



# COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE

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## Coquille Indian Tribe Awarded Oregon Heritage Grant to Create Permanent Canoe Fragment Exhibit

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Coos Bay, OR** — A true team effort is bringing a story to life on Oregon’s South Coast. One that has been hundreds of years in the making.

The Coquille (Ko-Kwel) Indian Tribe has been awarded a \$7,500 Oregon Heritage Grant to assist in a \$15,000 project that will design and construct a permanent exhibit for a traditional dugout canoe fragment discovered near Sunset Bay State Park. The Coquille Indian Tribe worked closely with the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Oregon Department of State Lands, and South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve are part of this cooperative project.

The artifact, believed to date from the 18th or 19th century, offers physical evidence of Indigenous life along Oregon’s southern coast and will be housed at the South Slough Reserve Visitor Center in Charleston.

Coquille Indian Tribe Chairman Brenda Meade said this is a great example of tribes working together to accomplish something of tremendous importance for all.

“The exhibit being built is going to be so helpful in telling our people’s story now and for future generations,” Meade said. “This project honors all the Indigenous peoples of this area who have walked these lands since time immemorial.”

The canoe fragment, carefully preserved through collaborative efforts between tribal and state partners, will be displayed in a custom-designed exhibit featuring a pedestal and display case, a nature-inspired mural, and an interpretive plaque. All components will be created by local and regional Indigenous artists, ensuring cultural authenticity and respect.

“It is an amazing opportunity to educate the public and celebrate our shared heritage and we are already looking forward to the next step in the process,” Meade added.

The exhibit will serve an estimated 10,000 annual visitors and support ongoing studies in archaeology, history, and anthropology. It also reflects a broader commitment to preserving and sharing untold stories of Oregon’s Indigenous communities.

“The South Slough Reserve is honored to showcase this cultural artifact and co-steward these lands with our tribal partners so that this place may continue to teach and inspire us for generations to come,” said Reserve Manager Patricia Fox.

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Oregon Heritage Commission, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

A public dedication ceremony is planned upon completion.

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**RESILIENT – STRONG – CARING: KO-KWEL**