice. Fire did reach onto the park (see photo), but finally after weeks of closure we were able to reopen the park on Tuesday, October 5th, with limited access. The visitor center is now open 10:00 am - 4:30 pm, Tuesday-Saturday but trails and the lower lot remain closed due to safety concerns and for resource protection. To protect the health of those who live, work, and visit our national parks and facilities, and in support of the President's Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, face masks are now required in the visitor center regardless of vaccination status.

The annual Big Hole Commemoration was unfortunately cancelled due to the fire activity and the Bear Paw Commemoration was cancelled due to Covid-19.

A huge thank you goes out to Casey Overturf who was the Bear Paw park ranger from 2016 -2021. We wish him the very best as he hangs up his ranger hat and continues down a different trail!



As we move into our fall and winter season, we said goodbye to our summer seasonals and welcomed in Grace Teofilo. Grace is our long term SCA education specialist and will be with us throughout the winter.

Facilities division also welcomed an amazing permanent maintenance worker, Jennifer Townsend-Stubbs (Jen). She has stepped in and from day one assisted with all park operations, from daily custodial duties to leading and mentoring youth crews. Facilities also gained Nathaniel Gowen (Nate). Although he is only with us seasonally, he has brought a much-needed cohesiveness to the team. Many projects have been completed with this amazing crew, all the while assisting with the Trail Creek Fire and all it entailed.



Photos: National Park Service

In June, the park hired a three-person Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) crew, the youth are local or have family in the area to support the housing needs of the crew. Projects that park staff worked on this 2021 season include: Rehabilitating the front gate area and staining the entrance sign, daily custodial of visitor center, lower parking lot areas and housing, grounds/trails maintenance, continued boundary fence repairs and rebuild of fence due to loss during the fire, invasive plant management and setting up and replacing of some of the replica tipis in the Nez Perce Encampment area.

Installation of a snow retention system on park housing and visitor center roofs will help with keeping park visitors and staff safer from falling snow and ice and rehabilitating one of the housing units makes excellent rainy-day work. A few infrastructure projects are happening at the park as well: Windows in park housing are being replaced, a much need roof replacement on an employee housing unit is taking place, the HVAC unit at the visitor center will be replaced, sewer system upgrades are continuing, parking lots and walkways are being upgraded for accessibility. Road repairs and pavement preservation projects are in the planning and design stage.

Park and management staff will continue to work on a fire recovery plan. Our much-appreciated partners, the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC), assisted the park with ongoing beetle kill hazard tree removal and cleanup projects along the



park trail system this summer. We are looking forward to their continued assistance and expertise for the 2022 summer for repair and rehabilitation tasks associated with the Trail Creek Fire.

We will continue to monitor all park functions to ensure that visitors adhere to CDC guidance for mitigating risks associated with the transmission of COVID-19 and take any additional steps necessary to protect public health.

Details and updates on park operations will continue to be posted on our website www.nps.gov/biho and social media channels. Updates about NPS operations regarding the pandemic will be posted on www.nps.gov/coronavirus.

Big Hole National Battlefield Visitor Center, closed since the Trail Creek Fire, reopened on October 5, 2021. The lower parking lot, trails and picnic area remain closed for public safety and resource protection.

Before visiting, please check the Park website (www.nps.gov/biho) to confirm operational status. A return to full operations will continue to be phased and services may be limited as fire and repair/rehabilitation continues.



NEWS FROM TRAVELERS REST and FORT OWEN STATE PARKS

Travelers' Rest State Park has been busy with visitors and fun events! A few highlights from the fall include events like the Corpse of Discovery, that invited the local community to have fun at a history and nature-themed Halloween event. We had over 150 participants and many fun costumes! We also have had a great time engaging local youth in the history and nature at the park with our bi-weekly Trekker Kids programs. These will resume in February 2022.

Travelers' Rest is proud to offer indigenous programming - this year, we have two Indigenous Art Markets, as well as numerous cultural demonstrators. We hope to increase indigenous programming in 2022 - be sure to check out our Instagram and Facebook page for event happenings!

Travelers' Rest Connection, the park's friends group, has resumed Storytelling events, which currently are on the first Saturday of the month on Zoom. These are free events and you can register at <https://travelersrest.org/events/winter-storytelling/>. Starting in January, our annual Winter Storytelling event will continue with a weekly speaker on Saturdays at 11 am in 2022. These programs will both be in person and on zoom, so be sure to sign up the previous website to enjoy these programs! Topics and speakers range from indigenous perspectives to natural history to Lewis and Clark Expedition stories.



Photos: Dale Dufour

As the summer season slowed down, Montana State Parks staff and AmeriCorps members took a day trip to Big Hole





Battlefield to learn about the nimí-pu story. This staff exchange allowed Parks staff to learn from National Park Service staff about the stories they tell at their park. This enlightening journey helped both the NPS and State Parks staff exchange ideas and knowledge about careers, working with visitors, and telling difficult yet incredibly important stories in our public lands.

- Maci MacPherson, Park Manager
Travelers' Rest, Fort Owen, and
Painted Rocks State Parks



NEWS FROM THE FOREST SERVICE Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest

Kearstin Edwards Appointed to the Chief's Wilderness Advisory Board

It is my great pleasure to congratulate our own Kearstin Edwards for being selected as the Region 1 representative to the Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group. This is a tremendous honor and responsibility as Kearstin will be one of a select group of field practitioners who will advise the Chief and Washington Office staff on wilderness management issues and initiatives. Kearstin was selected based on her dedication and understanding of the wilderness resource as well as her understanding of challenges and processes in the field at the Forest and Wilderness Area level. With her background and knowledge of wilderness across the Region she will be able to provide pragmatic advice and solutions to big picture strategies at the national level. Congratulations Kearstin and thank you for representing the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and Northern Region so well!

- Cheryl F. Probert, Forest Supervisor
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests



Photo: US Forest Service

Lolo Pass Visitor Center

This year at the Lolo Pass Visitor Center was an odd one. Most of last season was spent with the main center closed, providing service only through the window. After a year, and an official okay we were able to open our doors again for two weeks until we were evacuated and shut again for some wildfires that were a little too close for comfort. Once the wildfire danger had subsided, we once again were able to open our doors and provide our normal services to the public.

Over the season we had to get creative with how we could continue to provide interpretive services to the public, our staff were able to adapt to the ever-changing conditions and focus our efforts to providing over 32 interpretive Ranger Talks to campgrounds along the NPNHT.

In the spring we were able to provide a 3-day interpretive event with Roger Ammerman in the middle of the Camas bloom of Packer Meadow, Roger talked



with hundreds of visitors about everything from the cultural significance of the camas root to Lewis and Clark's first experience digesting the plant.

For Public Lands Day we were able to have several interpreters come up to the pass to celebrate the day with us. Talks ranged from blacksmithing, to the history of fur trapping in the area, to Public Lands Day themed games for kids provided by one of our rangers.

Currently our winter hours are Wednesday-Monday 7:30-3pm PST, we're excited to kick off the new season and already the snow is starting to pile up!



Photos: Samantha Bergland



- Samantha Bergland, Visitor Center Manager



NEWS FROM THE NEZ PERCE TRAIL FOUNDATION

For the past two years, the Nez Perce Trail Foundation has been meeting with Leavenworth, Kansas city officials relative to the creation of a Nez Perce memorial dedicated to the Nez Perce who were incarcerated at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas following their surrender at Bear Paw, Montana. The captured Nez Perce were held at Ft. Leavenworth for approximately 9 months before being shipped by rail to Baxter Springs Kansas and were then forced to continue south by foot into Oklahoma Indian Territory where they were finally located.

The image at the top right is a rendering the City of Leavenworth would like to see constructed to honor the Nez Perce who were unjustly imprisoned at Ft. Leavenworth. The proposed monument will be located in a Leavenworth City Park. The estimated cost of the project is \$56,500 and the Foundation is currently working with the City of Leavenworth and Leavenworth Main Street to create a fundraising strategy. More about how you can contribute to this worthy endeavor will be forthcoming.



Photo: Dick Seymour

Another project on the Foundation's 2022 calendar is the replacement of the interpretative signage at Imnaha, Oregon. The large wooden signage is in danger of collapsing under its own weight. The support columns for the sign have been reinforced and hopefully the sign will remain standing until it can be replaced. The textured surface that includes the US Forest Service logo is very near unreadable. The Foundation plans to replace this important historical interpretative signage this coming summer.

This past July, a full presentation on the Nez Perce War of 1877 was given to those Vietnam Veterans attending the D Company, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment reunion in Louisville, Kentucky. A survey of those in attendance revealed that only those veterans from the Northwest were familiar with the Nez Perce or the War of 1877. The presentation created a great deal of interest among several in the audience to take advantage of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail Auto Tours and the Nez Perce National Historical Park sites.

- Jim Zimmerman, President
Nez Perce Trail Foundation



NEWS FROM BITTER ROOT CULTURAL HERITAGE TRUST

Over the past several months the Bitter Root Cultural Heritage Trust has continued ongoing work to establish meaningful interpretation throughout the Bitterroot Valley with an emphasis on the Nez Perce NHT. Of course, we wander a bit beyond the Bitterroot when it is helpful to the Trail.

The BRCHT worked with NPNHT and Forest Service officials to pen the NATIVE Act request and we are well pleased with the progress to date as you can see from the information in the stories above. Three cheers for fearless proposal writing! If you have a project to raise funds for and need help thinking through your campaign, we would be glad to offer our thoughts and ideas.

The BRCHT is honored to have received a Challenge Cost Share from the FS/NPNHT to undertake development of a trail-wide partnership plan. With CoViD waning, project planning and prework will take place over the winter. Then in Spring and Summer, CoViD permitting, we plan to travel the entire length of the trail to meet and work with as many existing partners as possible. And, of course, we will have eyes wide open to identify potential new partners. More on this work, and, most importantly, how you can participate and help, will be in future Progress Reports.

Lastly, believing that communication among and between us is of tremendous value, the BRCHT has taken on the task of helping Sandi with quarterly Progress Reports. We are interested in your ideas on how to make it most useful to you and fair warning, we will be reaching out to encourage your contributions. So during your daily work be storing away the exciting tidbits you have to share for the next Progress Report! There will be prizes!

- Kristine Komar, President
Bitter Root Cultural Heritage Trust



NEWS FROM NEZ PERCE TRIBE

Nee-Me-Poo Trail Maintenance, 2021

Each year, the NPNHT and Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest together fund a Participating Agreement for the Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries and Resource Management, Watershed Division to accomplish work on the Lolo Trail whose corridor also includes the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails. The work along the trail is accomplished with Forest Service partners and comprises, clearing out, logging out, loose rock removal, drainage maintenance, brush cutting, slide maintenance, and tread repair. The all-Nez-Perce crew camps out on 2-7 day hitches as they accomplish their work.

For this project, the Tribe provides job training and education programs that provide tribal members with outdoor skills, job ethics, and community and independent living skills. This opportunity is an avenue for positive self-development, addressing pertinent life issues, and for contributing to their community. Programs managed by the tribe will introduce tribal members to the management of natural and cultural resources on National Forest System lands

Trail maintenance completed in 2021 took place during two two-week time periods and resulted in work on 18 miles of trail from Musselshell Meadows to 500 Road. Future work was also planned out to include weed treatment and continued prioritization on water bar replacement, removal and recycling of un-needed rebar, and remarking the trail.

As a conclusion to the report the authors wrote: *“The Nimi’ipuu have used the Lolo Neemepoo (k’usey’ne’ i’skit) expedition trail since time immemorial and are inextricably linked to the trail. As co-managers of the trail, the Nez Perce Tribe Watershed Division is compelled and dedicated to protecting landscapes, restoring the trail and preserving associated knowledge integral to the perpetuation of historic values through meaningful consultation.”* Would that we could all feel so connected and committed to our landscape.

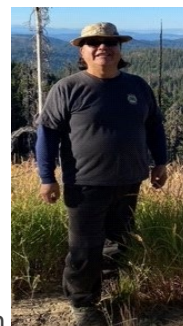
Many thanks to the Nez Perce Field Crew:



Ira Ellenwood



Doug Jackson



Levi Pinkham

Photos: Abe Yearout

Forest Service Partners: Adam Muscarella (Trails Technician), Carol Hennessey (Rivers, Wilderness, Outfitter & Guide, Trails & Recreation Program Manager), Kearstin Edwards (Central Zone Recreation Staff), Sandra Broncheau-McFarland (NPNHT Administrator).

- Justine Peterson, Project Leader V
- Abe Yearout, Specialist I
Department of Fisheries and Resource Management,
Watershed Division



NEWS FROM NEZ PERCE TOURISM LLC

Nez Perce Tourism LLC (www.nezperce traditions.com) picked up the Best Cultural Heritage Experience award at the annual excellence in Tourism Industry Awards Gala, hosted by the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AINTA) at their recent national conference. Read the story by Patty Talahongva in [Indian Country Today](#).

Stacia Morfin, Owner of Nez Perce Tourism, also presented with Forest Service Program Manager for Travel, Tourism, and Interpretation, Toby Bloom, at AINTA's 23rd Annual American Indian Tourism Conference. The conference was held at the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort and hosted by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation in Scottsdale, AZ. The conference attracted over 300 attendees and 800 virtual participants.

Stacia was also a presenter at the Partnership for the National Trail System (PNTS) 2021 Virtual National Trails Workshop, November 1-4, at the *Indigenous Voices: Collaboration and Engagement* session, where, of course, she highlighted the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.



Photo: Nez Perce Tourism, LLC

A NEW FACE ALONG THE TRAIL

New Forest Supervisor for Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

PORTLAND, OR, *September 20, 2021* — Pacific Northwest Regional Forester Glenn Casamassa announced the selection of Shaun McKinney as the new Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor. McKinney joins the Forest Service from the West National Technology Support Center, where he leads a team providing direct assistance, training, and innovative natural resources technological solutions to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff throughout the western United States.

“Shaun has worked in both public and private land conservation, drawing on his background as a fisheries biologist to inform his strategic direction and oversight of a large team tasked with developing and implementing innovative technical solutions for field science staff working on a variety of complex natural resource issues,” Casamassa said. “His considerable experience in organizational leadership, science-based decision-making, and innovative problem-solving will serve him well as he serves the residents and communities of eastern Oregon as Forest Supervisor on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.”

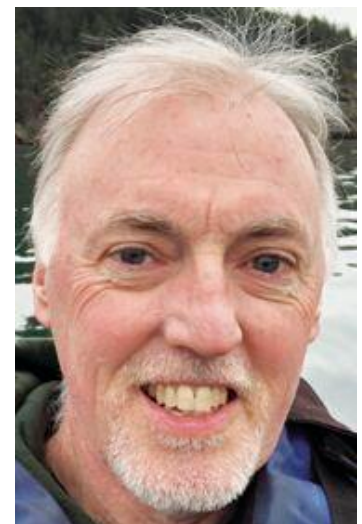


Photo: US Forest Service

McKinney's career includes previous leadership positions with both USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and with the Forest Service.


While serving as the NCRS West Technology Support Center director, McKinney served temporarily in Senior Executive Service assignments, as acting National Director of the agency's Natural Science Division, providing leadership on national science policy for the agency, and as acting Deputy Chief for Science and Technology, providing oversight of ecological science, soil health, engineering and technology support offices and initiatives across the U.S. Previously, he served as the agency's National Water Quality and Quantity Team Leader.

In his previous work for the Forest Service, McKinney was based in Corvallis, Oregon, where he led large teams charged with developing software-based technological solutions, such as databases and analysis tools, to support aquatic, watershed and fisheries research and program needs.

His background in natural resources management includes work as an aquatic analyst in the Pacific Northwest, conducting research for the Pacific Northwest Research Station's Aquatic Science Team, and as a biologist on the Umatilla and Siuslaw National Forests. He's also represented USDA as a technical and policy expert on water policy and natural resources for international projects in Jordan, in support of the Israel and Palestinian Peace Process, and for the government of Madagascar.

McKinney has a Masters of Fisheries Science and Statistics from Oregon State University and a Bachelor of Science from Michigan State University. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. "I'm looking forward to returning to the Blue Mountains, where I began my career, to work together with the staff, communities and partners on healthy ecosystems and economies. It will be an exciting next chapter filled with challenges and opportunities," McKinney said.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 24-28, 2022	Hike the Hill Virtual Issue Briefings	
February 14-18, 2022	Hike the Hill Virtual Group Meetings	
June 11, 2022	National Get Outdoors Day	
October 2022	24th Annual American Indian Tourism Conference (AINTA) , TBA	
August 2022	Chief Joseph Trail Ride #56 , Musselshell Meadows (Near Pierce, ID), www.appaloosa.com/chief-joseph-trail-ride	
April 17-21, 2023	International Trails Symposium , Reno NV, www.americantrails.org	

Please Note: Numerous events have been cancelled or postponed due to the current Public Health Emergency. Watch for additional updates on our website. Be well and be safe.



Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest
Photo: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland



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AUTUMN ALONG THE AUTO TOUR ROUTES



Top Photo, Dennis Baird: Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest
Bottom Photo, Joni Packard: Interpretive Signs on the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway, Wyoming.



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Fall 2021

