

PRESS RELEASE

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Native Villagers at Today's Blue Lake Park Help Lewis and Clark Learn Geography

FAIRVIEW, OREGON. Thanks to the original people living near today's Blue Lake Park, Lewis and Clark provided the world's first written record of the Willamette and Sandy River drainage. Descendants today are part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde who are helping plan and implement a tribute to Nichaqwli village August 6.

Heading up the Columbia after wintering at Fort Clatsop, the Expedition meets a resident of Nichaqwli (nee chalk lee), who tells them about a big river they missed twice before. The guide takes a few men downstream and into a channel hidden by islands of the Columbia. Today's experts believe the Clark party went as far as the St. Johns bridge area. The captains speculate this river might drain California and understand it to be called the Multnomah for one of the local tribes.

"Encounter at Nichaqwli" will be staged Saturday, August 6 to commemorate the sizable population of Upper Chinookan people who called this region home. A monument to Nichaqwli will be dedicated at 1:30 p.m. as part of an afternoon-long series of performances and demonstrations depicting life on the river 200 years ago. The 1-8 p.m. event signals the first of many fall and winter activities to mark the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in Oregon Country (see www.lcbo.net and www.lewisandclark-clark.org)

The idea for a permanent monument was originally proposed by members of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. Financial support comes from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Lewis & Clark Bicentennial of Oregon/Oregon Heritage Commission, Metro Regional Government, and the National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program. Grant funds and in-kind support for the afternoon event also come from Portland Oregon Visitors Association (POVA), Community Newspapers Inc., Oregon National Guard, Northwest Natural and West Gorge Chamber of Commerce.

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Location of the monument is in tranquil wetlands at the west end of Blue Lake away from busy boating, swimming and picnic facilities. Working with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Circle of Tribal Advisers Representative Elaine LaBonte, and the Cultural Committee of the Grand Ronde Tribe, local artists Fernanda D'Agostino and Valerie Otani are planning elements to suggest life along the Columbia River. [Culturally relevant local resources will be used in the monument.](#)

From 1-4 p.m., West Coast Bank will be offering public access to the fourth (and last) nickel in the Bicentennial series which is being released August 5 in Ilwaco, Washington. The freshly-minted coin depicts the Corps of Discovery's arrival at the mouth of the Columbia in November 1805.

"While Lewis and Clark ran out of blue beads to trade for supplies," says Robert D. Szniewajs, CEO of West Coast Bank, "we will have an armored car loaded to assure an equal exchange of cash for \$2 rolls of the new nickels long before broad national distribution by the U. S. Mint begins." The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco is planning a family learning opportunity on how early trade items preceded the use of coins and currency

Elders and members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde plan a variety of traditional demonstrations between 1 and 8 p.m. Drumming, singing, basket making, storytelling and moccasin making will be featured. Visitors can taste salmon baked original ways on cedar racks. Tribal members will prepare and sell fry bread, Indian tacos and authentic art and crafts until dusk.

During the afternoon, Lewis and Clark living historians will answer questions about their Columbia River trip. Other demonstrations feature plants and animals of the Columbia River, survival techniques, music of the Trail and portrayals of Francois Rivet dancing on his hands to fiddle music by world-class break dancer Alex Gibray from Los Angeles. Rivet was a French-speaking boatman hired by Lewis and Clark to help move the boats to and from Fort Mandan. He later homesteaded in the Willamette Valley and is buried in the old St. Paul Church cemetery.

Since there is no record of Sacagawea and Toussaint Charbonneau's son Jean Baptiste having a first birthday party while at Fort Clatsop, members of the West Gorge Chamber of Commerce are offering free 200th birthday cake in his honor. Nicknamed Pomp, he grows to manhood, learns several languages while living in Europe, and dies in 1866 while traveling through eastern Oregon to seek gold in Montana. His grave is in Danner, Oregon some 17 miles from Jordan Valley. An artist's rendition of infant Pomp and his mother are on the U.S. gold dollar coin that will also be sold by West Coast Bank at the August 6 event.

Other exhibitors will provide information on 200 years of change in the environment and Bicentennial activities coming up this fall in the Portland/Vancouver region and across the Northwest.

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US Fish and Wildlife Service personnel will provide continuous displays, including information on the condor first described by Lewis and Clark in the Columbia Gorge. Metro interpreters will lead walks in the Blue Lake wetlands from 1 to 5 p.m.

“Encounter at Nichaqwli” is also the opening day for the 37th national meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation meeting in Portland through Wednesday, August 10. A day camp for children in grades 1-12 begins at Blue Lake August 6 then moves to Lewis & Clark College. Designed to reflect the multicultural diversity of the Expedition, the camp will include young people from native, black, Hispanic, Asian, Russian and European backgrounds since their ancestors were also part of the Lewis and Clark story. For registration details, email education@lcbo.net

Blue Lake Park is located in Fairview north of I-84 at Exit 14, then follow Park signs toward the Columbia. Visitors arriving by car at Blue Lake Park pay a \$4 per vehicle entry and parking fee. Because of a triathlon in the Park that morning, visitors will be able to enter the Park after 11:30.

Across the river in Washougal, the new Captain Clark Park will be dedicated on Sunday, August 7 at 10 a.m... This is believed to be the site where the Corps of Discovery met their Nichaqwli guide while pausing six days to gather food for the upriver trip.

Long-term plans by Metro Parks and Greenspaces call for an education and interpretation center not far from the monument. Students and families will have access to detailed information on the plants and animals used by local tribes for millennia and learn which ones were first documented for science by Lewis and Clark.

Troutdale Historical Society, not far from Blue Lake Park, features a large Lewis and Clark exhibit during the Bicentennial. The display hall highlights the entire journey, but emphasizes the expedition’s time at the Sandy River.

The “Ocean in View” national nickel release is scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday, August 5 at Cape Disappointment State Park in Ilwaco, Washington. An official 12 inch NOAA survey marker depicting Lewis and Clark’s arrival will also be dedicated at the same location and time. For details, go to www.destinationthepacific.com

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