FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WASHINGTON COUNTY MUSEUM

ANNOUNCES:

THIS IS KALAPUYAN LAND, OPENING THURSDAY AUGUST 15TH

Member Preview: 5pm to 6pm. Remarks from the Guest Curator and introduction to the artists.
Public Reception: 6pm to 8pm. Performance and refreshments.

What happens when a museum known for pioneer history turns over curatorial authority to a young Indigenous Guest Curator? For Washington County Museum, the result is a bold self-critical exhibit about the Tualatin Valley's first people.

For the past 60 years, Washington County Museum has - like many museums - acquired, collected, and preserved Native artifacts. These cultural resources are mostly donated to museums by settler-pioneer descendants who may not know local tribal communities' true wishes for their peoples' artifacts. At Washington County Museum and all over the world these Native objects are the basis for exhibits and curriculum that is shared with the public. They are an incredible resource, but too often result in Native culture being discussed mostly in the past-tense. "The vibrant presence of today's Native people has not been given enough space at this museum. That's unacceptable for a place that teaches others about this area's history and culture," said Co-Directors Molly Alloy and Nathanael Andreini. "Native perspectives are essential, informed, complex, and numerous. With over 53,000 Native folks living in Oregon today, there's a threat of cultural erasure if museums do not make space for Native people to share their own stories and cultures."

Alloy and Andreini turned to a Guest Curator who could bring a unique Indigenous perspective. Steph Littlebird Fogel was born and raised in Banks, Oregon, is Kalapuyan, two-spirit, and an artist - as an individual she demonstrates how multifaceted contemporary native identities often are. Her new exhibit, *This IS Kalapuyan Land*, is an exhibition that honors the unique history of the Atfalati-Kalapuya tribes in Washington County, Oregon and celebrates contemporary Indigenous culture.

The new exhibit re-tools the museum's cornerstone historical display, called *This Kalapuya Land,* which was created over a decade ago in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. That partnership was a great step for the museum at the time; the new version makes the native perspective even more visible. As viewers move through the space they will encounter hand-written edits and annotations made by Littlebird Fogel to highlight errors,

update language, and note important passages in the original content. Each edit points towards larger problems in our collective recollection of America's and Oregon's history.

This IS Kalapuyan Land (note how Littlebird Fogel updated the title) allows visitors to think about the differences between Native and non-Native versions of history. The exhibit questions what information is presented as "fact" and how the museum context shapes what the audience learns. "Ultimately, I want to challenge the way we recall our shared histories," states Littlebird Fogel, "and examine how biased narratives can be perpetuated through archeology and academic institutions like museums and universities."

The highlights and updates that Littlebird Fogel made to the historical display are only the beginning of her contribution to the new exhibit -- she also brought in contemporary artworks from 15 Indigenous artists. She explains that "by incorporating contemporary Native work, I am hoping to illuminate the lives of Natives living today, and the effects of diaspora on Native proximity to their homelands." Through Indigenous art, the exhibit explores what it means to be Native American in contemporary society, and tells the stories of Indigenous descendants who are contributing to cultural survivance today.

Littlebird Fogel concludes: "*This IS Kalapuyan Land* is my effort, as a descendant of the Kalapuyan people, to offer a more holistic representation of the past, present, and future of Oregon's Indigenous community."

Featured Artists:
Carol Haskins (Grand Ronde)
Don Bailey (Hupa)
Nestucca (Grand Ronde)
Nicole Haskins (Grand Ronde)
Jason Cawood (Klamath)
Derrick Lawvor (Klamath)
Angelica Trimble-Yanu (Oglala Lakota Sioux)
Phillip Thomas (Chickasaw)
DeAnna Bear (Eastern Band Lenape)
Jana Schmieding (Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux)
Whitney A. Lewis (Chehalis)
Tincer Mitchell (Navajo)
Lindsea Wery (Chippewa)
Joni Millard (Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Crow)
Elizabeth LaPensée (Anishinaabe)

Stephanie Littlebird Fogel (Grand Ronde, Kalapuya) is a visual artist, professional writer, and curator from Washington County, Oregon. She is a 2019 Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) project grant awardee, a two-time Art + Sci Initiative recipient, and Fogel has worked

in collaboration with the Oregon Bee Project, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Postal Service. Fogel served as a juror for the Idea Initiative grant program, and received the Nancy Tonkin Memorial Scholarship for Emerging Artists.

About the Washington County Museum
For more than 60 years, the Washington County Museum, a private nonprofit organization, has provided community members and visitors an opportunity to experience and understand the richness of local history, heritage and culture.

The Washington County Museum's fall 2019 hours begin August 15th: Wednesday through Friday from Noon to 4pm and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm.

For admission, memberships, events and more:
visit www.washingtoncountymuseum.org
email info@washingtoncountymuseum.org
call 503.645.5353