



For immediate release: June 13, 2022
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Statements for Media Use Summer Solstice at Serpent Mound, June 18-21, 2022

PEEBLES, Ohio – The Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Shawnee Tribe and the Ohio History Connection will celebrate Summer Solstice at Serpent Mound from June 18-21. Serpent Mound, 3850 state Route 73 in Peebles, is a National Historic Landmark built by the ancient American Indians of Ohio.

These statements from the chiefs of the two Shawnee Tribes and executive director and CEO of the Ohio History Connection are approved for use in all media stories.

Statements:

“We are disappointed to not have the gathering we hoped for this solstice, but the health of our citizens, staff and community is paramount. The Ancient Indigenous peoples of this region—the Shawnee homelands—built these geometrically sequenced effigy mounds with careful intention. ... They were built because it had sacred meaning to those Indigenous peoples. Because of the age and location and geography, the Shawnee feel close kinship to this place. There’s a lot of evidence that indicates our ancestors may well have built the serpent. And it’s not just evidence in Ohio. It’s evidence throughout the region, even southward into Kentucky and West Virginia. And evidence from our ceremonial traditions that we still practice today in Oklahoma. So the reason we want to be present at Serpent Mound is to destroy bad stereotypes, those racist ideas, those things that help perpetuate the notion of manifest destiny as if it was a good thing.”

- Chief Ben Barnes, Shawnee Tribe (short version)

“We are disappointed to not have the gathering we hoped for this solstice, but the health of our citizens, staff and community is paramount. Some years ago, I went to Ohio for the first time for an event, and I saw a bunch of people dressed up pretending to be us [Shawnees]. It looked like they had gone to the local auto parts store, bought a bunch of shamies and stitched them together. And they were running around speaking in broken English with theatrical accents. And the other people in attendance were looking on at these people like they were the authentic authorities on Indigeneity, specifically Shawnee identity. If we were to believe the notions that these folks were presenting, Shawnees were a little more than ignorant troglodytes running around the landscape. I think that’s probably the most pernicious thing of all is that idea that Native Americans were brutish, unintelligent savages. Meanwhile, sites across the Ohio River valley, like Serpent Mound, provide evidence to the extreme contrary. The Ancient Indigenous peoples of this region—the Shawnee homelands—built these geometrically sequenced effigy mounds with careful intention. They didn’t crop up on accident, or because of aliens. They were built because it had sacred meaning to those Indigenous peoples.

“Because of the age and location and geography, the Shawnee feel close kinship to this place. There’s a lot of evidence that indicates our ancestors may well have built the serpent.



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And it's not just evidence in Ohio. It's evidence throughout the region, even southward into Kentucky and West Virginia. And evidence from our ceremonial traditions that we still practice today in Oklahoma. So, the reason we want to be present at Serpent Mound is to destroy bad stereotypes, those racist ideas, those things that help perpetuate the notion of manifest destiny as if it was a good thing."

- Chief Ben Barnes, Shawnee Tribe (full version)

"When I first became acquainted with the mounds it was just at Newark—then I quickly learned of Ohio's many mound sites. I found out that the Serpent Mound is the most famous, most mysterious and most misunderstood of the mounds in Ohio. I believe that, in an effort to protect the mounds, I have the responsibility to share what I know about them in order to protect them, and that includes being present at Serpent Mound. I'm looking forward to being there this summer and sharing an Eastern Shawnee perspective with everyone."

- Chief Glenna Wallace, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma

"Having our Tribal Partners here is vital to our commitment of sharing the authentic history of this sacred place. This collaborative observance of the summer solstice will continue to be part of our sharing the history of ancient Ohio and, specifically, Serpent Mound."

- Burt Logan, executive director and CEO, Ohio History Connection

For more information, go to ohiohistory.org/events/summer-solstice/. For press kit materials, including photos and video, go to ohiohistory.org/summer-solstice-2022.

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About the Shawnee Tribe:

The Shawnee Tribe is a sovereign nation of more than 3,700 citizens living across North America and abroad. Tribal headquarters are located in Miami, Oklahoma. The Shawnee Tribe fought to maintain its independence and homelands despite periods of genocide through warfare and disease at the hands of French, Spanish, British and Americans. The Shawnee were regularly forced to relocate their settlements beyond the ever-expanding boundary of colonial-controlled lands. Thus, the Shawnee are often referred to as the "Greatest Travelers in America," having established historic settlements in more than 20 modern states, with the highest concentration in or near their ancestral homelands of the greater Ohio River region. For more information, go to shawnee-nsn.gov.

About the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma:

The Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma's modern constitution is a multibranch structure with positions elected by the citizens of the tribe. The tribe also offers many services to benefit and empower tribal citizens, including education, career, health and social services. For more information, go to estoo-nsn.gov.



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About the Ohio History Connection:

The Ohio History Connection, formerly the Ohio Historical Society, is a statewide history organization with the mission to spark discovery of Ohio's stories. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization chartered in 1885, the Ohio History Connection carries out history services for Ohio and its citizens focused on preserving and sharing the state's history. This includes housing the state historic preservation office, the official state archives, and local history office and managing more than 50 sites and museums across Ohio. For more information, go to ohiohistory.org. The [Greater Columbus Arts Council](#) provides support for Ohio History Connection programs.