Clueless & Lark Bicentennial Stamp issued May 14, 2004
On this side of the border we forgot the bicentennial of MacKenzie’s crossing...
George Vancouver’s Mapping Expedition
1793

George discovers tide.
He reported a larger group was on their way “to shoot their arrows and hurl their spears at us.” Alexander MacKenzie July 21, 1793
Thomas Jefferson acquired one of Alexander MacKenzie’s sea otter pelts in 1797.

“Experience and reflection will develop to [the Indians] the wisdom of exchanging what they can spare & we want, for what we can spare and they want.” Secret Message to Congress, January 18, 1803
“Should you reach the Pacific ocean inform yourself of the circumstances which may decide whether the furs of those parts may not be collected as advantageously ... as at Nootka Sound...”  Thomas Jefferson’s instructions to Lewis, June of 1803
November 20, 1805  Sacajawea’s blue beaded belt was traded for a two otter robe.
The sea otter robes and skins never made it to Jefferson…
“Everybody could have all they wanted; if more were wanted, there was more of the same school or run of fish out in the river or bay; the swarming waters were limitless in their bounty…”

Annie Minor Peterson to Melville Jacobs  1934
1844 James Polk was elected President (54/40)
June of 1846 the British government gave our land to the United States
August of 1848 inspired by the Whitman massacre, Congress remembered to create a
government for the new Oregon Territory.
In 1850 Congress passed the Oregon Land Donation Act which opened Western Oregon to
settlement.
After the act was passed, Congress remembered the land was occupied.
So Congress authorized Commissioners to negotiate treaties
In 1853 Joel Palmer was appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon. His first treaty
signed on September 10, 1853 was the Rogue River Treaty. It was ratified by Congress on April
12, 1854.
Established by the Executive Order of President Franklin Pierce on November 9, 1855

For the Coast, Willamette and Umpqua Tribes. Three days later it became policy to include the Rogue Valley Tribes.

Senate Bill 142 (1860) introduced by Senator Joseph Lane stated that the Siletz Reservation “had been selected for the permanent residence” of the Rogue River Tribes as specified in the September 10, 1853 Rogue River Treaty.
1865 Executive Order

200,000 acres opened to settlement by an Executive Order signed by President Andrew Johnson December 21, 1865, upon request by the whites to open the Yaquina estuary for the exploitation of the native oysters.

“...the tract was thrown open to settlement, ...the whites rushed in upon the tract, seized upon the Indian farms, occupied their houses, in several instances ejecting the Indians who had built the houses by force and immediately commenced settlement of the country.”

Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon 1866
700,000 acres opened to settlement at the request of the Oregon Legislature.

“…these Indians shall not be removed from their present reservation without their consent previously had.”

**Act of Congress, March 3, 1875**

The Tillamook and Alsea bands were forcibly removed with no prior consent during the heavy winter rains and “left without shelter of any kind and destitute of food and clothing for themselves and their children suffering from heavy rain and wind storms.”

Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon 1875
In 1892, without the required consent of the Tribes, the remaining Oregon Coast Reservation was “allotted”. 551 members received title to 80 acres each in order to open the remaining 192,000 acres to settlement.

“Allotment” 1892

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551 members received title to 80 acres each in order to open the remaining 192,000 acres to settlement.
In 1910 Nick Hatch, an Aleut native, lost his parents and the Bureau of Indian Affairs shipped him to Chemawa Indian school in Salem Oregon…

1910/9 survivors, 1914 -2   Hattie 11
In 1914 Hattie Martin lost her mother and father and the Bureau of Indian Affairs shipped her to Chemawa Indian School...
In 1911 a census estimated that there were 500 to 1000 surviving sea otter in 13 small colonies. The 1911 Fur Seal Treaty included sea otter as an afterthought.
In 1912 the US Department of Agriculture mapped the kelp beds from Mexico to Alaska for potential exploitation to provide potash.

By this time, due to removal, there were very few active fish weirs...
By this time the majority of our tribal members had lost their allotted land because they could not pay taxes.

By this time, the estuaries were changing and State prohibited our access to our fish and fish weirs.

On August 13, 1954 the federal government determined that the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians no longer existed.

We were “terminated.”
The island was occupied by the protected sea otter...
1970 - Gathering the natives and removing the survivors.
We were restored in 1977…
Two sea otter populations were also restored. The Oregon population was not...
Our kelp forests have been replaced with urchin barrens.
“Young salmon hide in kelp.” Makah Nation
Up to a five-fold increase in fish density has been observed when urchin barrens are replaced with Macro-algae…

Slide provided by Dr. Jane Watson
Expansion of Kelp Beds over four years (1996-1999)

When the urchin population was controlled, the kelp beds made a fantastic comeback…
Elakha is the key to restoring our sustainable estuary fisheries....

“I finally learned that the men made prodigious hauls when one run or another of fish came in...and that everybody went and got all he or she needed, in the ‘go-help-yourself’ free for all that was actually the largest single source for the ... larder”

Melville Jacobs 1934
In 2001 we initiated our efforts to restore Elakha...
TRIBAL PROGRAM NEWS

Tribe Supports Elkaha – Sea Otter

The Siletz Tribal Council approved a resolution in January to become a member of the newly formed Elkaha Alliance, and appointed "Tribe Council member Justin Miller, the Cultural Resources director, and the Natural Resources manager" to represent the tribe in this alliance.

The Council also decided to support efforts to develop a plan to reintroduce the Elkaha and the eventual restoration of the Elkaha to the Oregon Coast.

The following letter expresses the views of the sea otter and is written by tribe member David Hatch.

Elkaha
by David R. Hatch

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This is a story without a beginning or an ending.

For the sake of a beginning, we start with a storm, actually a Russian Empire named Catherine. At the time she was known as "Her Imperial Majesty Russian Catharine." In 1725 the sea was in a state of discovery, to find out if her breath was as long as she was, and if she had the same kind of energy as the American sea. Although Vina sailed right through a narrow strait separating two continents, the weather was so bad he never saw the continent just to the east.


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On April 17, 2004, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Alexei I, sent "Sea Otter" on another five-year journey to look further for more answers, to the same question. On this trip, Vina and his crew were the first to reach St. Peter, instead turned them. Many of the crew, along with the women, were not able to survive the winter in the sea we call the Bering Sea and were shipwrecked on an island just off the coast of Russia that we call Bering Island.

Those who lived through the winter survived because of the natural climate of the area and abundant resources, which was relatively easy to collect. This animal lived from both food and clothing. In their parts, the animal was called "Elkaha," but most of us know this animal as the sea otter. The Siletz Indians, with more than 800 people, have always had medicine that is widely used and immediately commissioned a full-length cloak.

This trip was as successful for the Elkaha and my family on the Aleutian Islands as it was for Vina Bering. The fur of the Elkaha provided the motivation for the Russian invasion of the Americas. In their quest for fur, the Russians brought along their entire culture to make explorations and decimated the native peoples by taking the young girls – wives, daughters, and sisters – leaving in their wake the men to hunt for fur, even during the winter storms.

After a few years in one spot, the otter and people peoples were very much removed and it was time to move to the next island. While the Russians were exploiting their way north, word spread of the valuable fur trade. This inspired the extension of the Spanish invasion northwest in 1794. Within a year, the Spanish were going about their business involving the Alaskan Natives and the sea otter.

Not to be left out, the English, led by James Cook, showed up in 1778. They started resuming the geographic features so named by the Russians and the Spanish and trading a right with a presence for a present.

Just price of his return trip to Hawaii, where he managed to get himself murdered by the native Hawaiians and the rest of the sea otter trade.

"The fur of these animals, as mentioned in the Russian accounts, is certainly more soft and fine than that of others we know of: and we can find out the discovery of this part of the continent of North America, where so valuable an article of commerce might be met with, cannot be a matter of importance."

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Sea Otter - Elkaha

When Lewis & Clark were exploring the continent with their premier Corps of Discovery, the Russians were landing ships loaded with 15,000 feet sea otter pelts. Over and over, the pattern of destruction was repeated as Russian invaders moved from island to island. By 1810, the Spaniards were killing the Albright hundreds by the Russian as poachers in San Francisco Bay. Fort Ross, just 65 miles north of San Francisco, was established in 1812 and stands today as a tourist attraction and monument to the extent of the Russian invasion.

By the time the wagon trains arrived in Oregon, it is estimated that more than 1 million sea otter pelts had been taken along the Pacific Coast. The otter populations were in such poor shape the Albright were no longer of interest to the Russians and was sold to the United States in 1867. In Oregon, the story of Elkaha looked like it was coming to an end. The sea otter was about to assume the distinction of being Oregon's first species wiped out by the various invaders.

In 1877, an Englishman named Walter Nash traveled with his English friends from the town of Corvallis to see a small settlement named Newport. Here he reports:

"I remember well after supper that evening, we three Englishmen were into 'Bush' and cordial sires to chat and smoke. A smoking still lamp lighted the place. As the doorbell jingled, a couple of Indians came in out of the dark, one carrying along on his shoulder come long, dark beech which he got on the counter before the storekeeper. Moxley picked up his face and came to take notice. From nose to face, the animal was about four feet and four and a half feet long, blackly of the outer type -- the fur dark brown, the feet were wet. "I have never met this before," Moxley said to me. "It is the sea otter of the Pacific." The Indian became darker with 'Bush' for the body. The beak started at two hundred dollars, and Moxley's face fell for, by degrees it went to four hundred, and changed hands for a little feet long, plainly of the outer type -- the fur dark brown, the feet were wet. "I have never met this before," Moxley said to me. "It is the sea otter of the Pacific." The Indian began to dark with 'Bush' for the body. The beak started at two hundred dollars, and Moxley's face fell for, by degrees it went to four hundred, and changed hands for a little feet long, plainly of the outer type -- the fur dark brown, the feet were wet.

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Public education is critical to our effort.

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Ancient Elakha jawbones from our middens have been used to verify the sub-species which occupied Oregon.
12 Ancient Mitochondrial DNA Fragments Extracted

4 Ancient Haplotype A (7% / 55%)*

8 Ancient Haplotype C (74% / 0%)*

Modern Haplotype A

Modern Haplotype C

*Modern (Southern Sea Otter% / SE Alaskan %)
2002 Curriculum Field Test

Sorting Beach Wrack - the modern food web is dominated by herbivores...

Sorting Midden Samples - the pre-contact populations were different than the modern populations...

Oregon Field Guide on OPB
White Cedar National Marine Sanctuary
for the purpose of restoring near shore macro-algae
100 years after Lewis and Clark left, the last known sea otter in Oregon was killed.

Perhaps 100 years after that animal was killed, we can welcome Elakha home.

Perhaps my grandson or great grandson will be able to harvest the same fish my great grandfather harvested in the same sustainable manner...