



# • TAMÁSTLIKT •

CULTURAL INSTITUTE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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A canoe carved from a log, typical of the Native canoes that plied the Columbia River in historical times, provides a clue to the importance of the river and Celilo Falls to the fishing culture of the Tribes here. A new exhibit at Tamastlikt Cultural Institute describes the life and death of Celilo Falls, drowned beneath a dam that backed up the river on March 10, 1957. For thousands of years the falls provided a central gathering place for trading tribes who traveled to Celilo from what is now southern Alaska to Northern California and east to the Rocky Mountains. The new exhibit is open to the public through June 10..

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Tamástslikt Cultural Institute will kick off the year with a commemoration of one of the most devastating events for Tribes along the Columbia River, the 1957 destruction of Celilo Falls, once the most popular fishing and trading place in the Western U.S., before there was a U.S.

In fact, other Columbia River tribes with museums, including the Yakama and Warm Springs, are also expected to mount exhibits and stage events connected to the 50th anniversary of the inundation of Celilo Falls by the completion of the dam at The Dalles, Oregon. Then on March 10, the anniversary day of the inundation--despite the fact the falls had existed for thousands of years it took less than a day to cover with water behind the completed dam--representatives of many Columbia River tribes will meet near the former site of the falls. As part of the commemoration they will honor the fishers who have drowned there over millennia.

The Tamástslikt exhibit, *Pawiyálst'aksha Wayámna, Memorializing the Death of the Sound of the Falls*, will be open to the public Feb. 10-June 10, 2007. Tamástslikt will also host a separate, ancillary exhibit, *Discovering the Rivers of Lewis and Clark*, about the larger river systems, as a context to the story of the Columbia River. Both exhibits run concurrently.

Tamastslíkt is seeking loans of Celilo memorabilia from Indians or non-Indians to include on the community wall, part of the new exhibit. Items sought include photographs, newspaper clippings, receipts for Dalles Dam settlement expenditures, artwork, fishing gear, model canoes, even memories that people can record on video or audio.

“Celilo is such a powerful memory that the people of this community, whether Indian or non-Indian, can help us flesh out the story, and we are interested in all contributors,” said Susan Sheoships, Tamastslíkt education coordinator. “It’s especially important to create this exhibit for our own Tribal young people, who have heard about Celilo but were never able to witness it. That’s why we’re asking for the help of the community. Some people romanticize the days of Celilo while others do not, and we want to strike a true balance in our story.”

The exhibit will include a map where fishers can mark where they used to fish and write a description of their experience. Those with items to loan or memories to record can call 966-9748 and ask for Randall Melton (objects) or Susan Sheoships (appointment for recording).

Ken Karzmiski, director of The Dalles Discovery Center, was instrumental in developing the exhibit, helping Tamástslikt find rare historic photos and artifacts.

Among the sights for visitors to the exhibit are huge aerial photographs of Celilo Falls in 1935. Other chronological themes of the exhibit that Tamástslíkt is portraying in images and text are:

- Nature shapes the land (prehistoric Missoula flood)
- Nature shapes the people (Tamanwit, Indian law, oral tradition)
- Changing the nature of things (Lewis & Clark, Canadian explorer David Thompson, missionaries, Oregon Trail)
- People Change Nature:
  - Life on the river
  - Wave of Construction
- Fences, Fishwheels, Trespassing
- Lawsuits
- Modern Legend—Now Celilo is a modern legend to our own young people.
- Our people Recall/ Remember/Talk about Wayamna.

Launched in May 2001, the exhibit *Discovering the Rivers of Lewis and Clark* was produced by the American Rivers Council to enhance public interest in river conservation and to encourage citizen involvement in key decisions affecting the future of the rivers Lewis and Clark traveled. Already it has been viewed by more than 1.5 million visitors at 27 venues in 13 states, including Monticello, Virginia, in 2003 for the beginning of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration.

The American Rivers Council was designated as the official conservation partner for the three-year commemoration by the National Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Council. It designed this award-winning exhibit to enhance public interest in river conservation and to encourage citizen involvement in decisions about the rivers' futures.

According to Peter Carrels, a writer who oversaw the exhibit's design and construction and recently appeared at Tamástslíkt to set it up here, in three conceptual presentations the exhibit covers the four main Western rivers traversed by the Expedition. The rivers are the Missouri, Yellowstone, Snake and Columbia. The exhibit presents the story of the rivers as they were, as they are today after considerable human induced environmental changes, and, finally, as they may be if current efforts to restore the rivers are successful.

Visitors to the exhibit walk the length of the Lewis & Clark Trail, from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean, along the way learning about the rich river life that the explorers

encountered.

Exhibit visitors find inspiration in stories of communities now developing environmentally and economically sound riverfronts.

Cosponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The History Channel, and with content donated by National Geographic, the exhibit strikes an even-handed tone on matters of controversy.

It has been built to the highest standards by the makers of the D-Day Museum and the Kansas City Jazz Museum. The exhibit includes:

- Spectacular photographs, art reproductions, excerpts from Lewis and Clark journals and maps, and vivid narrative, covering the length of the Lewis & Clark Trail, from St. Louis to the Pacific.
- A mini-theater showing video shorts. Tamástslíkt has selected video of the Columbia River and especially of Celilo Falls for this section of the exhibit.
- Three audio stations on which visitors can hear voices of the past and present. According to Carrels, those are the voices of historical figures describing the rivers, others who explain the severity of the damage to the rivers' ecology, and yet others who are involved in restoring at least portions of those rivers.

Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute is located at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 10 minutes east of Pendleton. From Interstate 84 take exit 216 and follow the signs five minutes to Wildhorse Resort and the Institute. Coming from the north, take the Mission exit from Highway 11 just northeast of Pendleton and follow the signs for about ten minutes to the Wildhorse Resort and the Institute. Tamástslíkt is open 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition to exhibits telling the story of the three Tribes' history and culture, there is also a Museum Store and the Kinship Café.

For more information: 541-966-9748 or [www.tamastslíkt.org](http://www.tamastslíkt.org). Direct dial the museum store at tollfree 1-866-282-2022. Tamástslíkt is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

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