

Indians of Western Oregon

The Northwest Coastal Indians lived in what is now Alaska along the Pacific Ocean down the coast to Northern California. This was a rugged strip of land with many small islands, deep inlets, and narrow beaches. The mountains rise to the shore in many places. Thick forests of spruce, cedar, and fir dominate the area supplying and endless supply of wood. Many rivers and streams cross the land. By the 1750's more than 100,000 Indians lived in this area because it was richer in natural resources than any other area of North America. This patch is designed to help girls understand and appreciate the rich heritage and culture of Indians of Western Oregon.

To complete this Try-it, complete FOUR of the following activities:

1. Take a field trip to a museum for a program on local Native Americans or attend a Pow Wow or other Native American celebration.
2. List Indian tribes that lived in your area.
3. Find out what places have Indian names. Can you find out their meaning?
4. Prepare a Native American food (fry bread, baked salmon, pemmican). Talk about how the Indians prepared and preserved their food.
5. Take an imaginary journey into the life of a Native American girl in the Willamette Valley or on the coast 150 years ago. Use skits, posters, or other media to portray a day in her life.
6. Make a Native American craft made by the tribe in Western Oregon. Your leader may have some suggestions and instructions or decide on one of your own.
7. Take a nature hike. Identify plants and animals that were used by local Indians. How were they used?
8. Legends and storytelling were important part of Native American life. The stories taught a way of life through oral tradition. Read some Native American legends from Western Oregon. Portray one in skits, pictures, or other media.