

Prehistory of Athapascans

Overview Hugo, Oregon like most places has its Native American history, some known, most not. Hugo's first citizens or peoples were the Takelma Indians of the Rogue River Valley.

BLM Native American Publication¹

The scope of the BLM background paper was to describe the current condition of the cultural resources in the Hellgate RAMP area. It is also applicable to the Hugo region.

Prehistory Several groups of Indians lived along the stretch of the Rogue River between the Applegate River and Grave Creek. The territory of the Takelma extended from the Rogue River valley to some point between Grave Creek and Marial, possibly around Rainie Falls. Other groups, speaking Athapaskan languages, lived along Galice Creek and the Applegate River. Major Athapaskan villages existed at the confluences of these streams with the Rogue River (Gray 1987).



Tarweed

Seasonal runs of fish (salmon and steelhead) provided the major source of food to the Indians who lived along the Rogue River. These people inhabited villages along the Rogue River during much of the year, but during the summer supplemented their diet with foods hunted and gathered in the uplands. The river-side villages were the main home-places for these people. They returned to these villages year after year, and the village provided the focus of an individual's social identity.

Hugo's Takelma Indians

It is unclear how far back in time the river-village focus was characteristic of the people who lived here. There has been very little archaeological research to document the prehistoric past.



Salmon

Certainly time brought changes, and the native way of life in the nineteenth century did not characterize all of the past. The Athapascans were relative newcomers to the area, for example, arriving on the coast of Oregon and California from the north, about a thousand years ago. These people had distinctive tool-kits and a way of life highly adapted to the use of aquatic resources. It is no surprise to find them along the inland rivers. The Ritsch archaeological site, at the mouth of the Applegate, is characteristic of these late period village sites.

Before about 2000 to 3,000 years ago, however, it is hard to document a cultural pattern which included major villages. One hypothesis suggest that climatic changes altered the river's regime so that the fish runs characteristic of the last several thousand years were not as abundant before that time (Spencer 1992). The sites of Marial and Stratton Creek, for example, show impressive time depth but reflect a more nomadic existence than that characteristic of the later period. Despite these differences, these sites also demonstrate the importance of the river to native peoples for the last 10,000 years over which time each site was inhabited.



Camas



Hellgate Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP)

Want more information? Contact a member of the HNAT.



Black Oak

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1. Grants Pass Resource Area, Medford District Office, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior. May 1993. *Cultural Resources Background Paper*. For revising the Hellgate Recreation Area Management Plan. Medford, OR.

2. Map 1 from Gray, Dennis J. (1987). The Takelmas and Their Athapaskan Neighbors: A New Ethnographic Synthesis for the Upper Rogue River Area of Southwestern Oregon, University of Oregon Anthropological Papers, No. 37. Eugene: Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon.



Black Tail Deer

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission of promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Send us your e-mail address if you want to know what we are doing.

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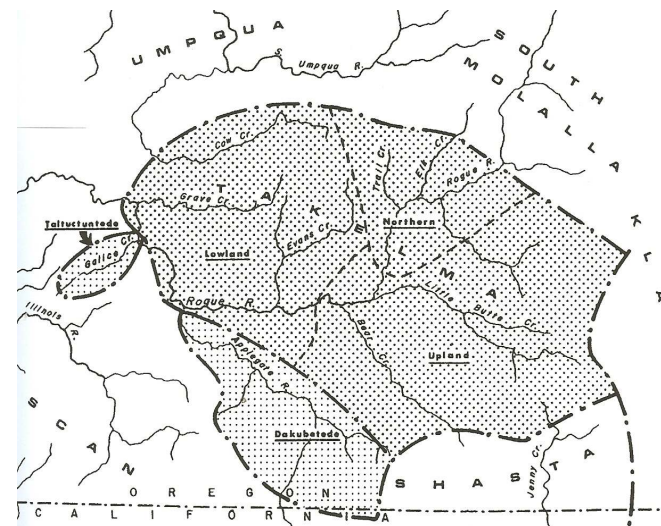
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Map 1. Takelma Indians

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Hugo Neighborhood Association &
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Josephine County Historical Society