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For immediate release

MAP SHOWS COWLITZ HOMELAND NORTH OF CLARK COUNTY

A 19th-century map recently found in a Department of the Interior (DOI) report casts doubt on the Cowlitz Tribe's claim that Clark County was part of its homeland—a link other tribes have had to make to establish reservations with casinos.

According to the map, dated 1876 and representing the historic distribution of area tribes, most of present-day Clark County was occupied by the "Tsinuk," a phonetic representation of Chinook. Historically, Chinookan bands, which spoke closely related languages and shared a culture distinct from that of the Cowlitz, lived along the Columbia River, from The Dalles area to the river's mouth.

The map situates the Cowlitz Tribe over northern Cowlitz and Skamania counties and part of Lewis County. The southernmost point designated as "Kowlitz" land is still north of present-day Kelso, Wash.—23 miles north of the 152 acres that the tribe has asked the Bureau of Indian Affairs to designate its initial reservation.

"This map is just one more piece of evidence that demonstrates the Cowlitz Tribe's reservation should be located farther up the I-5 corridor," said Edward Lynch, chairman of Citizens Against Reservation Shopping. "We have no difficulty with the tribe wanting to establish a reservation and pursue economic opportunities, but this casino simply doesn't belong here in Clark County."

The Cowlitz Tribe has formed a partnership with the Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut and proposed a large-scale casino resort along Interstate 5 at the La Center interchange. The proposal includes 160,000 square feet for gaming, 210,000 square feet for restaurants and retail, 150,000 square feet for convention and entertainment space, a 250-room hotel, a 200-space RV park and parking for 8,500 employee and patron vehicles. An environmental impact statement examining the proposal is expected this fall.

To develop a casino at Exit 16, the Cowlitz Tribe must establish that Clark County is its ancestral homeland because land taken into trust—or designated reservation land—after Oct. 17, 1988, may not be used for gaming except in a few specific cases. One of these exceptions is made for land that the DOI approves as a tribe's initial reservation, an option for the Cowlitz Tribe, which was federally acknowledged Dec. 31, 2001, but as yet has no reservation.

However, to approve an initial reservation on which gaming may take place, DOI's criteria "requires that the tribe have strong geographical, historical and cultural ties to the land," according to July testimony by George Skibine, an acting deputy assistant Interior secretary, before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

According to Skibine's testimony, as of July only three tribes had had initial reservations approved for gaming purposes under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. One of these is the Mohegan Tribe, which operates the second-largest casino in the United States and is diversifying with gaming ventures involving the Cowlitz Tribe and another tribe in Wisconsin, and by purchasing the Pocono Downs racetrack in Pennsylvania.

The 1876 DOI map, which was published in *Contributions to North American Ethnology*, is part of a large body of evidence that the Cowlitz Tribe's aboriginal homeland was not in Clark County. The Indian Claims Commission determined in 1971 that the Cowlitz Tribe held aboriginal title in 1863 to the Cowlitz River drainage and Toutle River drainage but not to the lower Lewis River area or land in Clark County. More recently, as the Cowlitz Tribe was going through the federal acknowledgement process, the Bureau of Indian Affairs concluded that Clark County and the lower Lewis River were not historically or genealogically significant to today's Cowlitz Tribe.

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CARS is a local citizens organization that is concerned about the practice of reservation shopping and is dedicated to keeping large-scale casino gambling out of southwestern Washington.