

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians Land Acknowledgment

This area now called Yachats is the homeland of the yaxaik village (pronounced “yaw-hike”, and the h has a raspy sound) of the Alsea speaking people who lived sustainably from time immemorial. The name comes from the Alsea word for ‘to go’, yax-, and refers to a place at the end of a trail. In the late 1700’s to early 1800’s, diseases introduced by Euro-Americans killed many of the coastal Tribal people including the Alsea people. Violence, battles, and massacres also became the common experience. Survivors were pressured to sign treaties (from 1851-55) and live on a shared reservation with many other Tribes. The 1.1-Million-acre Coast Reservation, created November 9, 1855, by President Franklin Pierce, was intended to become a new homeland, but within a decade the federal government began removing lands from it. Tribal Peoples throughout western Oregon were forcibly rounded up, shipped, and marched to this new reservation, and it was run as a prison camp. Many died on these “trails of tears.” In 1860, the Coos and Lower Umpqua people were forcibly marched barefoot from their homelands to the Alsea Sub-agency (now Yachats) which was under the auspices of the Coast Reservation. In 1865 and 1875, the reservation was robbed of about 900,000 acres of its treaty guaranteed territory. The lands and resources were stolen, and treaties were violated by the U.S. government with no compensation. U.S. genocidal policies allowed the imposition of horrific treatment at all of the reservation prison camps, resulting in many people dying of starvation, exposure, disease, beatings, and depression of spirit. These truths include the documentation of a blind Coos woman, Amanda, forcibly taken from her daughter and marched 80 miles north to the prison camp in Yachats. Amanda fell numerous times climbing over the basalt at the base of Cape Perpetua leaving a significant trail of blood.

Despite generations of oppressive policies and cultural genocide, through nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon, their descendants through perseverance are successfully restoring their communities, rebuilding their traditions, and continuing to fight for recognition and protection of their rights. The Amanda and Yaxaik Trails are solemn and spiritual trails that are reminders in perpetuity.

Supervision for this land acknowledgment is generously provided by The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

If you wish to support and promote the practice, conservation and restoration of their Siletz Tribal languages and cultures, look up the Siletz Tribal Cultural Programs at: www.ctsi.nsn.us

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