

## Letters to the editor

### From Confluence

Dear Warm Springs,  
We have two exciting new resources to share with you that elevate Indigenous voices in our understanding of the Columbia River system:

Scholar Emily Washines (Yakama) has written a new article for the Confluence Library about why it is so important for students to learn about salmon, not just for environmental science but also to connect with the Native cultures of our region.

Grand Ronde cultural educator Greg Archuleta has delivered a new inventory of native plant species at the Sandy River Delta, in collaboration with the Sandy River Watershed Council. This will guide land use managers in the restoration of this storied landscape that includes the Confluence Bird Blind.

Meanwhile, our Indigenous artists and educators continue to Zoom into classrooms to connect students with traditional lessons and stories. All of this is made possible by the Friends of Confluence. Thanks to everyone who has supported our Annual Appeal. If you haven't yet, make your tax-deductible donation now or support this important work monthly. Thanks!

Stay safe, **Colin Fogarty**, executive director, Confluence.



Emily Washines

Emily Washines, MPA, is a scholar and enrolled Yakama Nation tribal member with Cree and Skokomish lineage. Her blog, *Native Friends*, focuses on history and culture. Building understanding and support for Native Americans is evident in her films, writing, speaking, and exhibits.

Her research topics include the Yakama War, Native women, traditional knowledge, resource management, fishing rights, and food sovereignty. Emily speaks Ichiskiin (Yakama language) and other Native languages.

Yakima Herald-Republic lists her as Top 39 under 39. She received a Single Impact Event Award for her 2018 presentation from the Association of King County Historical Organizations. She is a board member of the Museum of Culture and Environment, Artist Trust, and Columbia Riverkeeper.

She is adjunct faculty at Yakima Valley College. You can read her salmon story on the website: [confluenceproject.org](http://confluenceproject.org)

### Matter of tribal health

Dear friends,  
As we begin 2022, we are filled with gratitude for your support of the urban American Indian community, especially during a year filled with unprecedented challenges. Our community continues to face an unparalleled health crisis, as we prepare to solve new challenges due to the devastating impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We understand there are many issues demanding your attention this year—please accept my sincere gratitude on behalf of the National Council of Urban Indian Health for your continued support of our work and mission.

Did you know that American Indians face some of the starkest disparities in health outcomes of any racial population in the U.S.?

Much of these health disparities are the ongoing outcomes of hundreds of years of historical trauma and genocide against our communities.

Unfortunately, the Indian Health Service is underfunded, and currently only funded at 12 percent of the actual need; therefore, American Indians are more vulnerable to infectious disease outbreaks due to a lack of access to critical public health infrastructure and other resources.

As you know, NCUIH is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally-competent healthcare services for American Indian and Alaska Natives living in urban settings.

What we do matters. Responding to the pandemic has exposed how fragile the healthcare system is and has intensified existing healthcare inequities. We are inspired by the strength and resiliency of the urban American Indian population

for which we advocate, and our work toward health equity is made possible by your generosity.

This year, please consider making a donation to NCUIH's fundraiser.

Fundraisers are important to nonprofits, like NCUIH, because they bring people together to raise more money than we ever could alone.

Our work is made possible by your generosity and every dollar raised will get us closer to our goal working for health equity for urban American Indian people.

**Francys Crevier**, CEO, NCUIH.

### Water system

The Department of the Interior is beginning nation-to-nation consultations with tribes as it implements the Infrastructure Law.

The law invests more than \$13 billion directly in tribal communities across the country—including potentially millions of dollars to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs—to improve drinking water systems, bolster community resilience, replace other aging infrastructure, and help ensure that everyone has access to high-speed internet. The consultations will take place January 26-28.

## Veterans home loan increases in 2022

The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to announce an increase to the maximum loan amount available through the Oregon Veteran Home Loan Program, to \$647,200 effective January 1.

The Oregon Veteran Home Loan Program is one of Veterans Affairs core veteran benefits since the agency's inception in 1945.

The program offers eligible veterans fixed-rate financing for owner-occupied, single-family residences up to the Federal Housing Finance Agency Limit.

The maximum will increase on January 1 to \$647,200 from the previous \$548,250.

The Veteran Home Loan

## Museum winter drive brings 200 new members



### RESILIENCY & STRENGTH

The Museum at Warm Springs winter membership drive is in honor of Ancestor Ken Smith. The drive so far has resulted in more than 200 new members, and the number goes up every day.

We have expanded our board of directors to include representation of more tribal members, Central Oregon, and the Portland Metropolitan region.

The Potlatch Fund just committed \$10,000 support toward museum operations. We are grateful to The Potlatch Fund!

Visit Central Oregon is providing the Museum at Warm Springs with \$25,000 for the design

and installation of two new signs on Highway 26.

These signs will greatly improve visibility to the hundreds of people that travel by every day. Thank you, Visit Central Oregon!

Thanks to Sue Matters, station manager at KWSO 91.9 FM for the wonderful short video that she produced to highlight the museum's Gift Shop. It's posted on our FaceBook page. If you are not a follower, please consider following us.

We are looking forward to 2022 with an expanded program of outreach and partnerships, and our operations continue despite continuing pandemic concerns.

The Tribal Youth Art Exhibit opens in January

2022. Please visit!

Thank you for considering your New Year gift. And please don't forget about our faithful supporter, the Oregon Cultural Trust.

You can double the impact of your gift to the museum by making a matching donation to the trust: Your donation to the Trust serves as a tax credit and will be deducted from any Oregon taxes that you owe.

Most importantly, stay safe and support one another. We appreciate you! See the website: [museumatwarmsprings.org](http://museumatwarmsprings.org)

**Elizabeth Woody and staff at the Museum at Warm Springs.**



Frankie Williams, W.S. Veterans Representative

Guarantee, and has lent approximately \$8.2 billion in low-interest home loans to more than 336,000 veterans since 1945.

To be eligible, a veteran must have served on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces, as documented on his or her DD-214, and must meet one of the service criteria outlined on ODVA's website at: [www.oregon.gov/odva/Home-Loans/Pages/Eligibility.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/odva/Home-Loans/Pages/Eligibility.aspx)

For more information regarding both the VA and ODVA home loan program, contact the Tribal Veterans Service Office at 541-460-0605. **Frankie Williams**, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Veterans Affairs Officer.

benefit is a non-expiring, lifetime benefit for any eligible Oregon veteran and may be used up to four times. The program finances purchases only, not refinancing.

This Oregon benefit is separate and distinct from the federal VA Home Loan

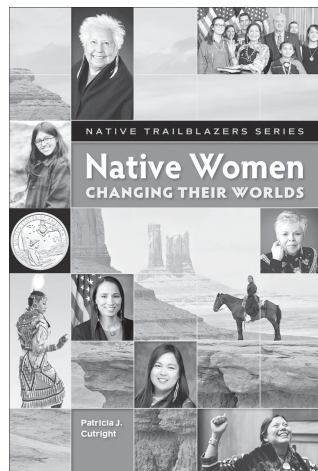
### To student vets

Congress last week extended pandemic protections for GI Bill users to ensure student veterans will receive full benefits in the spring. This includes students studying online due to the pandemic.

The move is expected to affect about 57,000 students currently enrolled in degree programs. At issue is how post-9/11 GI Bill benefits are paid out to students who attend college classes remotely, rather than in-person. Students using the veterans education benefit receive money for tuition plus a monthly housing stipend.

Individuals enrolled in traditional in-person classes receive the full financial benefit, while students in online-only classes get half of that housing stipend, leaving some worried they may not have their rent payments covered.

## Among the Best of 2021



Voted one of the Best Books of 2021 is *Native Women Changing Their Worlds* by Patricia Cutright, (Lakota, Cheyenne River Sioux).

The 12 Indigenous women featured in this book overcame unimaginable hardships—racial and gender discrimination, abuse, and extreme poverty—only to rise to great heights in the fields of politics, science, education, and community activism.



A Happy New Year wish from Travis Bobb.

Spilyay Tymoo  
(Coyote News, Est. 1976)

Publisher Emeritus in Memorium: Sid Miller  
Editor: Dave McMechan

Spilyay Tymoo is published bi-weekly by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Our offices are located at 4174 Highway 3 in Warm Springs.

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Annual Subscription rates: Within U.S.: \$20.00