

New Sign Honors Indigenous Peoples / Welcomes Visitors To the Long Tom Watershed

After twenty two-years serving the people, plants, and wildlife of the Long Tom Watershed, the Long Tom Watershed Council has installed new sign welcoming visitors and residents to this special and unique part of the Willamette Valley. Located at the geographic divide between the Willamette Valley and the Oregon Coast at Cougar Pass on Highway 126, the sign marks a significant local point of interest, and acknowledges the important indigenous origins and connections to this place.

The Watershed Council worked closely with Dr. David G. Lewis (Grand Ronde) on the design and language of the sign:

“The sign will honor the tribes who inhabited the watershed, the Chelamela and Chemapho tribes of Kalapuyans, who lived along the rivers and creeks of the watershed for more than 10,000 years. These tribes stewarded their lands by harvesting fruits and vegetables, and setting autumn fires to effectively control the overgrowth of vegetation and ensure the revival the land the next season. They saw the first American settlers into the area and helped them build their farms. In 1855 the Kalapuyans signed the Willamette Valley Treaty which was ratified, and in 1856 the Kalapuyans removed to the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation as their permanent home. The memory of the Kalapuyans and how they created this lush valley was veiled for over 100 years. In the past thirty years scholars and tribal members have worked to restore the cultural traditions, ecological knowledge, and history of the Kalapuyans. The Long Tom Watershed Council has worked hard to incorporate that history and knowledge into its projects and this sign helps bring awareness of the previous and current presence of the Kalapuyans people back to their traditional homelands. I am honored to have been a part of this collaborative project.” – **Dr. David G. Lewis** [ndnhistoryresearch.com]

“This sign isn’t just for visitors. It is also for those who live, work and play here to recognize and be proud of their role in the watershed. This sign is one small step toward supporting that “watershed community’ thinking, and forging a stronger sense of identity to this place to drive thoughtful stewardship of this home we share. At its most basic, a watershed is simply naming where water accumulates as it flows downhill. But culturally and ecologically, watersheds are so much more than that. Every watershed is unique – most have their own personalities and characteristics that contribute to our daily lives in important ways we may not realize. Those contributions are often quite personal, like where the rainwater leaving your roof or driveway goes (and who drinks it downstream), where your own drinking water comes from, what you can grow in your garden, even what kinds of jobs are available nearby, and where you can build a house. Around these unique characteristics of place, communities are built. People’s lives and culture have always been shaped by lands and waters where they live. The Long Tom is no different in how it shapes our lives here, and no less special for all its unique qualities. For this project, we were thrilled to receive David Lewis’ guidance on how we can best acknowledge the connection to, and ongoing stewardship of, this watershed by the Kalapuyan people. A camas flower was carefully chosen for the design to honor the enduring relationship between camas as a first food, and the people of the Long Tom Watershed.” – **Clinton Begley, Executive Director**

The sign was designed by [Discover Mac](#) of Eugene, and [Roseburg Forest Products](#) is generously hosting the sign on their forest property adjacent to Highway 126. **Funding for the design gifted by council donors. Additional donations are being accepted to cover the cost of sign printing and installation. The sign will be installed Friday June 14th, 2019.** More information about the sign’s design, indigenous people of the Long Tom, our partnership with Native people and and the robust history of the watershed council’s work, please visit www.longtom.org.

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Sign Design Draft (Installation Begins June 14th)



About the Long Tom Watershed:

The Watershed covers approximately 420 square miles and includes the communities of Veneta, Junction City, Monroe, and most of the City of Eugene. The watershed is home to over 180,000 people and represents diverse habitat types from its headwaters and tributaries high in the coast range, rare oak savannah and upland prairie habitats, wetland and wet prairie habitats including the West Eugene Wetlands, to Amazon Creek – the Long Tom’s largest tributary. The Long Tom is an important west-side tributary to the Willamette River as home for numerous native fish like the Coastal Cutthroat trout, seasonal juvenile spring Chinook salmon. Plus, rare plants like Kincaids lupine, bradshaw’s lomatium, and the Willamette daisy, as well as important bird species like the acorn woodpecker and streaked horned lark all call this special watershed home.

About the Long Tom Watershed Council

For 21 years The Long Tom Watershed Council has worked on behalf of its community to build a culture of neighbors helping neighbors to do the right thing for land & water in the home we share. From the Coast Range to the Willamette River and everything in between, this community expresses its values for clean water and healthy habitats through the council’s work – watershed wide.

The Long Tom Watershed Council is a unique and friendly local organization and a recognized leader in science and community-based watershed protection and restoration. LTWC was founded in 1998 by a diverse group of stakeholders including farmers, foresters, anglers, businesses, scientists, and conservationists who responded to the opportunity to act locally and cooperatively to address land and water issues under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. Since that time, we have worked across traditional boundaries to complete many education and restoration projects that document and improve local water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.

The foundations of the organization are current science, community education and collaborative relationships. We work closely with local people and organizations as well as regional representatives of state and federal agencies to develop and deliver appropriate strategies to maintain and improve water quality and habitat conditions of the Long Tom River Watershed. Through our three program areas – Habitat Restoration, Survey & Monitoring, and Community Engagement & Education, we are working for clean water and healthy habitats for people, fish and wildlife habitat in the upper Willamette Valley.