PROPOSAL 25  
Interdisciplinary Perspectives:  
Indian-White History and Prehistory in the Inland Northwest

Project Leads: Dr. Jerry Galm, Professor of Anthropology; Dr. Stacy Warren, Professor of Geography;  
Dr. Bill Youngs, Professor of History

One of the most productive ways of enhancing student learning and faculty engagement—key  
components of the university’s Strategic Plan—is through collaborative projects across disciplinary lines.  
We will bring together our skills in anthropology, geography, and history in this project.  With the help of  
deeply engaged student assistants we will develop an interdisciplinary resource archive, focusing on the  
crossroads of Indian-White settlement in the Inland northwest.

We will create a collection of learning materials in several areas of mutual interest focusing in  
particular on the ice age floods which shaped the contours of much of eastern Washington; the ten-  
thousand-year-old Indian “Site 45KT1362” (aka “Sentinel Gap Site”) near Vantage, Washington; the  
Mullan Road, the first wagon road across the Northern Rockies, which passed through today’s Turnbull  
Wildlife Refuge; the Cataldo Mission, a Jesuit Indian mission in northern Idaho; and the story of Chief  
Joseph’s relocation to the Colville Reservation, just north of Spokane in 1885.  For each of these focal  
points we will assemble an archive consisting of three or more of the following materials: original  
documents, articles, photographs (contemporary and historical), film, and maps.  We will make these  
materials available as: (1) films on DVD,  (2) a web site, and (3) a binder with copies of key print  
materials and images.

Films of the Sentinel Gap Site, for example, illustrate the distant prehistory of humanity on the  
Plateau.  Contemporary newspaper articles relating to the relocation of Chief Joseph to the Colville  
Reservation (1885), and a contemporary film of nightfall over his gravesite on the reservation are  
evocative of Indian life shortly after white settlement.  The Mullan Report—the key document on the  
building of the Mullan Road—along with photographs of remaining section of the road provide a window  
on early white exploration and settlement.  Through developing GIS maps of these topics linking images,  
documents, and topography, we will be able to provide exceptionally attractive resources for students and
faculty, enabling them to explore these resources in the future. We will use these materials in our own classes both for their content and as examples for our students of how our diverse disciplines can be brought together to develop a fuller picture of life in our region—and by extension in other areas of inquiry.

We do not claim to be developing a text-book-like coverage of the whole subject of the "Indian-White History and Prehistory of the Inland Northwest." What we are doing is constructing a series of "stories" drawing on the materials in our fields. We will be exploring the question what does this project mean to each of us individually, what can we add to the mix? And then we will be discovering places where each of our individual stories intersects with others from other fields. How can one story add to another? The Mullan Road (the first wagon road across the northern Rockies) seems to have it all -- history, literature, anthropology, geology, geography. And as each of us puts stories on the table, so to speak, others in the group will have information and perspectives for that story. Given the broad sweep of her field, geography, Stacy Warren’s perspective will be essential from the start with any of our topics. But additionally, we anticipate that connections between our fields will become evident.

In addition to the academic expertise we bring from our various fields, we all have a head start on the media side of this project: Stacy is an authority on creating GIS experiences on the web; Jerry has some films from the "Sentinel Gap Site;" Gene is associated with a wonderful Internet site on the Ice Age Floods (http://www.iceagefloodsinstitute.org/); and Bill done some related film-making and Web work, including the Mullan Report (http://www.narhist.ewu.edu/mullan_report/mullan_report_home.html), some articles on the road (http://www.narhist.ewu.edu/historical_media_workshop/sample%20web%20site/mullan_sitemap.htm) and a very preliminary site on Indian-White encounters (http://www.narhist.ewu.edu/Native_Americans/indians_frontier_spokane.html).

Students will be engaged in this project eventually by studying the materials in their classroom; but equally important, some will be engaged from the start as research assistants helping develop the
materials. Preliminary work on these subjects has already involved students extensively as research assistants, transcribers, editors, writers—but each isolated from the others by the boundaries of their disciplines.

As we work our way through the project we will identify at least three faculty members in other disciplines such as botany and geology, whom we will invite to contribute to this interdisciplinary endeavor. The first of these is geologist and ice age floods expert Gene Kiver. We have not yet identified the other resource experts yet because we want to the connections to flow out of our research. The story of the Mullan Road, for example, might suggest the value of input by a botanist and a meteorologist to enhance the story of the experience of building the road. We would then contact the appropriate persons to interview.

A Closer Look: The Meaning of this Project to Four Faculty Members

These statement by the core faculty in the project illustrate the different perspectives we bring to our project—and suggest the rich mix of ideas and experiences we will bring together in creating the cross-disciplinary web site, DVDs, and reader:

• **Jerry Galm**: The anthropological component of this study will focus on the interdisciplinary aspects of archaeological research. The linkage of archaeology to disciplines as diverse as history, geology/geomorphology, soil science, and climatology will be examined through the compilation of summary information capsules based on studies of regional sites. These study capsules will be organized as straightforward and meaningful information summaries emphasizing the chronology of human occupation of eastern Washington (and the larger Columbia Plateau) and the overall lifestyles of First Americans.

    Archaeological site case studies will highlight the presentation for each time period synopsis beginning with the c. 10,200-year-old Sentinel Gap site located in central Washington. Faculty, staff, and students from Eastern, as well as graduate students from Central Washington University, conducted the excavation of this site. The methodology of archaeology, as well as the conditions of fieldwork, and the
actual materials recovered from this important site can also be developed through the editing of film footage taken of the investigation in progress. Students will assist in the development of information capsules and if possible, the production of a short film on the excavations and analysis of the Sentinel Gap site. Information contained in each capsule will summarize Native lifeways (e.g., typical artifact forms, housing styles, foods consumed, paleoenvironmental conditions, trade relations, and so forth) and will identify other resources (e.g., books, articles, photos/photomontages, films, museum or other exhibits, artifact collections) of potential use in classroom presentations. This information can also be modified for use in K-12 classroom learning exercises, utilizing the resources, personnel, and students in the Education program to assist in this effort. Finally, students can develop selected information as a GIS base map collection. This map file can incorporate a wide variety of datasets ranging from major site locations, historic Native group locations, population data (historic), and sites containing special features, such as houses (the traditional semi-subterranean mat-covered lodge) to paleoenvironmental reconstructions of eastern Washington by time period (e.g., 12,000 years ago to the present).

Bill Youngs: My interest in historical research focuses on the art of story-telling with footnotes—solid scholarship backing up interesting and important tales from the past. One of my favorite stories from the Inland Northwest is story of the Mullan Road. In 1853 Capt. John Mullan began work on the road which would carry his name. Arguably he would finish the job that Lewis and Clark began. In 1803 the Rocky Mountains were *terra incognita*, but the Missouri and the Columbia Rivers were already on the map. The idea was to go up the first river and down the second, right across the continent. Ideally, that unknown land would be merely a hill a hundred feet high, and the distance between the two rivers would be a couple of miles.

Of course, it didn’t turn out that way, and the Rockies almost killed Lewis and Clark.

Enter John Mullan some fifty years later. By then the Oregon Trail had been opened through the gentle terrain of South Pass, but it failed to take advantage of the Missouri. Problem was – if you used the helpful Missouri and you had to pay with the formidable Rockies. John Mullan’s job was this: take the
western-most point a steamboat could reach on the Missouri and the eastern-most point a steamboat could fetch on the Columbia and punch a wagon road through the mountains between the two. During the fall of 1853 Captain Mullan was headquartered in the Bitter Root Mountains. In a report to the government he described his job as exploring the mountain region “whence flow the sources of the Columbia and Missouri rivers in a network of babbling brooks.” The man was a poet as well as an explorer, and he was on the verge of one of the great adventures of Inland Northwest history.

As my individual discipline-based contribution to “Interdisciplinary Perspectives: Indian-White History and Prehistory in the Inland Northwest” I will be assembling documents, such as government reports, on the Mullan Road, taking and arranging photographs and films, writing and editing articles on the subject. These will go onto the project web site, the DVD, and the resource book. And these will come from my perspective as an historian. But equally important I will be working with Jerry, Stacy, and Gene to ferret out the interdisciplinary facets of the subject, exploring the Indian side of the story, developing useful maps, and considering how the geology of the region affected the road-building. I will also be exploring several other subjects, including the story of Chief Joseph on the Colville Reservation with the same considerations of personal knowledge and interdisciplinary possibilities.

Gene Kiver: Here is how the ice age floods are described in the language of our brochure for the Ice Age Floods Institute:

“It is a clear, cold morning in the interior Northwest about 15,000 years ago.

“While mammoths graze peacefully in the distance, you view with joy the magnificent landscape that is home to you and your people. You welcome the warmth of the rising sun.

“But there is something strange in the distant wind. Your heart pounds as you realize the sound is not of the wind alone. The animals are suddenly restless as the sound becomes a roar and the earth begins to tremble. Remembering stories told by the elders, you scramble up the slope, gasping for breath with the sudden exertion.
“Instantly the view northward across the landscape changes. The roar becomes deafening as a great mass of water and ice hundreds of feet deep bears down on you. As blocks of ice the size of whole villages tumble in seething, muddy water, you realize that your people will be swept away. You struggle for footing as you race further up the steep slope. Maybe you can outrun the torrent….”

The story of the ice age floods, one of the most arresting episodes in the entire history of geology, is at the core of my potential contribution to “Interdisciplinary Perspectives.” With the help of student researchers, I will describe the geological setting of the Inland Northwest to establish the basis of land use. Geology ultimately creates both limitations and opportunities for human use. The resourcefulness of humans in adapting to these conditions should be one of the major integrating themes of the study. Archaeological sites, pioneer locations, road and railroad locations are all tied to or influenced by the geological and climatological settings.

Additionally the tie in with the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail (in Congressional committees at present) will be outstanding. People visiting trail locations should be exposed to the fascinating cultural history tied to the landscape. The Cheney-Palouse Chapter board is currently working on scenic road trips through the eastern Inland Northwest. An excursion from Cheney along the route of the Mullan Road to Palouse Falls is a possibility: a road log that shows maps with mileage locations and descriptions and locations of significant geologic features, Native use of the areas, historic buildings and towns would be a useful product that could be shared with students and the general public. In Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge there is a four-mile scenic loop road that could be developed easily into an interpretive trail. It is part of the Scabland, contains wetlands, and has at least one site along the road where a homestead once existed. Peggy O’Connel, a colleague, has a detailed trail log on the foot trail to one of the lakes scoured by the catastrophic Missoula Floods.

In each of these cases and in others we will explore during the course of this project the connections between geology, anthropology, history, and geography are abundant and fascinating.
Stacy Warren: It can be said that geography is the most interdisciplinary of fields, bringing together the land and the people who live upon it, including their cultures, economics, politics, religions, artistic endeavors, and related practices. For the geographer, the map is the most perfect, as well as the most efficient way to express these often complicated relationships. Thus, a geographic perspective that highlights the mapping of the Inland Northwest over time brings a critical edge to the proposed interdisciplinary project: geography offers an integrative framework that helps solidify curriculum, and it offers an immediately appealing pedagogical tool—the map—to do so.

The map, like all other forms of communication, has undergone dramatic transformation in the information age in two important ways that inform this proposal. First, the map has evolved from the familiar static paper object we all know from the schoolroom into an interactive, digital experience that can be encountered on the Internet, on CDs, or via other multimedia channels. In this way, the map becomes an ideal forum for students to explore the historical ideas central to this proposal, through the interactive web site and streaming video. Secondly, contemporary research on cartographic representation and cognition emphasizes the powerful and intriguingly fluid meaning(s) that maps can portray.

Geology penetrates historical understanding of the Northwest at all scales: it allows us to trace a continuity across the three central “case studies” (Gene’s floods, Jerry’s archaeological dig, and Bill’s Mullan Road) both in terms of the evolution of landscape itself in the Inland Northwest from the Great Missoula Floods to the environmental effects of the European settlers, and in terms of the humans themselves—as the environmental possibilities around them change, so too will the people. Historians and geographers have created literally thousands of maps to document these processes, but equally important are the previous generations of maps created as contemporary records by the people of the time. This project pulls in explorer’s maps dating back to the early nineteenth century, as well as Native American “maps” (sometimes in the form of rock art and other unusual cartographic styles). By placing the map as the center of student inquiry, we give students from many disciplines a way not only to
recreate the historical moments but also to glimpse those moments through the eyes of contemporary mapmakers themselves.

**Goals and Objectives:**

1. We will engage ourselves and our students in a fascinating adventure into cutting-edge research and materials accumulation in our disciplines, fostering in our students an appreciation for inquiry as a lifelong enterprise. In the phrase of the Strategic Plan we will engage students by creating “an environment supportive of learning and teaching excellence.”

2. We will *model* interdisciplinary learning and materials development through a close partnership of faculty and students across departmental lines, and we will provide a lasting record of that collaboration by chronicling the project itself.

3. We will create a collection of learning materials that will be illustrative for our students of the story of the early history and prehistory of our region and the results of interdisciplinary, faculty-student collaboration.

4. At least four faculty members, in addition to the basic team of Galm, Kiver, Warren, and Youngs, will make contributions to the project.

5. At least ten students total, from all of our disciplines, will be involved in the project as research assistants and/or through taking independent study.

6. The materials we develop will be used in at least four courses in at least four different disciplines on campus.

In essence, we will be modeling a finished *product* (content on the history and prehistory of the Inland Northwest) and we will also be modeling the *process* by which such products can be created (through interdisciplinary cooperation.)

**Project Activities:**

(1) The faculty members will meet regularly among themselves and with student research assistants to identify key topics and resources.
(2) This faculty-student team will assemble the resources through archival research and photographic field trips.

(3) The team will prepare resources for DVDs, the Web site, and the resources binder.

(4) Team members will provide user-friendly introductions, tables of contents, and suggestions for teaching strategies and learning activities to accompany the materials,

(5) Rounding out the project, the team will develop a clear, concise “Do it Yourself” guide to conducting this kind of interdepartmental student-faculty materials development project.

Interdisciplinary Perspectives and EWU Phase I Priorities:

Our proposed activities relate closely to the following subjects as outlined in the university’s document “Academic Strategic Plan Highlights” (http://www.ewu.edu/x9800.xml): “The Plan offers strategies to create an EWU Experience that is distinctive…”

- **For EWU Students:**
  - A curriculum that is integrated and interdependent
  - Learning as exploration, inside and outside the classroom, 24/7
  - Opportunities for student research, scholarship and leadership
  - Rigorous expectations with exceptional support
  - Community connections through service learning, internships and volunteerism
  - Learning rich in multi-cultural and international perspectives and experiences.

- **For EWU Faculty:**
  - Support to define the balance among teaching, discovery and engagement
  - Encouragement to become “institutional difference makers”
  - Opportunities to collaborate across disciplines
  - A collegial environment that values new ideas

- **For EWU Communities:**
  Partnerships with researchers, scholars and artists; Talented students willing to serve and learn; and Knowledge and people connections to centers, institutes and departments”

Project Feasibility:

We are confident that we can achieve the goals and objectives of this project for two basic reasons: (1) Each of us has already done substantial research on the topics proposed here, giving us a solid foundation on which to build. (2) The interdisciplinary nature of the project provides inspiration to each of us to dig deeper into our own fields, while learning a great deal from each other as we explore these “Interdisciplinary Perspectives.” In short, we are energized by this endeavor: we care, and we have a fabulous subject!
Timeline:

January, 2006 – meet with student assistants and outline our topics and research goals.

February-March, 2006 – engage with students in project-related research and organization.

April-June, 2006 – continue project-related research and organization; begin shaping materials into presentations on DVDs, the Internet, and the reader.

Summer, 2006 – complete and assess the project.

Assessment Plan:

• We will report on whether we have, in fact, created a web site, DVDs, and a reader as promised in our proposal.

• We will measure whether at least eight faculty members and ten students have been involved in the project.

• We will provide evidence of the inclusion of project-related materials in at least four courses from at least four separate disciplines on campus.

Budget Request: $15,000

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Explanation: The new hardware is essential for efficient processing of the materials, particularly for the films and the Internet; the software is valuable for film-editing. Our major budget item, the research assistant funds, provide funding for student work on the project.