

Lenape Indian tribe to sign new Treaty of Brotherhood

By Sue Kramer
Special Writer

Local residents will see a vision from the past this month when members of the Lenape Indian tribe pass through this area on a canoe journey that will eventually take them from Hancock, N.Y., to Cape May, N.J.

The first leg of the journey will be on the Delaware River and will pass through this area Aug. 14-16 when the Native Americans make camp at Bull's Island in Delaware Township and Washington Crossing State Park in Tinusville.

From those campsites, the tribe will be heading to Pennsbury Manor, the former estate of William Penn in Falls Township, Pa., where an historical

event will take place Aug. 24. A treaty of renewed brotherhood will be signed between the Lenape Indian tribe and the Delaware River Greenway Partnership, environmental groups, churches, historical societies and other organizations as well as other Native American tribes and nations, which actively support the Lenape Indian culture and cause, helping to sustain a people, language and way of life.

Jim Beer, Lenape Tribal Council spokesman, said, "At least 15 to 20 organizations will be signing the Treaty of Renewed Brotherhood, and those organizations represent thousands of people."

The treaty will be a reaffirmation of the brotherhood that existed between the Lenape peo-

ple and the one the Lenape called brother — William Penn. Mr. Beer said, "Historically, William Penn's dealings with the Lenape were good and fair. The Lenape's rights, including their freedom of religion, were important to William Penn, and on more than one occasion, he made this known to many."

Penn. and Lenape chief Tamenend signed the original treaty in 1682.

The Lenape people are the original inhabitants of Delaware, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania and southern New York and remain the stewards of those lands. They were the first tribe to sign a treaty with the United States and the first tribe to have land set aside for them in New Jersey.

Over a period of 250 years, many Lenape people were pushed west to Wisconsin, north to Canada and south to Oklahoma. However, a large number of Lenape families remained in the homeland and continued the traditions of their ancestors.

"Today the Lenape people from many parts of the country are coming together again, a rising nation," Mr. Beer said. "The 330-mile river journey and treaty signing will mark a new beginning of brotherhood between the Lenape and the people that neighbor the Delaware River."

The journey will continue after Aug. 24 from Philadelphia to Cape May, N.J. Rising Nation's sponsor is the Delaware River Greenway Partnership Inc., a bi-state public and private cooperative partnership of more

than 100 nonprofit organizations and government agencies as well as individual members dedicated to promoting the stewardship of the Delaware River.

The partnership recognizes the importance of the Lenape as not only a part of Pennsylvania and American history, but also a living culture of today.

The Lenape will be making camp in Phillipsburg Aug. 12. They will travel 18 miles downriver to Upper Black Eddy the following day, Aug. 13. Wednesday, Aug. 14, they will travel the 12 miles to Bull's Island.

Thursday, the 15th, is the day the Native Americans will be paddling through Lambertville on the 13-mile journey to Washington Crossing State Park (on the New Jersey side). The

By Sue Kramer
Special Writer

The historical Treaty of Renewed Brotherhood that will be signed by the Lenape people Aug. 24 comes at a critical time for the tribe, according to Lenape Tribal Council spokesman Jim Beer.

"The signing of this treaty affects us all," Mr. Beer said, "and has the potential to make the future more culturally secure and open-minded for our children and the next seven generations."

The seventh generation principle is based on the Native American belief that each generation is responsible for ensuring the survival of the next seven generations to come. This principle says man must carefully consider the impact of all de-

isions that are made today in regard to how these decisions and actions will affect the seventh generation — what is done today must not cause harm to the seventh generation. This includes all aspects of life, from the environment to culture.

Much of the existing Lenape culture is in peril today, Mr. Beer said. Several dialects of the Lenape language still remain, yet, as the elders who speak the language pass away, a precious aspect of this living culture is in danger of being lost forever.

Of equal importance, he said, are other aspects of the Lenape heritage: their oral history and historic accounts that have not been documented for the public. In addition, many pre-Columbian sacred stone works and burial grounds that have gone unrecognized by the ac-

Delaware River with the publication of books and video material.

In addition, he said, "The Lenape would serve as hosts at the cultural center for other indigenous peoples to share their artistic talents, musical achievements as well as spiritual understandings and healing practices."

The treaty reflects these thoughts. It concludes with: "May these partnerships serve to heal the past, give direction for today and brighten the future as we move forward, learning from

the mistakes of some of our forefathers, and may we, together, bring to light the cultural and geographic significance of Pennsylvania, preserving this natural history for all of our children. May the Creator of all things enhance us as we move ahead."

The Penn's Park, Falls Township, Pa., treaty signing ceremony will take place beneath the elm tree where Lenape Chief Tamenend and William

Penn signed the original Treaty of Brotherhood in 1682.

The treaty signing is an invitation-only event that will include speakers from the Lenape Nation and the Delaware River Greenway Partnership as well as other invited speakers.

There will be live entertainment, featuring Bill Miller, Mr. Beer and traditional drummers and dancers.

Indian culture says each generation responsible for next seven