

## **A GUIDE TO VISITING TRIBAL HOMELANDS DURING & AFTER THE LEWIS & CLARK BICENTENNIAL**

by The Circle of Tribal Advisors of the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial  
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We welcome you to our homelands – just as we welcomed Lewis & Clark, Sacagawea, York and the members of the Corps of Discovery two hundred years ago! Enjoy the wealth of educational and recreational opportunities we have to offer. Have you heard about tribal efforts to restore the buffalo to the Plains? Did you know just how important the salmon is to Northwest tribes? Have you ever taken a tour of a reservation? Or visited a tribal college? We have so much to show you! Visit our museums, historic sites, ranches, colleges and casinos. Attend a powwow, buy beautiful works of art, hike, camp, fish, dine, shop ... there is so much in store for you in our communities. *Welcome to our home!*

### **WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT AMERICAN INDIAN PEOPLE TODAY?**

#### **WE ARE STILL HERE.**

We are the physical manifestations of the dreams and prayers of our ancestors. This connection is alive, and it is the foundation of our existence today and for the future. But not every tribe is the same. We have different languages, songs and traditions. We even have different governments and histories. The Circle of Tribal Advisors consists of 40 contemporary tribes who represent most of the 100+ Indian nations whose homelands were traversed by Lewis and Clark. In fact, there is no such thing as a “typical” tribe. And after all that has happened in American history since the time of Lewis & Clark, we are still here.

#### **THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONTACT.**

By the time the Corps of Discovery came into contact with indigenous peoples, many tribes had experienced the consequences of contact. Smallpox, typhoid, influenza and measles wiped out hundreds of thousands of Native people. Later, conflicts with Euro-Americans grew more intense and more frequent as encroachment upon tribal lands and resources increased or promises were not kept. We have a shared history and all stories must be told.

#### **SAVING THE LANGUAGES OF THE EARTH.**

Our Native languages directly reflect the intimate knowledge of the ecosystems that have sustained us for millennia. But throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the U.S. government implemented policies to eradicate our languages and cultural practices in efforts to “civilize” and assimilate tribal people. In the few generations since, tribes nationwide have struggled to keep ancient languages alive. Language preservation and revitalization efforts are urgent races against time. Many tribes have language instruction and preservation programs. Today, tribal languages – and the indigenous ecosystems from which they came – are severely endangered and we are working to save them.

#### **PROTECTING OUR CONNECTIONS TO OUR ANCESTORS.**

There are thousands of tribal cultural resource areas, burial grounds and sacred sites along the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail. These are irreplaceable resources. They are the connections to our history, messages from our ancestors, treasures for our future and the cradle of our existence. The desecration, excavation, looting, vandalism, theft and destruction of these resource areas and sacred sites are a national disgrace. For us, they are irreparable losses. Our archaeological sites, sacred sites and burial sites are monuments, and like the monuments of other great nations, they deserve respect. Help us teach others how to respect them.

#### **TAKING CARE OF THE GIFTS: THE LAND AND THE WATER.**

Native lives and cultures are inextricably connected to the land, water and sky, and our ancestral union with them. The Creator bestowed these gifts upon us and we have the responsibility to ensure that they are protected. We come from these lands and we will always be here. Our children and seven generations to come will inherit healthy ecosystems and abundant natural resources if we make intelligent decisions today. We must remember this: all lands and water are precious.

#### **RESTORING THE BISON AND SALMON.**

The bison of the Plains and the salmon of the great Northwest rivers are sacred. They are as important to us as air is to our lungs. They are the Creator's great gifts – the wellspring of our spiritual, economic and social life. At the time of Lewis & Clark, and before the Columbia River was dammed, the salmon runs were a wonder of nature. Now, just 200 years later, some species of salmon recorded by Lewis & Clark are extinct; others are endangered. But salmon remains a dietary staple for Northwest tribes and the center of our ceremonial life. We are working hard to bring back the salmon. We are working just as hard to restore healthy bison herds to today's tribal lands. The bison was nearly exterminated by indiscriminate slaughter as America's westward migration grew. It is our responsibility to bring them back and reaffirm our relationship to this magnificent creature.

#### **THIS IS OUR HOME. WE WILL ALWAYS BE HERE.**

We are proud peoples. We are proud of our traditions, languages, arts and histories. We are proud of our achievements and contributions to American society-at-large, including those to the Lewis & Clark Expedition. We are part of this great American landscape. We come from these lands and we will always be here.