

## **BLM Study Review of Hells Canyon Complex Studies**

Native American Oral History Studies of the Hells Canyon Complex and Vicinity  
*Technical Report Appendix E.4-13*

Dean C. Shaw - Archaeologist, Four Rivers Field Office,  
Lower Snake River District, Boise, Idaho  
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### **1.INTRODUCTION**

Oral histories were gathered from Tribal Elders from the Burns Paiute Tribe.

The Warm Springs project sought to document the context and meaning of the cultural landscape by identifying knowledgeable members, training oral history interviewers, creating a data bank of oral histories, identifying cultural information on maps and adding oral histories to Tribal Archives.

A traditional cultural property (TCP) assessment sought to record oral histories, native place names and TCP locations for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

### **2.CONCLUSION**

Research on tribal issues will help the Burns Paiute Tribe and culture to flourish.

The Warm Springs project created a list of informed members, trained staff to be interviewers, but was not able to process all the interviews to create a data bank. The cultural information gathered was limited to a list of plants and place names that were not shared with the reader. Transcripts were not finished, so the data bank is not finished.

The Umatilla study recorded oral histories and noted place names and some TCPs.

### **3.STUDY ADEQUACY**

All three studies were difficult to judge because the results were not under the control of the contractors but relied on Tribal input. All three studies have established a solid base and continued progress should be measurable in the future.

The Warm Springs study did not address oral histories or TCPs.

The TCP study sought to document the *tangible evidence* with oral histories, but the biggest information gap is in the *intangible evidence* of TCP that *only* Tribal members can provide for archaeologists, anthropologists and land managers.

The Umatilla study was a good start, but additional work would be beneficial.

These studies only partially meet the goals set in *Study Plan 8.4.5*.

There was no input from the Nez Perce Tribes.

#### **4.BLM CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **CONCLUSIONS:**

The Burns Paiute Report was a good start but failed to add anything new to the literature of the area, it was very general and lacked details and insight. More detail is needed if the oral histories are going to capture Elder knowledge to be preserved in Burns Paiute Archives. Links to the actual Hells Canyon Complex relicensing project impact area need to be established.

The Warm Springs list of plant names in their native languages was educational.

The Umatilla report was a solid baseline report to which additional investigations can be tiered from.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Burns Paiute Report was a good start but failed to add anything new to the literature of the area, it was very general and lacked details and insight. Readers want to know how they made digging sticks and how they chose their root fields. Also, do they use traditional tackle or use purchased fishing equipment? Do they hunt with bows and arrows or use modern rifles? Please tell a few mythical stories or folklore and share some excerpts from the interviews with the Elders as a way to educate non-Indians and also to preserve their stories for the Tribal archives. Use page numbers. Describe the artifacts found and photographed. The map page was at too small of a scale to decipher meaningful data. Explain Photograph #9, such as did the member find the fish weight?, made it?, or used it?

For the Warm Springs study, more plants need to be identified. Also plants need to be expanded to answer questions such as: What were the plants used for?, How they were processed?, stored?, by whom?, when?, and where? It needs to address oral histories and TCP locations in the project area.

In the Umatilla report, when the place names were given; a discussion about present day use would have tied the report to the study plans and relicensing project better.

The Nez Perce Tribes should be represented.

