



Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail Traveling Exhibit - Complete Story



Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) has available for use a set of five double-sided "pop-ups" that tell the NPNHT Flight of Summer 1877 story.

- Panel 1: Provides information about Nez Perce (Niimiipuu) life prior to the arrival of European people.
- Panel 2: Discusses events in the early and mid-19th century related to the Nez Perce and the treaty period.
- Panel 3: Shares information about the 1877 War and Flight of the Nez Perce.
- Panel 4: Details the Nez Perce exile from 1878 to 1885 in present day Kansas and Oklahoma, an area the Nez Perce called Ee Yak ish Pah (iyeq'iispe), The Hot Country.
- Display 5: Focuses on the Niimiipuu people today and their connections with their ancestors.

These exhibits are available to visitor contact locations, cultural and educational institutions along or associated with the NPNHT, and for conferences and workshops.

The exhibits are approximately 30" wide by 80" tall, are double sided, and are light weight and can usually be set up by one person.

The NPNHT will pay for shipping displays to your location and it will be your responsibility to provide return shipping.

Usage time time is negotiated at time of reservation.

If you would like additional information or to reserve the exhibits, please contact: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland, Trail Administrator, at sandra.broncheau-mcfarland@usda.gov or call or text 406 360-7019.

Prequel

The Nez Perce Trail

The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail memorializes the events of the summer of 1877, when a native people were forced to flee their homeland in a futile attempt to avoid warfare and live their chosen way of life in peace. The story of this trail exemplifies a dramatic conflict that shaped the West and its people.

Tragic events pitted white settlers and former tribal allies against a people who had been their neighbors and friends. It propelled military leaders and volunteers into a four month campaign to capture the Nez Perce and force them onto a reservation. For the Nez Perce people, traditional trails, which had long been a source of joy and sustenance, became trails of flight and conflict, trails of sorrow.

We invite you to experience the heritage of the West as you retrace the footsteps of the Nez Perce and the soldiers who pursued them over some of the most spectacular country of the Northern Rockies.

www.usda.gov/nphnt

Mounting Tensions

White Settlement - Treaties

The Nez Perce first learned of Christianity through the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Company fur traders. With increased interaction, the Nez Perce interest in "the white man's book" (Bible) also grew. In 1831 four young Nez Perce journeyed to St. Louis and met with William Clark. Misunderstandings from this meeting led to Christian missionaries traveling west to deliver the salvation they believed the Niimiipuu sought.

As European settlers moved west, conflicts began to arise. In 1855, a reservation was established for the Nez Perce and other tribes in an area of the Oregon, Idaho, and Washington Territories. Although this initial treaty left most of their traditional lands intact, these boundaries were not respected by the newcomers and gold was soon discovered deep in Nez Perce homeland. A second treaty in 1863, generally referred to as "the Steel Treaty," greatly diminished the reservation. Tensions mounted as the goods and other provisions promised to the Nez Perce in the treaty were clearly not provided.

Lands originally promised to the Nez Perce were repeatedly diminished until the summer of 1877 when the U.S. Government demanded the Nez Perce not already on the reservation move to that land or they would be moved by force.

Having to flee their homeland and to abandon their way of life was a tragedy for the Nez Perce. The flight of 1877 was a desperate attempt to survive. The flight was a journey of suffering and loss. The flight was a journey of survival. The flight was a journey of hope. The flight was a journey of love. The flight was a journey of life.

Nez Perce Treaties

www.usda.gov/nphnt

The Summer of 1877

June 13 to October 5

Seeking to avoid more violence, nearly 750 Nez Perce desperately began a flight for their lives. Only 200 were warriors. The rest were women, children, elderly and sick. They were pursued by the U.S. military and after an initial battle at White Bluff Canyon where they defeated a cavalry force, the Nez Perce headed east toward buffalo country, hoping to find safety with friends. Along the way they were joined by more bands of Nez Perce. For the next four months the group, which included approximately 2,000 horses and hundreds of dogs, fought masterfully in some 20 battles and skirmishes. They eluded the U.S. Army and more than 2,000 soldiers, civilian volunteers, and scouts from other Indian tribes on a circuitous route through the present day states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

The Niimiipuu were led by Chiefs 'Eklitmyete'qmin' (Chief Looking Glass), Hotoon (Lean Elk), Ollak (Frog), Piyooop' (oo sayayee (White Bird), and Taxawab'at' (Tookshookshook).

These chiefs of the "non-treaty" Nez Perce were also joined by allies from Upper Palouse bands, led by Chiefs Hantalekin (Red Echo) and Hantahone Kure (Black Hawk).

www.usda.gov/nphnt

The Nez Perce in Exile

Ee Yak ish Pah (iyeq'iispe) "The Hot Country"

The story of the Nez Perce does not end at the Bear Paw Battlefield. Rather than returning to Idaho as Colonel Nelson Appleton Miles agreed in the terms of Chief Joseph's surrender, General William Tecumseh Sherman ordered the surviving Nez Perce be sent to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and from there ultimately to a reservation near present-day Tonkawa, Oklahoma, "The Hot Country," or Ee Yak ish Pah, where they would remain for the next eight years. Of the nearly 500 Nez Perce taken to Indian Territory, only 301 survived the extreme weather and poor conditions. The conditions were so dire that most Nez Perce babies born in Indian Territory died, and were buried there. Finally released from exile in 1885, their descendants live today on the Nez Perce, Colville, and Umatilla Reservations, as well throughout the U.S. and Canada.

www.usda.gov/nphnt

Nez Perce Today

Tradition Lives On

Today, the Nez Perce, Colville, and Umatilla Reservations are home to many descendants of that fateful summer. Through all of the hardships the Niimiipuu culture is still strong. They continue to be known for the fine Appaloosa horses they breed. Their language and traditional practices are lovingly taught to the future generations.

"We, the surviving Nez Perces, want to leave our hearts, memories, hallowed presence as a never-ending revelation to the story of the event of 1877. These trails will live in our hearts."

— Frank B. Andrews, Nez Perce descendant.

The Niimiipuu connection to their ancestors is great. The land unites generations across time, keeping the culture alive. It provides food, water, shelter, and beauty, and above all a sense of place. The Niimiipuu did not travel here. They are of this land.

This intimate and sacred relationship unites them. The Niimiipuu seek to promote the well-being of the people, the continuity of their culture, and the protection of their land.

Their forefathers offered their lives to protect the Niimiipuu way-of-life in 1877; they strive to continue their work. Their actions of fortitude and conviction is a model for our entire today.

www.usda.gov/nphnt



Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail Traveling Exhibit - Exile Story



The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) has a set of three "pop-up" traveling exhibits interpreting the Exile after the Flight of 1877.

- Panel #1: Provides information about a group of Nez Perce who in July of 1877 were returning from a buffalo hunt in Montana and discovered their homeland embroiled in conflict. They were captured and were held as prisoners of war at Fort Vancouver, Washington.
- Panel #2: Details the story of the more than nearly 300 Nez Perce men, women, and children who escaped the Bear Paw Battlefield and made their way north to Canada in the vicinity of Fort Walsh, a North West Mounted Police/Royal Canadian Mounted Police post located near present day Maple Creek, Saskatchewan.
- Panel #3: Details the Nez Perce exile from 1878 to 1885 in present day Kansas and Oklahoma, an area the Nez Perce called Ee Yak ish Pah (iyeq'iispe), The Hot Country.

These exhibits are available to visitor contact locations, cultural and educational institutions along or associated with the NPNHT, and for conferences and workshops.

The exhibits are approximately 30" wide by 80" tall and are light weight and can usually be set up by one person.

The NPNHT will pay for shipping displays to your location and it will be your responsibility to provide return shipping.

Usage time is negotiated at the time of reservation

If you would like additional information or to reserve the exhibits, please contact: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland, Trail Administrator, at sandra.broncheau-mcfarland@usda.gov or call or text 406 360-7019.

