

Human Experience in the Great Basin

Symposium Overview & Call for Proposals



THE OREGON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
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Human Experience in the Oregon Great Basin:

Past and Present Ways of Knowing

Human beings have lived in, passed through, and had relationship with the landscapes, plants, and animals of the Great Basin for at least 14,000 years. That time has included significant transitions in climate and attendant changes in species and ecosystems, all of which resulted in changing lifeways for the people. Evidence of that deep history is present in the stories, knowledge, and traditional names created, preserved, and shared by Paiute and Klamath peoples as well as in physical reminders, such as caches of tools made for hunting, gathering, and utilitarian activities, in addition to storytelling and spiritual practices.

Beginning as early as the 1930s, researchers employing the Euro-American traditions of archaeology and anthropology began investigating those physical remains, seeking to better understand the deep history of people in the Great Basin. Their work resulted in broader recognition of the long history of humans in this place, but they regularly labored without collaborating, or even consulting, with the peoples whose ancestral history they investigated; this lack was compounded by tribal governments' need to resist or overcome adverse federal policies, such as termination, during much of the twentieth century. While researchers of earlier times paid close attention to artifacts' physical context, more recent advances in soil science and stratigraphy allow for greater details to be gained from contextual study of the ancient belongings they uncovered. During recent decades, researchers have returned to these places, seeking to reinvestigate the human history preserved there by employing new scientific tools and methods. They regularly consult with local tribal governments, and research groups have increasingly included members of the Klamath and Paiute Tribes. Nevertheless, there remains significant opportunity for increased collaboration with tribal people and governments and for greater attention to Indigenous perspectives. All this work is uncovering data and offering analyses that are helping craft more sophisticated understanding of some of the oldest human history not only in the Great Basin in Oregon but also on the continent of North America.

The *Oregon Historical Quarterly* seeks to bring public attention to partnership successes and opportunities and to help make new research as well as longstanding Indigenous knowledge available to a broad range of public and academic audiences, through a symposium and associated special issue of the journal. We plan to host a two-day symposium in Bend, Oregon, on November 5 and 6, 2022, and to publish the journal issue within the following twelve to sixteen months. The public will be invited, and educators will be especially encouraged to attend.

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Symposium Framework

Guided by Wilson Wewa and Diane Teeman

Day 1: Land & Resources (Water & Non-Human Relatives)

Day 2: People & Climate Change

Starting with land and resources (or water and non-human relatives) will allow for beginning the discussion in the time before human beings arrived on the land, when coyote and the animals prepared for that arrival together; day 1 is expected to include discussions of people, but the land and resources (including plants and animals) will serve as the framework. The subjects of people and climate change will address both historical and contemporary experiences of climate change.

Each day begins with a 1.5-hour presentation by Wilson Wewa, followed by Q&A, and will end with discussion by Diane Teeman, who will speak to the relationship between the Native and western knowledge systems. Archaeologists and anthropologists are invited to submit proposals to present on their research during each day.

This symposium is co-organized by:

Wilson Wewa (Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, CTWSR)

Diane Teeman (Burns Paiute Tribe)

Dennis Griffin (OHQ)

Katelyn McDonough (UNR)

Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes Historical Museum)

Eliza E. Canty-Jones (OHQ)

To Submit a Proposal

The organizing committee is seeking proposals for relevant talks of between 15 and 30 minutes. To submit a proposal, please use [this link](#) to provide your name and contact information; the title and brief description (not more than 250 words) of your talk; your bio; and the names, contact information, and bio for any co-presenters. **Proposals are due by August 1, 2022**, and the committee will notify proposers regarding its decisions no later than August 31, 2022. Please note that the intended audience for this symposium is the general public, so it will be helpful to consider engaging non-specialists as you are building your proposals.