

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pacific Regional Office
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181
Phone: 503/231-6121
Fax: 503/231-2122
<http://pacific.fws.gov>

News Release



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Contact: Susan Saul – 503.872.2728

CATHLAPOTLE PLANKHOUSE PARTNERSHIP WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Acting Interior Secretary Lynn Scarlett will present the Secretary of the Interior's Cooperative Conservation Award to the Cathlapotle Plankhouse Project Steering Committee at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, May 4, 2006.

The committee is being honored for outstanding achievements in conserving our Nation's cultural resources through construction of a modern, full-scale replica of a Chinookan-style cedar plankhouse on the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Ridgefield, Washington, between 2002 and 2005.

The plankhouse represents the homes occupied by the Native American people of the town of Cathlapotle, a community that thrived on the banks of the Columbia River near modern-day Ridgefield for thousands of years. Today, the town site is protected as a nationally recognized cultural resource located on the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge.

The goals of the committee were to create an opportunity for refuge visitors to learn about the rich cultural and natural history of the area, to commemorate the historic encounters between explorers Lewis and Clark and the native peoples of the Columbia River, and to provide the Chinook Tribe with an opportunity to practice their cultural traditions.

The plankhouse also serves as an educational resource for area schools and as a tourism destination for Clark County residents and visitors.

The committee members include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees Virginia Parks, Anan Raymond, Tom Smiley, Rebecca Young and Tom Melanson; former Service employee Yvette Donovan; Chinook tribal representatives Sam Robinson and Greg Robinson; community representatives Truman Sturdevant and Pat Campbell; and Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee of Vancouver/Clark County Executive Director Arlene Johnson.

Raymond, Johnson and Sam Robinson will travel to Washington, D.C., to accept the award.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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