

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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Historic Signing of the Memo of Understanding at Oak Flats

On behalf of the Siletz Tribe, I want to take this opportunity of commending the tireless efforts of Teresa Miller and Frank Simmons of the Interdisciplinary Team that brought to fruition, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the U.S. Forest Service. This could not have been achieved without the commitment of the Forest Service.

The Tribe has always had a problem of communications with the Forest Service and having meaningful input into Forest Service planning. The MOU establishes the process by which the Tribe and the Forest Service "will jointly identify, communicate and coordinate actions of common concern relating to the management of lands and resources, and provide a mechanism for continuing involvement in the development and revision of land management plans."

It was an especially historic event because the signing ceremony was held at Oak Flats, the very site where the Rogue River Treaty was signed one hundred and forty years ago. Bud Lane's feather dancers, the Dancing Again Singers and the runners made this occasion very special. Little Miss Siletz, our elders and many tribal members were in attendance to witness and enjoy the day.

We are proud of Teresa and Frank's work and all the others who made this historic event possible. I urge you to read the detailed account on page 14 of this issue of the Newsletter.

Comments on Lincoln City's Reaction to Proposed Fee-to-Trust

We regret that the Lincoln City Council reacted the way it did to the Siletz Tribe's recent request to have 37 acres of Lincoln City property put into trust status.

In a letter to the Tribe dated September 12, 1995, Mayor Achenbrenner said, "If the Tribe is interested in pursuing opportunities for a cooperative relationship, I suggest an initial meeting . . . at the

Lincoln City Hall (from which the meeting can be televised)."

But the Mayor had already declared in the same letter, that the City Council "unanimously voted to oppose the Tribe's application . . . in the strongest possible terms".

Further, City Attorney Chris Thomas warned that the Tribe's action goes beyond Lincoln City: that it ". . . is an extremely significant development for the central coast . . . and could have significant effects for the state . . . if other tribes pursue a similar course."

As we stated in public meetings a year ago, the Siletz Tribe hopes to buy properties in Lincoln City that have economic development potential. It would be absolutely naive to think we would do otherwise. But the Tribe must, first of all, have the financial resources to buy the property and then, must go through a federal process to have the land placed in trust. Once in trust, the land would not be subject to property taxes or state and local regulations.

However, the taking of land in trust is discretionary with the Secretary of the Interior and there must be a finding by the Secretary of no significant impact on the city and county.

Furthermore, the Siletz Tribe's policy and practice has always been to make voluntary contributions to local governments for municipal services and to abide by reasonable local standards.

As for the complaint that the City and County governments were not notified of the acquisition of the Lakeside Village property, they were notified and are being given the opportunity to comment on the Tribe's fee-to-trust application.

We regret that the City reacted as they did. But we have come to realize that this may be standard operating procedure for the Lincoln City Council. Targeting Chinook Winds sandwich board signs is symptomatic - in that case, it was the City's impulsive, perhaps even racist, approach to issues.

Having said that, I believe it is important for us to work with the city with dignity and patience to

maintain a positive attitude in the same way we have always worked with federal, state and other local governments.

In response to the Mayor's letter I stated that we were more than willing to discuss this matter but that the meeting should be on a government to government basis. We will keep you posted on this matter.

Anti-Indian Climate in Washington, D.C.

I have commented in previous issues of the Newsletter about the mood these days in Washington and the threat not only to Indian funding of programs but most importantly, tribal sovereignty.

Of major concern right now is the taxing of Indian Gaming revenues. Here again, the bill which passed the House and is pending in the Senate, will not only adversely impact our revenues, it is an invasion of our tribal sovereignty.

You will recall that Senator Slade Gorton of Washington State was an outspoken opponent of Indian fishing rights and is generally known to be anti-Indian. He is vigorously campaigning to tax our gaming revenues. Unfortunately, there are others like him in Congress.

We have joined forces with other Tribes in fighting against this invasion of our sovereignty and of protecting federal funding of Indian programs.

In this connection, I would like to remind our members and friends of the upcoming election to replace Sen. Bob Packwood. It is very important for us to study the backgrounds of the candidates, their positions on issues of importance to Indians and to vote accordingly. Ballots are scheduled to be mailed out on November 18th.

Inter-tribal Communications and Coordination

As Tribal Chairman, I have been in communication with leaders of other Oregon tribes because of issues that are common to us all. Our tribe will host an Oregon Tribes Meeting in Salem on 10-19-95 to discuss current issues.