



“The water is near, the wind is breezy, the sky is clear blue and the Kiskiack Tribe is here, we are present. Don’t let anyone tell you anything different.”

– Newport News Park, Virginia, Shelter #8, April 13, 2024

On Saturday, April 13, 2024, the Kiskiack Tribe held their spring tribal meeting in Newport News Park located in Newport News, Virginia. Historically, the Kiskiacks are one of the six indigenous tribes of the Powhatan Confederacy led by Chief Powhatan (or Wahunsenecawh) during the settling of America in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The current descendants of the tribe are led by, Chief Charles “Spirit Eagle” Bowman, a tall, stately, gentlemen who exhibited a wealth of knowledge in his interactions with guests. Dressed in full native regalia, the chief welcomed visitors, officials, and members from several Virginia institutions that took part in the celebration of their native ancestors. Observers from the Weyanoke (aka Sassafras) Tribe of Charles City, Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg, the College of William & Mary and Hampton University took part in this momentous occasion.

Second Vice-Chief, Wayne “River Hawk” Bowman was integral in the presentation of the tribe’s history, he produced handcrafted tri-pods to display the origins of their ancestors here on the peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia. The word Kiskiack means, “Wide Land or Broad Place” in the Algonquin language. This picturesque event took place less than one mile from the infamous Cheesecake Cemetery located on the base of the Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown.

One of the most precious moments was watching the youth running and playing in the wooded area near the shelter. Boys and girls were searching and collecting pinecones, pine bark, pine needles and sticks while organizing them into different piles. One can only think these skills are intrinsic survival skills that come from their native roots.

After a feast of vegetables, fruits, fish and fowl, the tribe broke off into small groups to share stories, then they slowly transformed into a group of one for a power photo. Chief Bowman walked around gently organizing the family for the moment; he then knelt down proudly in the foreground. Visitors and onlookers snapped photos and watched in from a distance as the event reached its climax.

An onlooker visiting the park from Virginia Beach asked, “What is going on here?” Once she learned she uttered, “I think that is a positive thing, these folks are finding out who they are and where they came from.”

Chief Anita Harrell of the Weyanoke Tribe was elated with the vast amount of family connections and gave Chief Bowman her blessings for his works in keeping the Kiskiack Tribe relevant in Virginia and American history. He humbly accepted and gave all praises to his family and members for their service and dedication in making the world know that our tribe, “the Kiskiacks - are still here.”

Red Arrow Wolf