

# Chuck Sams nominated to lead Parks Service

Charles ‘Chuck’ Sams III is set to become the first Native American to serve as director of the National Parks Service. Mr. Sams, member of the Umatilla, is of Cayuse, Walla, Cocopah and Yankton descent.

Pres. Biden nominated Sams last week to lead the National Parks. The nomination now goes to the U.S. Senate for confirmation. As Kat Brigham, Chair of the Umatilla Board of Trustees, commented on Sams’ nomination and anticipated Congressional approval:

“This is an historical moment for America, and a monumental milestone for tribal people throughout Indian Country,” she said.

For years now, Mr. Sams has had friends and colleagues among



Chuck Sams teaching Whitman College students in 2018. The topic was the Treaties of 1855, and tribal history.

the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Natural Resources general manager Robert Brunoe has known him for many years, hav-

ing first met Mr. Sams in the ‘90s through the Salmon Corps program.

Antone Minthorn, a Nez Perce language speaker for the Umatilla

tribal Education Department, commented that Sams is the “right person, on the cutting edge” of conservation efforts throughout Indian Country.

“It’s significant. It’s timely,” Minthorn said of the nomination.

“I think Chuck really comes from a place where there’s been a lot of activity with the tribes’ growth. He knows the importance of our treaty rights, and has been instrumental in our efforts to restore water, restore salmon and build our economy.”

Besides his work with the Umatilla tribes, Sams has worked in state government and nonprofit natural resource and conservation management for more than 25 years. He and his wife Lori live in Pendleton. The Sams have four children.

## School BBQ next Tuesday

The Back to School Barbecue is coming up on Thursday, September 2.

The Back to School Barbecue and supplies giveaway usually draws over 1,000 visitors. This year the event, at the Academy, will not be in the restricted drive-by fashion, as it had to be last year; though the Confederated Tribes’ covid safety protocols still apply.

The barbecue is a great outreach opportunity for departments, programs and organizations. For information see the website: [forms.gle/TcaUoAx6CdUr45158](https://forms.gle/TcaUoAx6CdUr45158)

Email me if you have any questions: [rcina.estimo@wstribes.org](mailto:rcina.estimo@wstribes.org)

## Court again in favor of Yakama

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals last week denied a request by Klickitat County, Washington, for a rehearing in the case involving the boundary of the Yakama Reservation.

In an earlier unanimous decision in June, the Ninth Circuit Court ruled that the 1.4-million acre Yakama Reservation includes a parcel known as Tract D.

The land was set aside by treaty more than 150 years ago in recognition of its importance to the tribe and its citizens.

“The Ninth Circuit’s decision is a resounding victory for the rights that our ancestors re-

served in the Treaty of 1855,” Chairman Delano Saluskin said at the time.

Tract D consists of 121,465 acres in the southwestern part of the reservation.

It includes land near Mount Adams—one of the most sacred places for the Yakama Nation—that tribal ancestors recognize as critical for food, water and other resources.

“Both parties to the treaty joined together to protect the Yakama Reservation from Klickitat County’s challenge, and we are thankful the Ninth Circuit honored the treaty parties’ common understanding,” Saluskin said.

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**Application materials can be found here:**  
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