

RM-CESU -Progress Report, FY 07

Project Title: DVDs to Preserve Salish and Kootenai Tribal Knowledge

Park: Glacier NP

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Project description: This project, which will be completed by Salish Kootenai College in cooperation with Glacier National Park, will document traditional Salish and Kootenai tribal knowledge of the forests of Montana, specifically focusing on exploring Salish and Kootenai language and how words and terms for trees and other forest elements reflect native knowledge and cultural perspective. This information will be video recorded and preserved in an educational, interactive DVD format that can be shared with Glacier National Park staff and visitors, as well as with Montana's wider educational and tribal communities.

The first DVD will be organized into "chapters," one for each forest community. In each chapter, tribal Elders will give the names in both Kootenai and Salish of major plants in that forest type and traditional uses of some of these plants. A subtitle will appear on the screen with the Salish and Kootenai words written in international phonetic font. Total video length will be roughly 30 minutes.

The second DVD will be in an interactive format that allows users to "explore" each forest type in more detail. The general concept is that for each forest type, a photo of the forest community will appear. As the user drags his or her mouse over individual plants, a menu will appear, offering both text and audio files of the plant's name in Salish, Kootenai, English, and Latin (scientific name). The menus also will link to short video clips containing audio comments from the Elders concerning that particular plant. By producing two separate discs, users will have both a "passive" yet informative video and a more active, involved interactive disc where learning can proceed at the user's own pace.

Proposed scope of work: An Elder from both the Salish and Kootenai tribes will be interviewed by a Native American, Salish Kootenai College forestry student in each of four different forest communities (low elevation ponderosa pine/Douglas fir; mid elevation cedar/grand fir; mid elevation lodgepole; and high elevation whitebark pine with subalpine fir and spruce). In each of these forest types, the Elders will identify major tree, shrub and herbaceous species by the Salish and Kootenai names. These Elders and a few others also will be asked to describe any reflections they have on the cultural importance of each forest type

and any changes that have occurred in their lifetimes (due to fire suppression, human uses, etc). The interviews and filming will take place on the Flathead Indian Reservation over the course of several days during the spring of 2008. The interviews and film footage will then be edited and used to create two different, complementary DVDs, as described above.

The general script for the interviews, particular plants to focus on, and exact forest communities and site locations will be determined by Dr. Adrian Leighton, Forestry Instructor at Salish Kootenai College, and Dr. Sallie Hejl, Resource Education Specialist at Glacier National Park, in collaboration with the Salish and Kootenai Culture Committees. The two Culture Committees support the proposal. Both Committees will be involved in selecting the Elders that will be interviewed and will have final say over both the script and the final video product. In order that the final product can be widely distributed, any information that appears on the videos that either Culture Committee considers in any way to be proprietary or sensitive will be removed before the final product is produced.

Progress to date: The project concept was presented to the Kootenai and Salish Culture Committees in the spring of 2007. A general description was given to each committee, questions were answered, and both Committees agreed to listen to a more specific request for help from Elders at a future date. In the fall of 2007, William Swaney and Adrian Leighton, Natural Resource Instructors at SKC and Sallie Hejl, Resource Education Specialist at the Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center at Glacier National Park, approached the Cultural Committees a second time, and asked for their support and the recommendation of Elders who would be interested in participating. General consent was given and a liaison was established by both committees. Work will begin in February with the Culture Committee liaisons to determine a list of trees and other forest features that will be included. Selection of interested Elders will also occur at this time. Adrian Leighton has also met twice with Frank Tyro of the SKC Media Center to discuss filming logistics and budget.

Next steps: Filming is currently scheduled for spring 2008 and will take place during at least two SKC class field trips for Forest Botany. Editing and post production work, as well as interactive DVD design will occur during the summer of 2008. By early fall, a draft of the products will be available for preview and approval by both the Salish and the Kootenai Culture Committees. Final production and DVD creation will be completed by December of 2008.