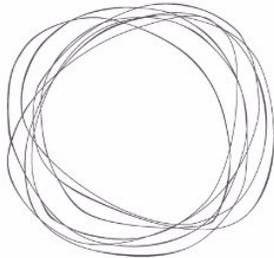


Connecting people to place through art and education.



confluence



Confluence in the Classroom: A Year in Review

With the 2015-16 school year ended, we're excited to report thousands of students at 11 schools across nine districts on both sides of the Columbia River worked with native artists and tradition keepers through [Confluence in the Classroom](#).

- Hundreds of students painted three murals covering 550 square feet of wall.
- 300 students wove cedar baskets.
- 35 kids created multimedia oral history about their connection to rivers.
- 15 students learned to play Native American flutes and made their own drums.
- 12 native youth made wing-dresses.
- 180 kids sat at the foot of She Who Watches at Columbia Hills State Park and listened to the stories of the N'chiwana, the Blg River.
- 400 students toured the Sandy River Delta and gathered traditional ecological knowledge at the confluence of the Sandy and Columbia Rivers.
- In Maupin, students learned winter stories and traditional and contemporary Native American songs and dances. Then they performed them in their community.

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- Yakama artist Toma Villa helped students at Vancouver's Discovery Middle School create mural encompassing the diversity of the school community.

Confluence in the Classroom was made possible this year by the generous support of the Bill Healy Foundation, Firstenburg Foundation, Gray Family Foundation, PGE Foundation, Roundhouse Foundation, U.S Bank Foundation and Wildhorse Foundation. Thank you!

Experiencing Confluence Through Multiple Senses

Zoriam Cooke finds the Confluence Land Bridge in Vancouver deeply meaningful and he wasn't going to let the fact that he's visually impaired stop him from sharing his multi-sensory experience. So he organized a tour for members of LIFT, an organization that helps visually impaired high school graduates transition to independent living, through Confluence in the Community and program manager Courtney Yilk. Just as Confluence aims to bring new perspectives to our sense of place, Zoriam expanded our perspective of this particular place by exploring the landscape through multiple senses. Participants tasted native thimbleberries on the Land Bridge's ethnobotanical walkway, smelled herbs in the Fort Vancouver garden, and examined the indigenous imagery on the Land Bridge's spirit baskets through touch.



Thanks to Zoriam and the excellent rangers and Blacksmith Theisen at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site! If you're interested in exploring the Land Bridge or any of Confluence sites in your own way, contact [Courtney Yilk](#), who took this photo.

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Stories From the River

First-person storytelling has a unique power to deepen our understanding of the history, culture and contemporary lives of native Northwest people. Confluence is developing an interactive online platform that will connect visitors and students to narratives that provide cultural and historical context to Confluence sites and the Columbia River system.

This year, Confluence is reigniting our oral history project with a series of interviews of native elders and cultural expert along the Columbia River system. They've agreed to share their stories of the river and their perspectives on preserving traditional cultures in a modern world. Nez Perce elders Wilfred "Scotty" and Bessie Scott spoke of their efforts to maintain public ceremonies that are powerful reminders to people today about our shared connection to the history of this land. Every April in Vancouver, Scotty leads a memorial with descendants of the Nez Perce Red Heart Band, whose families were imprisoned at Fort Vancouver in 1877. The purpose of the ceremony, Scotty told us, is not forgiveness or reconciliation but to simply honor the ancestors.

Stay tuned for more about this significant project. Photo courtesy of our film partners at NW Documentary.

Community Forums

Beginning next fall, Confluence will host a series of public forums that bring together tribal members, educators, scholars and community members to learn more about and participate in the Confluence Oral History Project. With support from the Oregon Community Foundation, our first four events will be held along the Columbia River. Check our website and upcoming newsletters for details about these forums.

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