



Cowlitz Indian Tribe

July 30, 2004

Tom Melanson, Project Leader
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex
P.O. Box 457
Ridgefield, WA 98642

In review of the Draft Environmental Assessment of July 12, 2004 Building and Interpreting the Cathlapotle Plankhouse, I have found the following errors. On pages- 6,7,8,9,10,24,25, and Appendix 1-2, and Appendix 3 page 5. Comments that the Cowlitz were present after 1830, and then only briefly. This conflicts with the FWS publication on Cathlapotle of 1999, page 14, "...so while Cathlapotle was in Chinookan territory it's occupants very likely include Cowlitz"... The works of R. Boyd and E. Hajda support this

Further, it is not made clear that the Lower Chinooks were never residents, indeed the Lewis and Clark Journals tell us "...those from below Oak Point do not come above, nor do those from above visit the mouth of the river"...(Columbia). The Lower Chinooks were not even visitors at that time.

The Lower Chinooks recognition petition tells us that they are descended from people living in Pacific County Washington; they are not related to anyone who did live at Cathlapotle. The failure to define, and correctly use the terms Chinook and Chinookan. The frequent misuse of the terms Chinook and Chinookan thru-out the document, is indeed far more often than not. The failure to explain, that at the time of Lewis & Clark, there were Upper and Lower Chinooks which were separate cultures.

The failure to explain that the term "Chinookan " applies equally to all 13 Chinookan Tribes, not solely to the Lower Chinook. The Chinookans were grouped because of cultural and linguistic similarities. Though the Chinookans shared much they were independent tribes with individual names and identities. To overlook that and assign their tribal identity to someone else is wrong. Perhaps the ultimate act of cultural genocide is to write a tribe out of history.

The failure to explain that the term "Chinookan" refers to a linguistic and cultural grouping, not a political entity. There never was a "Greater Chinookan Nation". The net result of these errors is that people who have no documentation as such are wrongly called residents.

Statements that are in error and as such easily disproven have no place in a historic presentation, especially a publicly funded presentation on public property. To present erroneous information as fact reduces the credibility of the project and all associated with it.

I have enclosed an example of such erroneous work from the "Plankhouse web-site".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Iyall".

Mike Iyall, For the Cowlitz Indian Tribe

cc. John Barnett, Tribal Chair
cc. Bill Iyall, Tribal Council Chair



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex



Summer Student Program Aids In Planning For Lewis & Clark Bicentennial

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Attracted by the chance to get involved with planning for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, EDAW, an international environmental planning, site design and landscape architecture firm, selected the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) as the project for its 20th annual Summer Student Program in June 2000. The EDAW Summer Student Program is a widely-recognized work-study program that attracts students from all over the world for an intensive two-week charrette style workshop addressing real project issues. This creative collaboration of students and professionals is held in a different retreat-style setting each year. Following the workshop, the students are hosted by one of EDAW's worldwide offices for a paid 8-week office internship.

At Ridgefield NWR, students in landscape architecture, environmental planning, and wildlife and fisheries biology identified potential opportunities for education and interpretive sites, trails, and an interpretive and education center to aid the refuge in preparing to host the thousands of visitors anticipated during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in 2003-2006. **X Both an ancient Chinook town site**, described by Lewis and Clark on November 5, 1805, and visited by them on March 29, 1806, and the Lewis and Clark expedition's campsite on the night of March 29, 1806, are located on the refuge. The on-going archaeological study of Cathlapotle, as the **X Chinook town site** is known, is the result of a partnership between the Service, the Chinook Tribe, and Portland State University and has yielded a rich record of daily life on the lower Columbia River both before and at the time of Lewis and Clark's visit. This formed the foundation of the education and interpretation program designed by the EDAW Summer Student

Bicentennial Program.

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Refuge staff, EDAW staff, and other design professionals participated with the students as a team. At the conclusion of the two week workshop, the students prepared a final product and publicly presented it to the Service and other interested groups and individuals, such as the refuge friends group, city council members, and congressional staff. A final version of the conceptual plans and designs created by the students of visitor facilities for Ridgefield NWR has recently been published and is on display at the Ridgefield Community Library located at 210 N. Main Avenue, Ridgefield, Washington, (360) 887-8281. Additional copies are available for viewing at the Refuge Headquarters office.

The Service is fortunate to have been selected to receive this valuable and exciting professional pro bono service and plans to use the final publication as a tool for pursuing funds and support for the discovery center and other visitor facilities designed by the students.

EDAW usually anticipates up to 150 applicants for the highly sought after slots in their Summer Student Program every year. Selection is based on originality, creative conceptual design, critical thinking, technical skills, written and graphic communication skills, and team-level participation skills. More information on the EDAW Summer Student Program is available on the EDAW website at www.edaw.com.

Getting Involved

To proceed in efforts to develop the discovery center and other visitor facilities for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, the Service recognizes the need to form partnerships. One such partnership exists between the Service and the Friends of Ridgefield NWR, a newly formed non-profit refuge support group. Among other things, the Friends are devoted to being one of the driving forces behind the establishment of an environmental and cultural education (discovery) center for the Refuge and community. They are committed to forming partnerships and spearheading fundraising efforts for the construction and operation of the center and are eager to share the vast information about the natural and cultural resources of the refuge and the Ridgefield area. It is important to the Friends that these resources are protected for continuing the education benefits to present and future generations.

For more information about the Friends group or how to become involved in their projects, write to Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, PO Box 1022, Ridgefield, Washington 98642, or call the Refuge Headquarters office at (360) 887-4106. or visit their website at <http://www.ridgefieldfriends.org/>

Archaeological Information

Cathlapotle

- Lewis and Clark, on their voyage down the Columbia River in 1805, identified a large Chinook village located at the confluence of the Columbia River, Lake River and the Lewis River. Lewis and Clark estimated that 900 inhabitants lived at the village and returned to trade and visit with them on their return trip on March 29, 1806.
- ✕ Because of the significance of this archaeological site and its association with the Chinook people, the proposed discovery center would likely be where the artifacts and data collected from the site would be curated and interpreted. It is the desire of the Chinook people to have them located as near to the site as possible and to serve as a testament of their culture and history.

Wapato Portage

- Wapato portage is the name given to the site described by Lewis and Clark as the place where they camped one mile upstream of the village they had just visited. There they witnessed the Chinook women harvesting wapato by portaging their canoes from Lake River, filling their canoes with the tubers, then portaging back into Lake River to return to the village. Wapato is a moist soil native plant with a large starchy tuber and was one of the major dietary staples found along the lower Columbia River. It still grows on the refuge today in many ponds and wetlands and is a favorite food of wintering tundra swans. Unlike many of the materials that were used by the Chinook people on the refuge, one thing that still remains is the abundant wildlife and natural resources that the people depended upon for their survival.

For more detailed information about the archeological sites located on Ridgefield NWR, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cultural Resources Division, 20555 SW Gerda Lane, Sherwood, Oregon 97140, (503) 625-4377 or visit their website at [CR Website](#)



Cowlitz Indian Tribe

August 9, 2004

Thomas J. Melanson, Project Leader
Ridgefield NWR Complex
P.O. Box 457
Ridgefield, WA 98642

Dear Mr. Melanson,

On review we find it necessary to write an addendum to our comments on the -Draft E A on the Plankhouse.

After two years of meetings and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the FWS continues to leave the Cowlitz Indian Tribe out of the consultation process. We are the nearest federally recognized tribe, NEPA rules require consultation with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. The mailing of the completed draft is the first communication initiated by FWS in this process. Perhaps most importantly, we are the tribe listed as likely residents in an FWS publication, and yet our name is not in this Environmental Assessment (EA) as residents.

We are people. We are proud of our history and to see our role in our homeland ignored and written out of history is an injustice to all of our people. This must change, the Cowlitz must be involved. Not begrudgingly or in token ways, but meaningful and significant involvement.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Barnett".

John Barnett, Chairman



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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 Ridgefield, Washington 98642-0457
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The Honorable John Barnett, Tribal Chair
 Cowlitz Indian Tribe
 P.O. Box 2547
 Longview, WA 98632-8594

August 24, 2004

Honorable John Barnett,

The Refuge staff has received your letters dated July 30, 2004, and August 9, 2004, in response to the draft Environmental Assessment (EA), Building and Interpreting the Cathlapotle Plankhouse, prepared in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We have also received your letter dated August 4, 2004, regarding information on tribal history, a topic which we will address under a separate cover letter as it does not relate to the EA. The Service is committed to addressing the issues of concern posed in your letters and will strive to identify and rectify perceived shortcomings in the draft EA.

We are concerned that the Cowlitz Tribe considers receipt of the draft EA as the “first communication” by the FWS with the Tribe regarding the NEPA process. When we entered into the process of developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Cowlitz Tribe, it was with the express intent to address the Tribe’s concerns regarding government to government consultation for the NEPA process on the Refuge. It was our understanding that Mike Iyall and Bill Iyall represented the Tribe during the consultation process, and we interpreted your signature on the final MOU as supportive of that authority.

The draft EA was developed incorporating the points of consensus reached in the MOU. Specific examples include: the use of the term Chinookan and Cathlapotle Chinookan throughout when referring to the Cathlapotle people to avoid confusion with the modern Chinook Tribe; reference to the presence of Cowlitz in the area of the Refuge; and the inclusion of the Cowlitz in the development of interpretation and education programs on the Refuge to ensure they appropriately reflect Cowlitz cultural aspects.

We have now provided the document for your review as another step in the consultation process. As the comments prepared for the Tribe by Mike Iyall in his July 30, 2004, letter indicate, the Tribe has identified areas where further discussion, clarification, or correction may be necessary.

It was agreed in the MOU that Cathlapotle is to be identified as “an example of the Chinookan culture.” As such, the draft EA for the Chinookan-style plankhouse focuses on its Chinookan history and the goal to construct it as a structure for the interpretation of Chinookan culture. In keeping with the spirit of the MOU, the term Chinook is only used in reference to the Chinook Tribe, who is a partner in the project.

Mr. Iyall cites that “the frequent misuse of the terms Chinook and Chinookan thru-out the document, is indeed far more often than not.” We did find a typographical error on page 33 in which a reference to Chinookans is misidentified as Chinook. We regret the error and will change this reference in the final EA. We were not able to identify any other instances, however, in which the terms were misused. Please advise us if you are aware of other specific instances we may have overlooked.

It was not our intent to infer or imply in the document that there was a "Greater Chinookan Nation," as Mr. Iyall states, but we agree that a clarification of terms is warranted to provide a framework for the lay reader. We propose to include a paragraph at the beginning of the document that defines the difference between the prehistoric and historic Chinookan cultural and linguistic group that is the focus of the project and the Chinook Tribe which is the modern political entity referred to throughout the document as a partner:

Cathlapotle, located on what is now the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), was one of nineteen Chinookan towns recorded by Lewis and Clark in the Wapato Valley. The term Chinookan refers to the culturally and linguistically related groups who occupied the Columbia River from the upstream end of the river's gorge (near the present town of The Dalles, Oregon), to the river's mouth, and along adjacent portions of the present coasts of Washington and Oregon. Lower Chinook was spoken by peoples living on both sides of the river's mouth, and Middle/Upper Chinook was spoken along both sides from the river's estuary upriver through the Gorge. Cathlapotle is considered to be within the Middle/Upper Chinookan language area. The modern Chinook Tribe represents the Lower Chinook-speaking Cathlamet, Clatsop, Willapa, and Chinook Proper and the Middle Chinook-speaking Wahkiakum peoples, all located downriver from Cathlapotle.

We hope that by adding this paragraph we will address Mr. Iyall's closing concern that "statements that are in error and as such easily disproven have no place in a historic presentation..." Mr. Iyall enclosed an example of a presentation of "erroneous information" with his letter, citing it as a page from the "Plankhouse web-site." While the internet document in question is in no way related to the draft EA, it is located on the website maintained by the staff of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. It should be noted that this site is actually separate from the Cathlapotle Plankhouse Website and in fact was prepared four years ago before the plankhouse project was initiated. We thank you for calling to our attention the fact that this website still had an outdated reference to "Chinook." The page will be appropriately modified. As agreed to during the consultation process, both the Plankhouse website (www.plankhouse.org) and the Region 1 Cultural Resources Program (<http://pacific.fws.gov/CRM/INDEX.HTM>) were thoroughly reviewed and revised in February 2004. Please let us know if you come across any more of the outdated references in our internet materials which may have been inadvertently overlooked.

Mr. Iyall also refers to errors he identified regarding the presence of Cowlitz at Cathlapotle, primarily regarding the historic timeframe. We acknowledge our commitment to address the Cowlitz presence in the area of the Refuge on page 5 of the EA, "... new information has provided impetus for inclusion of cultural aspects related to the Cowlitz Tribe into this process." The extent and duration of Cowlitz presence in the area continues to be a point of debate between the FWS and the Tribe, and further discussion regarding the historic evidence will help us interpret aspects of Cowlitz history as presented in the MOU.

Thank you once again for sharing your concerns about the NEPA process and the draft EA. I hope we have addressed these issues and reassured you that we are committed to working closely with you and further developing our relationship with the Tribe. Currently the refuge staff is experiencing a transition of leadership with Tom Melanson's promotion; in the interim I will be the Acting Project Leader until early October when we expect our new Project Leader Tim Bodeen to arrive. I would be happy to meet with your Tribal Council to clarify these issues and further understand any outstanding concerns. It might also provide an opportunity to introduce Tim to the Tribal Council. I appreciate the valuable time that we both spent developing the MOU and look forward to working closely with you in the near future.

Sincerely,



Rebecca E. Young

Acting Project Leader

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex

