



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



East Kamiah/Heart of the Monster is an important ethnographic landscape that includes a rock formation considered to be the ancestral birthplace of the Nez Perce.

Nez Perce National Historical Park was established in 1965 to facilitate the preservation and interpretation of sites pertaining to early Nez Perce culture, the Lewis and Clark expedition, the fur trade, missionary activities, gold mining, logging, and the Nez Perce War of 1877. The park originally consisted of 24 sites in north central Idaho. This concept of a series of sites, most of which were not owned by the National Park Service, was a new one. The park

sites would be linked together through the interpretive themes and Nez Perce story.

In 1992, Congress authorized the Nez Perce National Historical Park Additions Act, which added 14 sites in Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon for a total of 38 sites. Nez Perce National Historical Park administers nine sites, while state, tribal, local, or other federal agencies manage the remaining 29 sites; the Park Service partners with these

landowners to facilitate resource protection.

The nine sites owned and managed by the Park Service include: Bear Paw Battlefield, Big Hole National Battlefield, Buffalo Eddy, Canoe Camp, East Kamiah/Heart of the Monster, Old Chief Joseph's Gravesite, Spalding, Weippe Prairie, and White Bird Battlefield. Park headquarters is located at Spalding, Idaho, within the Nez Perce Reservation, and park staff work in close cooperation and partnership with the Nez Perce tribe. Information for eight of the nine sites owned and managed by the Park Service is included in this report. A full assessment of Big Hole National Battlefield will be released separately.

Park sites preserve, interpret, and commemorate the history of the Nez Perce or, as they call themselves in their language, the "Nimiipuu." According to archaeologists, the Nez Perce have lived in the territory centered on the middle Snake and Clearwater rivers and the northern portion of the Salmon River basin in central Idaho, and the neighboring territory of Washington and Oregon, for the past 11,000 years.

Protecting resources and enforcing park regulations are difficult at Nez Perce National Historical Park, in part, because the park is spread across four states. In spite of the geographic challenges, cultural resources at the park are in fair condition, with an overall rating of 75 out of 100. Archaeological resources and ethnography scored particularly well at 85 and 82 out of 100, respectively. Park stewardship of cultural resources has provided adequate protection and no particular resource is in danger at the current time.

Natural resources, conversely, are in poor condition, scoring 59 out of 100. This score was calculated with just 57 percent of the information generally required by the Center for State of the Parks methodology to determine overall resource conditions. Information on some criteria is not available.

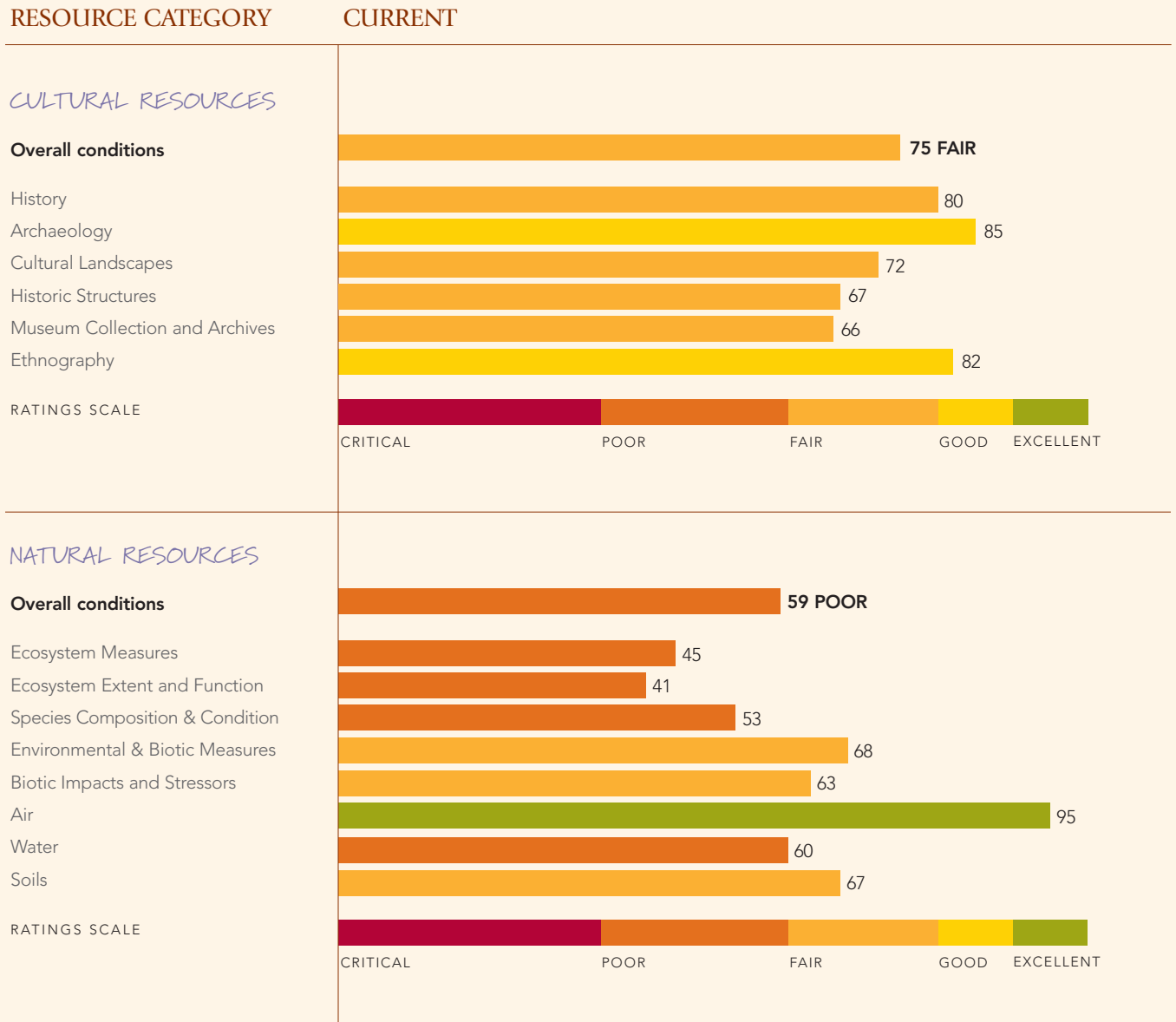
KEY FINDINGS

- The park requires additional funding to redesign museum exhibits to more accurately convey the significance and culture of the Nez Perce people, improve accessibility to the artifacts, and enhance interpretive efforts. Redesigned exhibits would allow the park to meet museum management standards and protect valuable Nez Perce collections by rotating display objects, properly displaying clothing artifacts, and reducing lighting levels to prevent deterioration.
- Research on the historic use of structures at the Spalding Site (Watson's Store, the Agency Log Building, and the Agent's House) would allow the park to more thoroughly understand the history of the Nez Perce Reservation. Additionally, the Agency Log Building and Watson's Store could be adapted for visitation and interpretation.
- The most apparent natural resource issue for the park is the encroachment of invasive plant species into park sites. Degradation of water quality, encroachment by oil and gas operations, and adjacent land development are also concerns for some of the park sites. In general, air quality is good, dark night skies and scenic vistas are maintained, and populations of many species appear sustainable. Additional research is needed to develop a more comprehensive understanding of natural resource conditions.



Historic structures at the Spalding Site date to the reservation and allotment period on the Nez Perce Reservation.

Note: When interpreting the scores for natural resource conditions, recognize that critical information upon which the ratings are based is not always available. This limits data interpretation to some extent. For Nez Perce National Historical Park, 57 percent of the information requirements associated with the methods were met.



The findings in this report do not necessarily reflect past or current park management. Many factors that affect resource conditions are a result of both human and natural influences over long periods of time, in many cases before a park was established. The intent of the Center for State of the Parks® is to document the present status of park resources and determine which actions can be taken to protect them in the future.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORY—ADDITIONAL STUDIES WILL SUPPLEMENT INTERPRETATION

Park staff use a wide range of historical research to help them interpret and protect park resources. They also recognize the need to gain a better understanding of the resources that do not belong to the Park Service but are directly related to the park's mission and to identify cultural resources currently unknown to the park in order to provide stewardship and resource management when possible.

Several historical research studies planned in the coming months should supplement the existing literature. Topics include the history of the Nez Perce in Canada following the Bear Paw Battle of the Nez Perce War of 1877; a Nez Perce transportation thematic study; multi-culturalism among the Nez Perce; and Christian influence among the Nez Perce. The park also plans to produce a new interpretive film to present Nez Perce history and culture from a Nez Perce perspective.

A positive relationship between the park and the Nez Perce tribe has facilitated cultural resource protection and interpretation and has fulfilled the legislative intent of providing for the Nez Perce "voice" in the telling of their stories.

ARCHAEOLOGY—EXTENSIVE RESOURCES IN GOOD CONDITION

Nez Perce National Historical Park has a wealth of archaeological treasures, including petroglyphs and pictographs, battle-related remains, evidence of homesteading and mining, pre-European contact village sites, burial sites, pithouse complexes, and a variety of other resources. Thirty-six identified archeological sites are located on 1,963 acres of Park Service land; 22 are in good or fair condition, five are in poor condition, and nine are not documented.

The park works closely with professional archaeologists and the Nez Perce tribe to doc-

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Park staff are partnering with museum management staff in Washington, D.C., to develop a virtual exhibit that will contain high-resolution photographs of more than 200 artifacts.
- Park staff supported the Nez Perce people in their efforts to purchase the Spalding-Allen Collection, a rare and remarkable assemblage of Plateau American Indian artifacts that encompasses many facets of traditional Nez Perce culture. The collection is on loan to the park and is the main focus of museum exhibits.
- In 1998, the Park Service funded construction of the Nez Perce National Historical Park Research Center to house administrative history records; donated manuscript collections; 3,000 bibliographic items including books, theses, dissertations, reports, reprints, audio/video tapes, microforms, subject and biographical files, maps, and periodicals; and a rare historic photograph collection documenting Nez Perce life over the past century.
- The park has worked closely with the Upper Columbia Basin Network to develop a camas lily-monitoring project at Weippe Prairie. American Indian students from the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's Salmon Camp program help park managers with data collection. Information from this monitoring effort will guide development of long-term management planning for the site.



The park's research center houses historic photos that document Nez Perce life over the past century.

The Park Service commissioned Nez Perce artist Nakia Williamson-Cloud to paint a historic scene of Canoe Camp, the location where the Nez Perce helped Lewis and Clark build canoes for their journey west.



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ument sites and update archaeological records. Park planning efforts acknowledge that all of the archaeological sites are valuable and emphasize protection and interpretation of all cultural resources. At present, there are no significant gaps in archaeological resource stewardship, and there are no significant archaeological resources that need evaluation. Some resources, however, are in need of condition assessments.

The photo-monitoring project established for Buffalo Eddy is an example of how the park places a high priority on protection activities. This site, located in a heavily visited recreational area on both sides of the Snake River, contains two groups of rock outcroppings covered with petroglyphs and pictographs. Hundreds of images from as early as 4,500 years ago are associated with early Nez Perce people. The

photo-monitoring project established by the park provides photo documentation of the site and allows the interpretive staff to compare the current condition of rock art to past photographic evidence of rock art conditions. If vandalism should occur, the photographs can provide documentation of the original rock art, which can be used as evidence to prosecute offenders. Teaching visitors about the significance of archaeological resources through interpretive programs and brochures can also protect resources from intentional or unintentional damage.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES—NEZ PERCE STORIES TOLD THROUGH LANDSCAPES
 Nez Perce National Historical Park is full of landscapes that reflect how people have interacted with their environment. The park's cul-

tural landscape inventory indicates that there are 24 potential cultural landscapes; only one of them, East Kamiah/Heart of the Monster, has recently been evaluated and is listed in fair condition. It is an ethnographic cultural landscape that includes a rock formation considered to be the ancestral birthplace of the Nez Perce.

The site includes an interpretive shelter and audio station that relates the Nez Perce creation story of “Coyote and the Monster” in both English and Nez Perce. Threats to East Kamiah/Heart of the Monster include erosion caused by visitors and increasing numbers of invasive plants. Adjacent development threatens some of the park’s other identified cultural landscapes.

Cultural landscape inventories for Old Chief Joseph’s Gravesite and Big Hole National Battlefield are planned to commence before the end of 2006. Old Chief Joseph’s Gravesite, located north of Wallowa Lake and south of Joseph, Oregon, is a sacred site for the Nez Perce people and a national historical landmark. Old Chief Joseph (the father of Chief

Joseph, leader of one of the non-treaty bands during the war of 1877) signed a treaty with the United States in 1855, allowing his people to retain much of their traditional lands in the Wallowa Valley of Oregon. In 1863, another treaty forced on the Nez Perce people substantially reduced the size of their reservation and led to events that started the Nez Perce War of 1877. In addition to Old Chief Joseph’s grave, the cemetery contains other gravesites, some of which are unmarked.

Big Hole National Battlefield is the site of the August 9, 1877, battle of the Nez Perce War. The Nez Perce crossed the Bitterroot Mountains trying to evade capture by the U.S. Army, but they were surprised in an attack at this campsite. The Nez Perce held the U.S. Army in a siege and captured its howitzer. Although they successfully held the army under siege, 87 Nez Perce men, women, and children were killed. The army suffered 29 dead and 40 wounded. Today, the cultural landscape includes the battlefield, several mining features, and other archaeological resources.

Big Hole National Battlefield is the site of a battle where the Nez Perce held the U.S. Army in a siege and captured its howitzer.



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Watson's Store, built as a trading post in 1911, is one of the park's historic structures. Sporting a restored exterior, the building has great potential for adaptive or interpretive use.

Park staff conduct periodic inspections and photo documentation of landscapes, and consult the Nez Perce tribe before initiating any work that may affect cultural landscapes.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES—SOME ADDITIONAL RESEARCH NEEDED

Twenty buildings are included on the park's list of classified structures. Thirteen are owned and managed by the Park Service, and 12 of these are in good or fair condition; one structure is in poor condition.

Watson's Store is one of the three historic buildings located at the Spalding site within walking distance of the park visitor center. Built as a trading post in 1911, the store closed in 1964. The Nez Perce tribe purchased its contents, which are now part of the park's museum collection. The store is on the site of the original town of Spalding, established in 1898. Its architecture has been studied, and a University of Idaho graduate student is investigating the history and significance of the store. The Park Service restored the exterior of Watson's Store to its 1910-1930 appearance,

and it has great potential for adaptive or interpretive use.

Research on the other two buildings at the Spalding site—the Agency Log Building (a reconstruction) and the historic Agent's Residence (built in the 1860s)—would promote a more thorough understanding of the reservation's history.

Fire is the greatest threat to the park's historic structures; vandalism and natural disasters are rare. Basic maintenance such as sweeping pine needles from rooftops goes a long way in preventing deterioration.

MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES—IMPRESSIVE COLLECTIONS DOCUMENT NEZ PERCE HISTORY

The Spalding Visitor Center contains the park museum, the Research Center housing the archives and library collections, and an auditorium that screens a film on Nez Perce history and culture and also hosts cultural events. The Nez Perce National Historical Park museum and archives collection consists of 308,463 items not including those from the Big Hole National Battlefield and the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area/Ft. Spokane Museum collections, which are stored under special agreements.

The museum's world-class collection of objects relates to all aspects of the Nez Perce culture and history and their contacts with the 1804-1805 Lewis and Clark Expedition and explorers, missionaries, miners, loggers, and settlers who came to stay in Nez Perce country. Other museum objects include artifacts from the Big Hole, Whitebird, and Bear Paw battlefields. The Spalding Visitor Center displays a Columbia Plateau dugout canoe, one of several owned by the park.

In 1964, in anticipation of park establishment, the Nez Perce tribe purchased the inventory of Watson's Store located at the Spalding site. The store's contents included some of the first museum objects acquired by the park.

Under a loan agreement with the Nez Perce, the park also houses the Spalding-Allen Collection, a rare and remarkable assemblage of Plateau Indian artifacts encompassing many facets of traditional Nez Perce culture. It includes elaborate apparel, trade items, baskets, beadwork, hemp bags, cornhusk bags, pipes, weapons, children's apparel and toys, and other examples of Nez Perce craftsmanship. Along with some of the artifacts acquired by Lewis and Clark, the Spalding-Allen Collection contains some of the oldest surviving examples of Nez Perce artifacts.

The history of the Spalding-Allen Collection is nearly as remarkable as the collection itself. In 1893, the Spalding-Allen Collection was donated to Oberlin College, and in 1942 it was loaned to the Ohio Historical Society. In 1980, the Nez Perce National Historical Park acquired the collection on loan and made it a central focus in the visitor center exhibit area. But in 1993, the Ohio Historical Society requested the return of the collection. Eventually, the Ohio Historical Society agreed to sell the collection, and the Nez Perce tribe raised \$608,100 to purchase it in 1996. The Park Service supported the tribe in its negotiations with the Ohio Historical Society and helped to bring the collection home.

The park's archives and library collections are significant resources that focus on the history and culture of the Nez Perce people. They contain the park's administrative history records, donated manuscript collections, and 3,000 bibliographic items such as books, theses, dissertations, reports, reprints, audio/video tapes, microforms, subject and biographical files, maps, and periodicals. The archives include a rare historic photograph collection documenting Nez Perce life over the past century and a database of about 4,000 images available on a digital image viewer.

In 1998, the park hired a full-time archivist and began planning the Research Center, which was funded in 1998 and completed in



The park houses the Spalding-Allen Collection, an assemblage of Plateau Indian artifacts that encompasses many facets of traditional Nez Perce culture.

The Nez Perce National Historical Park Research Center provides work space for researchers to study the park's impressive collection of books, maps, historic photographs, and more.



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2000. The Research Center houses the archives, archival storage, and a public research/reading room. In addition to providing research assistance at the center, the archivist works with local museums and academic institutions and conducts special workshops to make park resources available to the public.

Although the park has an impressive museum collection, staff are concerned that exhibits do not adequately convey the culture of the Nez Perce and the significant role of the Nez Perce people in the history of the nation. The exhibit design is outdated, cases are small, and objects may be damaged by strong light. A redesigned exhibit area would improve accessibility to the artifacts, enhance interpretive efforts, and provide better protection for artifacts. Staff are also concerned about the threat of pipes leaking and water damage to archives

in the Research Center's storage area and museum collections in the basement of the visitor center.

ETHNOGRAPHY—CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH NEZ PERCE BENEFITS PARK

The park is dedicated to interpreting the history and culture of the Nez Perce people. To accomplish this, staff work in cooperation with the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Chief Joseph Band of the Colville Confederated Tribes. On occasion, the park consults with other tribes that have historical ties to the park sites and those with whom the Nez Perce had historical associations through trade or shared hunting and gathering grounds.

The park protects many culturally sensitive properties, including the Old Chief Joseph Gravesite, legend sites such as East Kamiah/Heart of the Monster, and traditional use areas such as Weippe Prairie. The Nez Perce and other American Indian groups including the Shoshone and Salish peoples collected traditional resources in the Big Hole Valley. During the Nez Perce War of 1877, the Nez Perce dug camas roots, hunted, and fashioned tipi poles in the valley, unaware that soldiers were approaching. The Nez Perce consider the Big Hole Battlefield a sacred burial ground, and many families visit the location to pay respect to their ancestors who lost their lives there. There have been no specific studies on traditional uses of resources at this location.

Park staff take into account that the Nez Perce descendants located throughout the region have varying views concerning these sites and their associated values. These groups are consulted in any situation where sensitive issues arise. Tribal members and museum staff discuss objects that might have spiritual associations, and any objects deemed inappropriate for display have been removed from exhibits. Cedar boughs are placed above the museum cases for spiritual reasons, and tribal spiritual leaders occasionally conduct blessing ceremonies for certain objects.

In 2000, a Washington State University researcher collected plant specimens used in traditional Nez Perce culture for a traditional-use study on ethnobotany, and the museum stores two identical collections for research use. There are no other traditional-use studies in place. The Nez Perce tribe conducts its own traditional-use studies, and park staff are aware that the tribe may be opposed to outsiders researching what the tribe considers to be its intellectual and cultural property.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is a key focus at Nez Perce National Historical Park, and the park offers a variety of opportunities to learn about the history of the Nez Perce and cultural and natural resources of the park. In 2005, park staff presented 319 interpretive programs to 4,830 people and provided 100 educational off-site programs to 4,570 students. The park also offers teaching materials to educators. School groups visit the park year round and children are encouraged to participate in many hands-on activities, including assembling a ten-foot tipi and learning about a traditional Nez Perce home. An interpretive program entitled *A Child's Life* offers fourth-graders an opportunity to learn about what life was like for Nez Perce children in the past. Students handle replica items and learn Nez Perce stories that would have been told to native children.

At the visitor center, a short movie called *The Nez Perce: Portrait of a People* is shown in a large theater adjacent to the lobby. It provides information about the 1805 meeting with the Lewis and Clark, the arrival of Christian missionaries, the invasion of their homeland by white settlers, the discovery of gold on the reservation, and the War of 1877. Although the film is dated, it still provides visitors with an overview of the Nez Perce culture. The park hopes to produce a film with a more contemporary view of the continuum of the culture and history of the Nez Perce people, told from the Nez Perce perspective.

Other interpretive opportunities offered by the park have included special workshops, a presentation of an oral history project of Nez Perce elders, special speakers series, archaeology programs, and Earth Week events for students.



The park's visitor center includes a theater that shows a movie about Nez Perce culture.

HISTORY OF THE NEZ PERCE

Chief Joseph posed for this photo on July 4, 1901.



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For at least 11,000 years, the Nez Perce or “Nimiipuu” lived in the valleys of the Clearwater, Snake, and Salmon rivers of the Pacific Northwest. They dug for camas lily bulbs, fished for salmon, and hunted buffalo and other game. In the 1700s, the introduction of the horse allowed for increased hunting and trading opportunities.

In 1805, the Lewis and Clark Expedition arrived in Nez Perce country. The explorers had traveled by way of the Lolo Trail across the Bitterroot Mountains of western Montana and north-central Idaho. By the time they encountered the Nez Perce on the Weippe Prairie, they were tired, hungry, and disheartened. The Nez Perce welcomed Lewis and Clark, provided them with food and horses, and taught them to build canoes. On their return trip from the west coast, Lewis and Clark spent a month at Nez

Perce camps as they assembled supplies for the journey home.

Trappers, traders, and explorers came soon after the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In 1836, the first Christian missionaries, Henry and Eliza Spalding, arrived and established a Presbyterian mission in Nez Perce country. In 1860, gold was discovered in the Bitterroot Mountains, and the Nez Perce reservation, established by treaty in 1855, was overrun with miners and settlers. In 1863, in response to miners and settlers clamoring to gain title to Nez Perce reservation lands, a new treaty greatly reduced the land base of the reservation to one-tenth its original size, and called for several Nez Perce bands living outside of the reservation to leave their homelands in the Wallowa Valley of northeastern Oregon. The 1863 Treaty was not acceptable to some of the Nez Perce bands, and it divided the

Nez Perce into treaty and non-treaty groups.

In 1877, the U.S. government forced the non-treaty bands to move to land within the reservation. The non-treaty Nez Perce reluctantly agreed, and about 600 Nez Perce people gathered on the camas meadows next to Lake Tolo two days before the deadline to move to the reservation. On June 15, young men angered by the death of Nez Perce at the hands of white men in the Salmon River country retaliated by killing four white men. This led to the first battle of the Nez Perce War on June 17, 1877, near White Bird, Idaho. The U.S. Army was soundly defeated at the White Bird Battle, but continued to pursue the Nez Perce and engaged them in several other skirmishes and battles through the summer of 1877.

The conflict lasted four months as the U.S. Army pursued the non-treaty Nez Perce on their flight, which eventually led them toward Canada. The Nez Perce won several battles, but losses were heavy on both sides until the Nez Perce surrendered on October 5, 1877, at the Bear Paw Battlefield, about forty miles south of the Canadian border.

At the war's end, nearly 800 Nez Perce men, women, and children had traveled almost 1,170 miles to escape the pursuing army of more than 2,000 enlisted men and volunteers. It is estimated that nearly 200 Nez Perce crossed the border to Canada and 431 surrendered to the U.S. Army at Bear Paw.

Those that surrendered were sent to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and then on to the Indian Territories in what is now Oklahoma. Eventually, some were allowed to return to the Pacific Northwest and their homes on the Nez Perce reservation or the Umatilla Reservation in Oregon Territory, while others were sent to the Colville Reservation in Washington Territory.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were difficult times for the Nez Perce. The

Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 reduced the reservation land base by allotting individual Nez Perce up to 160 acres of land. This was an attempt to assimilate American Indians by making them farmers, and it also served to provide white settlers with the lands they demanded. One consequence of the allotment period was a reduction of the Nez Perce reservation by 90 percent. By 1910, 30,000 whites resided on the reservation, by then home to only 1,500 Nez Perce people.

The Nez Perce Tribe adopted a constitution in 1948. Since then, the Nez Perce have pursued and won several claims against the government, including compensation for the loss of fishing rights on the Columbia River, which resulted in an award of \$2.8 million. The Nez Perce people continue to pursue self-determination, and their traditions have survived and thrive as testament to the vibrancy and strength of their culture.

Yellow Bull participated in the Nez Perce War of 1877. He later traveled to Washington, D.C., as a delegate to discuss Nez Perce issues with decision-makers. This photo was taken in Washington in 1912.



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Camas lilies bloom throughout Weippe Prairie. The Nez Perce collected the bulbs of this plant for food; today, the park works with American Indian students to monitor camas lily populations.

NATURAL RESOURCES

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT—MULTIPLE SITES MAKE MANAGEMENT A CHALLENGE

Natural resource inventory information is not available for some of the sites owned and managed by Nez Perce National Historical Park. Just 57 percent of the natural resources information required by the Center for State of the Parks assessment methodology was available to determine resource conditions. This lack of information can be attributed to the fact that the park emphasizes its significant cultural resources; efforts to inventory and monitor resources at parks in the Upper Columbia Basin began in 2001; several of the park sites (Buffalo Eddy, Bear Paw, and Weippe Prairie) have just recently come under Park Service

ownership; and the park lacks access to other Park Service services such as an exotic plant management team.

The park's general management plan emphasizes the important ties between natural and cultural resources at Nez Perce National Historical Park. The Nez Perce people had a close relationship with their environment, and they both shaped and were shaped by their natural surroundings. They hunted elk, deer, and bison, fished for salmon, and collected camas roots. Later, many of these same abundant natural resources lured fur trappers and miners to the region.

The park is managed with an understanding and appreciation of how cultural and natural resources are interwoven. The park's 2005 strategic plan acknowledges that "Nez Perce National Historical Park celebrates and pro-

fects those changes wrought upon the environment through man's interaction" and that "disturbed lands are often just as clearly tangible records of the cultural landscape."

The Park Service owns nine of the 38 units within Nez Perce National Historical Park for a total of about 2,000 acres. Of these units, Bear Paw Battlefield may be the most important ecologically because it features native shortgrass prairie within a larger landscape that otherwise consists of tilled and grazed land. The site provides habitat for two rare birds, Baird's sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*) and Sprague's pipit (*Anthus spragueii*), both of which require native prairie, which has been declining due to agriculture, grazing, and invasive plants. Bear Paw is relatively unimpaired compared to other sites within Nez Perce National Historical Park, which generally contain heavily altered vegetation communities that are common throughout the region.

LAND USE—SURROUNDING USES THREATEN SOME SITES

The land use history of Nez Perce National Historical Park is complex, as the park has sites within four states that were extensively occupied and modified by past human use. Land uses have ranged from harvesting bulbs and hunting wildlife to grazing, agriculture, and town site development, all of which have had varying effects on the environment. Hunting and gathering minimally affected the landscape, while grazing and agriculture damaged native plant communities, and non-native plants are now widespread. Grazing continues at one park site today, the Weippe Prairie, which was officially obtained by the park in 2004. Grazing will eventually be phased out at this site in order to restore a historic landscape similar to the conditions present when Lewis and Clark first encountered the Nez Perce.

Today, lands surrounding the nine Park Service-owned sites within Nez Perce National Historical Park are primarily used for agricultural, residential, and commercial purposes.

On October 5, 1877, the Nez Perce surrendered to the U.S. Army at Bear Paw Battlefield. Today this site features native shortgrass prairie that provides habitat for special wildlife species not found in the tilled and grazed landscapes that dominate the region surrounding the park.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/NEZ PERCE NHP



Although the park has some natural resources concerns, air quality is good, dark night skies and scenic vistas are maintained, and populations of many species appear sustainable.



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Many of the sites border major rivers and highways, corridors that often encourage the spread of invasive species within the park. Almost all of the sites are in close proximity to lumber mills or small communities.

White Bird Battlefield and Spalding are the most impaired, with native vegetation overwhelmed by the presence of invasive plants, as well as apparent issues with water quality that may be related to cattle waste. Weippe Prairie's stream is likely affected by grazing and agricultural activities, and vegetation there is threatened by further spread of invasive plants. Non-native plants, possible localized air pollution, and residential and commercial development threaten the Heart of the Monster and Canoe Camp sites. Heart of the Monster also has issues with feral cats and non-native bullfrogs. Bear Paw Battlefield may be threatened by future encroachment of oil and gas extraction operations and also faces threats because of its isolation and the spread of non-native plants. At present, however, this unit appears to be the most intact of the Park Service-owned portions of the park.

PARK RESOURCES—INVENTORY AND MONITORING WILL INFORM MANAGEMENT

Although the park has issues with invasive species, potential water pollution, encroachment by oil and gas operations, and adjacent land development, air quality is good, dark night skies and scenic vistas are maintained, and populations of many species appear sustainable. Additional research is needed to develop a more comprehensive understanding of natural resource conditions. This knowledge will come, in part, through the park's inclusion in the Park Service's Upper Columbia Basin inventory and monitoring network. The network has funding to inventory vertebrates and vascular plants, and some information has already been collected. Additional work will provide some of the information needed to better understand natural resources and threats, and will help park staff determine appropriate actions to protect resources.