

Tamkaliks Celebration and Friendship Feast

By Mary Hawkins

Tamkaliks Celebration takes place each July in Wallowa as a celebration and recognition of Niimiipuu (Nez Perce) presence in the Wallowa Valley. The event began in 1990 when the City of Wallowa invited Taz Conner, a descendant of *Tuekakas* (Old Chief Joseph), to help plan a festival.

The first year, the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Pow Wow and Friendship Feast, as it was called, was held in the high school gym and on the school grounds. By the third year, the powwow had grown so large that it was moved outside to a five-acre site donated by a local farmer. In 1998, the event was renamed Tamkaliks, which means "from where you can see the mountains" in Nez Perce, and moved to the Homeland Project property which is owned by the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center, a nonprofit created in 1995.

A standing committee of local volunteers, including many of the project's founders, and Native Americans from the Wallowa Valley and the three reservations of the Nez Perce now organize Tamkaliks as a three-day celebration with drums, songs, dancing, and a horse parade. Participants and visitors camp along the Wallowa River, and on Sunday a Washat service is held, followed by the Friendship Feast. The Native community provides salmon, deer, and elk; a local rancher provides buffalo; and town residents bring potluck dishes. About 450 people attend each year.

Sources

"Tamkaliks Celebration." Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center.

Tamkaliks Celebration, July 22. Video.

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https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/tamkaliks_celebration__friendship_feast/