

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

W I L D L I F E *and* L I V I N G H I S T O R Y

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HIGH DESERT MUSEUM AND THE MUSEUM AT WARM SPRINGS RECEIVE IMLS GRANT FOR *WEAVING STORIES* PROJECT

Funding supports programs and practices that honor Indigenous perspectives

Bend, OR – A collaborative project between the High Desert Museum and The Museum At Warm Springs has received a \$110,662 Museums for America grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support a collaborative project, *Weaving Stories: Creating Stronger Institutional Partnerships to Enhance Culturally Relevant Visitor Experiences*. The project will empower museum professionals at both institutions to expand their capacity to develop place-based exhibits, programs and practices that honor Indigenous perspectives, both past and present.



“This is a tremendous opportunity to support and further develop our partnership with The Museum at Warm Springs and to work together and leverage expertise at both of the museums to co-create innovative visitor experiences that weave together indigenous cultural traditions and dynamic contemporary communities,” said High Desert Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. “We are very honored to be awarded this funding and to partner with The Museum at Warm Springs.”

Based on the successful National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded *Cosmic Serpent* and *Native Universe* models, the *Weaving Stories* project will use multiday workshops and intensive learning experiences to foster relationships across organizations and advance staff expertise. These NSF-funded models explore the commonalities between western science and native knowledge.

The three-year project is divided into three phases built around intensive learning experiences. The cultural engagement phase (December 2017-December 2018) will center on a foundational four-day workshop that will advance understandings of land, place and culture among stakeholders. During the exploration phase (January 2019-November 2019), core project staff will travel to museums in Washington, D.C. and the Northwest to learn about innovations in exhibit design and challenges in interpretation of complex stories. The development phase (December 2019-April 2020) will include a four-day workshop that will enable staff to work collaboratively on exhibit concepts and program design.

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“The Weaving Stories project will provide staff, volunteers and board members of both organizations with the skills and tools necessary to create connections that generate regional networks between native and museum communities and develop science education programs in which learners benefit from both western science and indigenous knowledge,” said The Museum At Warm Springs Executive Director Carol Leone.

In addition to benefiting staff, volunteers and board members at the two institutions, the project will ultimately benefit museum visitors and the Central Oregon community by increasing public awareness and understanding of different cultures and worldviews and sparking community dialogue.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in 1982 and brings regional wildlife, culture, art and natural resources together to promote an understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of North America's high desert country. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats, and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate the high desert environment. The Museum is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a Smithsonian Affiliate. To learn more the Museum, visit www.highdesertmuseum.org.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM AT WARM SPRINGS:

The Museum At Warm Springs exists to preserve the culture, history and traditions of the three tribes which comprise The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The Museum was designed to provide a welcoming sight to the public as well as a safe conservatory for the traditional treasures of the Tribes. To learn more about The Museum At Warm Springs, visit www.museumatwarmsprings.org.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

An independent, federal agency, the Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grantmaking, policy development and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov.

For more information, contact the High Desert Museum at 541-382-4754 ext. 300 or The Museum At Warm Springs at 541-553-3331.

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