



From Cathlapotle to the Classroom

A Multidisciplinary Hands-On Resource Kit



Contents include:

- Artifact replicas made by a Chinook artist
- Teaching guide w/ hands-on lessons and activities
- Books, videos, audiotapes, and other reference materials
- Samples of natural materials



Above: archaeological excavation at Cathlapotle provided the background for the kit. Below: the kit's materials can inspire class projects.



The Product:

The “Discover Cathlapotle!” environmental and heritage education kit is a traveling trunk available to teachers (primarily grades 2-5) in the Vancouver-Portland metropolitan area. The kit focuses on the archaeological site of Cathlapotle, located on Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge in Ridgefield, Washington. This historically-documented Chinookan town site was described by Lewis and Clark during their trip down the Columbia River in 1805. Upon their return in 1806, they stopped to visit the people who lived at Cathlapotle.

Because fieldwork at the site has ended and lab analysis is in progress, the site is not accessible to the public. The kit was developed to share the rich past and fascinating discoveries at Cathlapotle with school students and the whole community. Soon, a full-size replica of a Chinookan-style plankhouse will stand on the Refuge to serve as an environmental and heritage education center. Go to www.plankhouse.org to learn more about the Cathlapotle Plankhouse Project.

The Goals:

Working with the Chinook Tribe, Portland State University, and the teaching community, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed this resource kit to explore the cultural and natural history of Cathlapotle and its people. The project's goals are threefold:

- 1) to promote understanding and appreciation of past and present native cultures,
- 2) to foster a sense of stewardship for natural and cultural resources, and
- 3) to provide curriculum-based materials emphasizing critical-thinking skills and hands-on discovery learning in language arts, social studies, math, and science.

Thousands of students have experienced the kit since its introduction in 1995.

Some Facts about Cathlapotle:

- The site was one of the largest and most important Chinookan towns along the Columbia River.
- Lewis and Clark counted 14 cedar plank houses and estimated a population of 900 people.
- Archaeological survey, mapping, and excavation have identified the remains of 11 probable house structures, an extensive midden deposit, artifacts, and animal food refuse.
- Radiocarbon tests date occupation from at least 500 years ago to the 1840s.

To schedule use of the kit

- If you are an educator in the Vancouver-Portland Metropolitan area, you can arrange to use the kit in your classroom FREE! It books up fast, so here's what to do:
 1. Determine a range of preferred dates you'd like to use the kit. If you can, organize a group of teachers in your school who will share the kit during the two-week loan period.
 2. Contact: Virginia Parks, Project Coordinator, at virginia_parks@fws.gov, 503-625-4377, 503-625-4887 (fax), to reserve a date or find out more about the kit!