Jefferson monument designs unveiled Friday

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ILWACO—A presentation by students at the University of Washington’s public art class of their designs for a proposed monument to President Thomas Jefferson will be Friday, beginning at 1 p.m. at the Ilwaco Heritage Museum.

The monument will be constructed at Fort Canby State Park in recognition of Jefferson’s vision that resulted in the Lewis and Clark Expedition 200 years ago. The presentation is open to the public.

The Pacific County Friends of Lewis and Clark collaborated with Washington State Parks, UW and the Chinook Tribe in “Art In the Landscape: The Jefferson Commemorative Project.” “This is making academic history,” Professor John Young of the UW fine arts department said. In addition to exploring Jefferson’s westward vision, the designs will explore the Native American perspective of the expedition. Chinook tribal member Dick Basch contributed insights to the class.

The students visited Fort Canby this spring to gather background information about the area and the Corps of Discovery. After returning to the college, the class worked in teams, exploring the ways significant history can be interpreted as public art. Three sites within the park have been selected for placement of the monument—north of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, North Head/Bellevue Park and Waikiki Beach. These sites are among the most visited in the park.

The Friends group encourages the community to review and provide input on the models and drawings that will be shown by the class Friday. The models will remain at the museum for several weeks, then be on display at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Fort Canby through June.

The UW public art class is a new concept, merging the fine arts, landscape architecture and industrial arts design departments into one class. The Jefferson project is an “awesome idea and a very challenging project,” said Professor Daniel Winterbottom of the landscape architecture department. Student response to the class was overwhelming and the enthusiasm for the project has exceeded expectations, the professors said.

Final selection of the design will be made by Washington State Parks. The agency also will be seeking funding for the project.