



Visitor Guide



The new exhibit at Big Hole National Battlefield took nearly five years to plan, fabricate, and install. Beginning in 2007 with the first scoping meetings, our partners were involved in every step of the process. The exhibits seen here are what you first encounter when you step into the lobby of the visitor center. The room to the right used to be where the film was shown. That has been moved to the doorway you see at the center of the photograph (NPS photo).

Welcome to the Park

Ta'c 'ee páayn. We are glad you are here.

Nez Perce National Historical Park tells the stories of the Nez Perce people, the NiimiiPuu. The park is made up of places important to the NiimiiPuu today, yesterday and tomorrow. From Old Chief Joseph's grave in Joseph Oregon to the Bear Paw Battlefield near Chinook Montana the Park's sites tell stories about people who were created to be on this land.

For 11,000 years the NiimiiPuu have been here. Their story is the story of the American Indian in all its glory and sadness. Park Rangers staff visitor centers in Spalding, Idaho and Wisdom, Montana. Other sites have staff, wayside exhibits or trail guides. Stop and visit, we are glad you are here.

Tami DeGrosky
Superintendent

Bearing Witness at Big Hole

On June 2, 2012 Big Hole National Battlefield, a unit of Nez Perce National Historical Park, will had the grand reopening of its Visitor Center.

In 2011, a new energy efficient roof was added and brand new exhibits installed. The new exhibits completely change the way the story of the events of August 9-10, 1877 is told. Instead of focusing on the particulars of the battle and tactics, the park decided early on to tell the human side of the events at Big Hole. This is a story that still resonates with the descendants of those who survived the assault on the NiimiiPuu or Nez Perce encampment.

To accomplish this task, the park endeavored to work closely with our tribal partners, the Nez Perce, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation on every phase of the design and production of these new compelling exhibits. Superintendent Steve Black observed that engaging our partners is critical for any projects success. "The amount of consultation on this project was immense and a lot of thought went into every aspect of the design. In the end it was all worth it as I look around the exhibits and see what we created."

Formations Inc. of Portland, Oregon was the designer with help from Aldrich-Pears Associates of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Meetings were held at all three reservations to make sure that the voice of the people who were most

affected by the events of 1877 would be heard and that when the exhibits were completed they would be something the NPS and the Tribes could be proud of. Despite good intentions, longtime suspicions had to be overcome and replaced with understanding and acknowledgement that the park was indeed headed in a new direction. In addition, the exhibits are fully accessible due to the work of the University of Montana's Rural Institute Program. In the fall of 2012, Turner Exhibits of Seattle worked very hard to install all of the individual pieces into what you see today.

The exhibit has many elements to it, providing visitors an understanding of why the NiimiiPuu were at Big Hole. The highlight of the exhibit is the stories of the descendants. Despite the passage of time, the stories of what happened here are still felt and this is captured in the audio recordings visitors can listen to. The park staff is very excited over the opportunities. Mandi Wick, lead interpreter at the battlefield observed, "During one of the initial meetings for this exhibit, a respected tribal elder asked if we were ready to truly tell this story. I am happy to say that yes we are... and yes we did."

Visitors who once quickly browsed through the old exhibits now take their time to comprehend what happened here in 1877. The story told now certainly lives up to the mission statement for Nez Perce National Historical Park – a park about a people for all people. Everyone who was involved in the process can say they made a difference in the way the story is told.

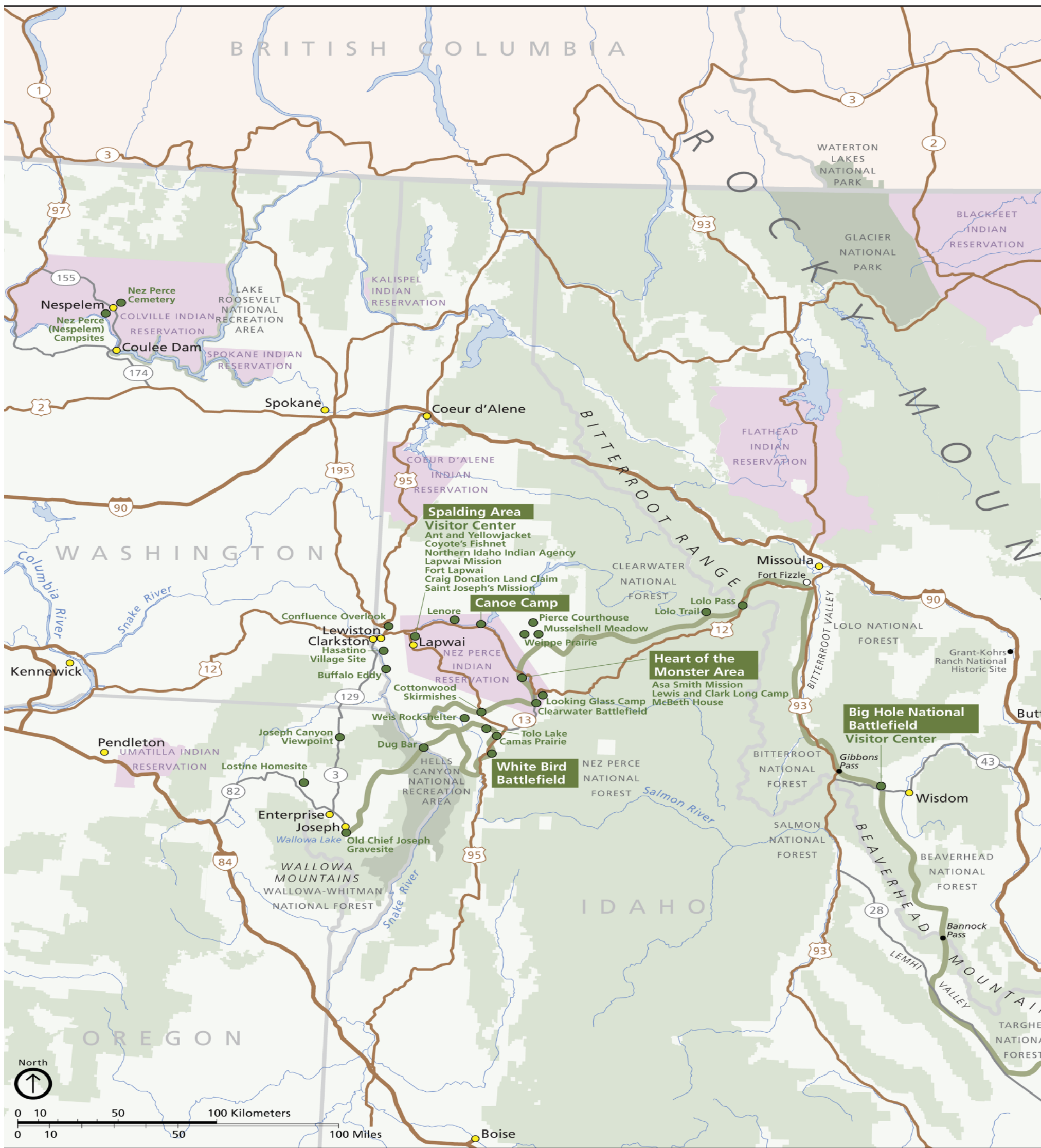


Testimony

The exhibit features testimony from Nez Perce descendants of Big Hole and quotes from U.S. Army soldiers. Nakia Williamson-Cloud, a Nez Perce artist and ethnographer living in Idaho, captures the essence of what the battlefield means to a contemporary Nez Perce.

"I think that for me, what I think about when I go to these places, where our people were, whether it be in times of war, or otherwise... and especially these places where people lost their lives, Big Hole. It's a pain that is inside all of us, each and every one of us as Nez Perce people. And

it's something that we're only starting to heal ourselves through our ceremonies and through our traditional ways of understanding. For me and my own life and understanding of the hardships I've had to go through, as we all do as individuals, I look to those people personally, and I look to things that they went through. Whatever the challenge presents us in our lives, that's who I look to. I look to our elders and I gain strength, and I gain a sense of understanding that if our people could endure what they had to do to, endure seeing their children, babies killed in front of them, to see wives and mothers killed in front of them, face that... then I can get any challenge that I have."



Idaho

Confluence Overlook
Donald MacKenzie established a trading post near the confluence of the Clearwater River in September 1812. The Nimiipuu were not interested in the fur trade and MacKenzie sold out to the British.

Coyote's Fishnet
Coyote and Black Bear got into an argument. In frustration, Coyote threw his fishing net on a hill and tossed Black Bear on another, turning him into stone. Both features are visible today.

Ant and Yellowjacket
Ant and Yellowjacket got into an argument arguing over who had the right to sit on a particular rock to enjoy some Salmon. Coyote asked them to stop. They continued to fight, whereby Coyote turned them into a stone arch that is visible today.

Spalding
The Spalding site has seen many uses by the Nimiipuu and was the location of Henry and Eliza Spalding's mission. The park's visitor center and museum is located here as well.

Northern Idaho Indian Agency
As part of the treaty process, the U.S. Government set up an agency to oversee the implementation of the terms of the treaties.

Fort Lapwai
In 1862, a detachment of volunteers chose this location for their fort. The 1883 officers' quarters at the southwest end of the parade ground is one of the few original buildings to have survived.

Craig Donation Land Claim
This is the site of the claim by the first Euro-American settler in Idaho. William Craig was a mountain man, an interpreter, and friend of the Nimiipuu.

St. Joseph's Mission
This was the first Roman Catholic mission among the Nimiipuu. It was dedicated in Sept. 1874 by Father Joseph Cataldo, who had built it. *The church and grounds are currently closed.*

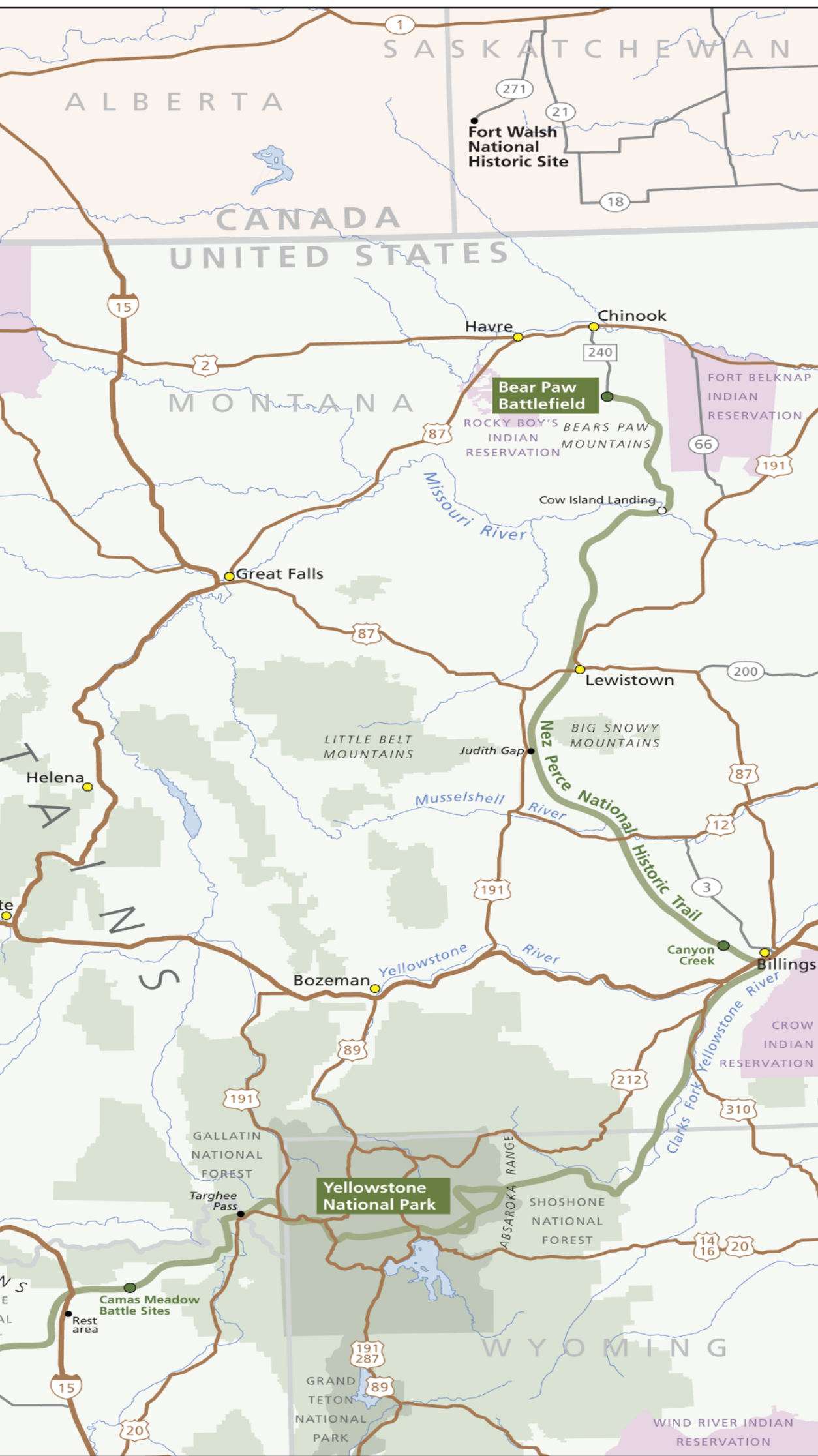
Cottonwood Skirmishes
Skirmishes with the U.S. Army and volunteers occurred near here on July 3-5, 1877.

Weis Rockshelter
More than 8,000 years ago humans first made this home and continuously inhabited the area until about 600 years ago.

Camas Prairie
Where wheat fields stretch to the horizon today, camas once grew. Camas bulbs were a major food source for the Nimiipuu. They gathered here in late summer and early fall to dig them.

Tolo Lake
In 1877, the non-treaty bands congregated at this ancient council site, known as Tephalewam, before moving onto the reservation. Frustrated by injustices against the Nez Perce, three Nimiipuu warriors raided homesteads on the Salmon River from this site.

White Bird Battlefield
On June 17, 1877, the first battle of the Nez Perce War was fought here. The U.S. cavalry was defeated with heavy losses and the Nimiipuu began their long journey to find safety and sanctuary. A self-guided walking tour of the battlefield is available at the trailhead.



Montana

Big Hole National Battlefield

On the morning of August 9, 1877, U.S. troops surprised the Nez Perce who crossed the Bitterroots trying to evade capture. Between 60 and 90 Nez Perce men, women, and children were killed. The Army lost 29 soldiers and 40 wounded.

Canyon Creek

After emerging from Yellowstone National Park, the Nez Perce were pursued by the cavalry. In a rearguard action the Nez Perce were able to gain time by successfully stopping the pursuing troops.

Bear Paw Battlefield

Just 40 miles short of the Canadian border, the Nez Perce were besieged by the Army. With losses mounting, Joseph gave his rifle to General Howard, ending the siege on October 5, 1877. They had traveled 1,170 miles in the nearly four months since the first skirmishes.

Oregon

Dug Bar

At this traditional crossing of the Snake River, Joseph and his band crossed in May, 1877 as they left their homes in Oregon for the reservation in Idaho. Located in Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area, the site is accessible by either boat or a high clearance vehicle.

Joseph Canyon Viewpoint

The canyon seen from the overlook was one of the winter homes of the Nez Perce. Tradition holds that Chief Joseph was born in a cave along the east bank of the creek. Restrooms are available. **Site is open seasonally.**

Old Chief Joseph's Gravesite

The remains of the elder Chief Joseph were reburied here in 1926. Nearby are the graves of other Nez Perce and some settlers.

Lostine Campsite

At the junction of the Lostine and Wallowa Rivers is a traditional Nez Perce summer campsite where Old Chief Joseph died in 1871. This landscape has changed little from the days before the area was settled. **Not a developed site.**

Washington

Burial Site of Chief Joseph the Younger

In 1885 Chief Joseph and his band were allowed to return to the Northwest from Indian Territory in Oklahoma. Joseph spent his remaining years on the Colville Reservation and died here in 1904. **The cemetery is private property and a sacred place.**

Nez Perce Campsites at Nespelem

Chief Joseph's band continued their traditional way of life while living on the Colville Reservation. These were their winter and summer homes and were the last places where Joseph lived. **Not a developed site.**

Buffalo Eddy

The unique petroglyphs of this area are evidence of the longevity of the Nimiipuu occupation of the area. Defacing federal archeological sites is a criminal offense.

Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail

In 1986, Congress established the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail to commemorate the 1877 War. The trail begins at Wallowa Lake, Oregon and extends 1,170 miles to the Bear Paw Battlefield, Montana. The trail is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Further information can be found on the web at: www.fs.fed.us/npnht/.

Clearwater Battlefield

On July 11, 1877 Gen. Oliver O. Howard crossed the Clearwater River and hoped to take the Nez Perce by surprise. His hopes came to naught and the fighting ended with the Nimiipuu withdrawing.

Heart of the Monster

This is the location of the Heart of the Monster, where Coyote defeated a monster and, in turn, created the Nimiipuu. Audio stations tell the story in English and in the Nez Perce language.

Asa Smith Mission

In April 1839, Rev. and Mrs. Asa Smith established a mission in the Kamiah area. Unsited to the demands of such work, the Smiths left in 1841.

Lewis and Clark Long Camp

Near here Lewis and Clark camped in the spring of 1806 for nearly a month.

Canoe Camp

In the early fall of 1805, the Lewis and Clark expedition rested here and built canoes of hollowed-out logs for the final leg of their trip to the Pacific Ocean.

Lenore

For thousands of years, this village site was used by the Nez Perce and their ancestors.

Weippe Prairie

This was a root-gathering place for the Nimiipuu and it was here on September 20, 1805, that Lewis and Clark first met the Nez Perce. During the 1877 War, the Nimiipuu gathered here after the Battle of the Clearwater.

Pierce

In September 1860, gold was found on the Nez Perce reservation, triggering another treaty that reduced the size of the reservation. The other site of interest is the old Shoshone County courthouse, completed in 1862 and the oldest public building in Idaho.

Musselshell Meadow

For many generations, Nimiipuu have come here to dig for camas. General Howard camped here at the end of July, 1877 while pursuing the Nez Perce over the Lolo Trail.

Lolo Pass and Trail

This historic Nez Perce trail was used by Lewis and Clark in 1805 and 1806. During the 1877 War the Nez Perce followed the trail on into Montana. The U.S. Forest Service maintains

a visitor center at Lolo Pass. During the summer months it is open daily. In the off season, they are open on weekends. Please contact the Forest Service at (208) 942-1234 for more information on hours and activities.

Looking Glass' 1877 Campsite

The Looking Glass Band tried to remain neutral in the conflict between the non-treaty Nez Perce. The Army attacked the village. Looking Glass regarded this as treachery and joined the others against the Army.

Hasotino

Hasotino was a site used until the end of the nineteenth century and was located near an important eel fishery.

Camas Meadow Battle Site

After the tragedy at Big Hole, the Nimiipuu gained time by stealing more than 200 of the Army's pack mules and horses, halting their advance.



Lemhi penstemon (*Penstemon lemhiensis*)

Lemhi Penstemon, A Unique Treasure

Lemhi penstemon (*Penstemon lemhiensis*), a unique plant that is found at Big Hole National Battlefield. Lemhi penstemon is a very large and showy blue flowering penstemon that is in only a few counties of southwestern Montana and in one adjacent county in eastern Idaho. The species appears to be in decline although very little information is available to confirm that.

It has long been suspected that an unusually large population of the species occurred in Big Hole Battlefield and through surveys conducted by the national park service in 2007-2011, we now have clear evidence that the largest reported population for this species does occur in the park. Our most recent population estimate is that approximately 3000 plants occur on the steep slopes of the Battlefield.

Volunteers In Parks: A Call to Action



Looking for a hands-on way to help the park? Consider sharing your time and talents as a Nez Perce VIP (Volunteer-In-Parks). Volunteers are needed throughout the year to help staff our visitor center, present interpretive and education programs and help out with miscellaneous tasks. If you are interested, please call the volunteer manager at the Spalding visitor center at (208) 843-7038 or Big Hole National Battlefield at (406) 689-3155.

Phenology - Timing is Everything

What is Phenology? It refers to recurring plant and animal life cycle stages such as leafing, flowering, and migration of birds and o the study of these cycles and their timing/relationship with weather and climate change. The National Phenology Network (<http://www.usanpn.org/>) was designed so that scientists and the public could monitor the influence climate change has on the phenology of plants, animals and landscapes.

At Nez Perce National Historical Park's Spalding site and Bear Paw battlefield, the staff has adopted this national monitoring protocol. Gathering

phenological data is very important because it affects almost all aspects of our environment including: the abundance and diversity of organisms; species interactions; functions in food webs; seasonal behaviors; and global-scale cycles of water, carbon, and other chemical elements.



Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries technicians capturing a Coho salmon in a fish wier on Lapwai Creek.

Coho Salmon - Something seems Fishy

The Nez Perce homeland is crisscrossed by waterways that all lead to the Pacific Ocean. Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) are especially suited for this area because they are anadromous, meaning they spend their youth in freshwater and migrate to saltwater for most of their lives. When they are ready to lay their eggs, they swim back to their freshwater birthplace, spawn, and then die. Unsustainable fishing practices, hydro-electric dams, and environmental change have had disastrous effects on fish populations.

In 1986 coho populations disappeared from the Clearwater River in north central Idaho. In an effort to restore local coho broodstock in the river and its tributaries, the Nez Perce Tribe developed the Clearwater Coho Restoration Program in 1994. For the last several years, in the fall, technicians from the Tribe's fish program have installed a temporary fish weir in Lapwai Creek at the park's Spalding site. The fish that are collected are transported to fish hatcheries, their eggs are hatched, reared, and released into the Clearwater River where they contribute to the Columbia Basin and ocean fisheries.

Archeological sites, battlefields and artifacts are protected by state and federal law. Anyone who injures, destroys or appropriates artifacts or objects of antiquity on park lands is subject to arrest and prosecution to the maximum extent of the law.

Please call (208) 843-7009 in Idaho and (406) 689-3155 in Montana to report incidents.

Nez Perce National Historical Park - Quick Reference

Nez Perce National Historical Park
39063 US Hwy 95
Spalding, ID 83540

Phone: (208) 843-7009
Fax: (208) 843-7003
E-Mail: NEPE_Visitor_Information@nps.gov
Website: www.nps.gov/nepe

Big Hole National Battlefield
PO Box 237
Wisdom, MT 59761

Phone: (406) 689-3155
Fax: (406) 689-3151
E-Mail: BIHO_Visitor_Information@nps.gov
Website: www.nps.gov/biho

Bear Paw Battlefield
301 Ohio
Chinook, MT 59523

Phone: (406) 357-3130
Fax: (406) 357-3140
E-Mail: NEPE_Bear_Paw@nps.gov
Website: www.nps.gov/nepe/planyourvisit/bear-paw-battlefield.htm

Partners

Nez Perce National Historic Trail
12730 Hwy 12
Orofino, ID 83544
Phone: (208) 476-8334
Website: www.fs.usda.gov/npnht/

Tribal Partners

Nez Perce Tribe: www.nezperce.org
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation:
www.colvilletribes.com
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation:
<http://www.umatilla.nsn.us>

Social Media



DiscoverNezPerceNationalHistoricalPark



nezperceNP
bigholeNPS
bearpawNPS



NezPerceNPS



Comments?

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