



*Nez Perce*

TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 305 • LAPWAI, IDAHO 83540 • (208) 843-2253

September 3, 1996

Donald R. Curtis, Jr., Lt. Colonel  
Commanding  
Walla Walla District U.S. Army Corp of Engineers  
201 N. Third  
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Dear Colonel Curtis,

We appreciate the coordination that has been extended to us by your staff regarding the remains discovered in Columbia Park near Kennewick Washington. Through the coordination we have become aware of the depth of the problems the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACOE) is encountering with recovery and re-interment of the remains. We request you take all actions needed to obtain possession of the remains that were recovered from land owned by the United States.

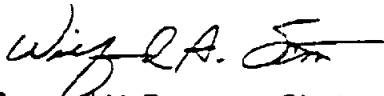
The Nez Perce Tribe supports the request made by other tribes to reinter the remains as soon as possible with as little publicity as possible. We believe, with the information available, it should be determined that the remains are not the result of a crime and therefore the Coroner's office should release the remains to the care of the USACOE at the earliest opportunity and the processes within the Native American Graves Protection Act should be the terms guiding the disposition of the remains. We would like to especially stress that we do not feel the remains of any or all of the individuals should not be shipped anywhere for further research or subjected to further testing of any kind.

We would like to review any and all reports regarding the remains as they are generated by your staff or received from the Coroners office.

Handling the remains of our ancestors is a difficult thing to do. We understand and appreciate how difficult it is for your staff to coordinate this very delicate matter with several Tribes and the local officials too. We appreciate the effort to coordinate the concerns with the Nez Perce Tribe. We urge you to obtain the possession of the remains as quickly as possible and follow the NAGPRA guidelines thereafter, with re-interment at the site of discovery the ultimate goal.

Please call me or my staff if there are further developments in this matter.

Sincerely,



Samuel N. Penney, Chairman  
Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee

cc: John Lier, USACOE Archeologist  
Linda Kurtz, USACOE Legal Counsel  
Andy Miller, Attorney for Benton County  
Armand Minthorn, CTUIR