

# Water: many tribes join ceremony

(from page 1)

A time when the river ran wild and the water was so clear you could drink from it.

“I remember when I was a young child, that no matter how deep the water was, you could see the bottom and count the rocks,” Mr. McConville said in a video interview from 2013. “And of course you could drink the water.”

“Somebody needs to be accountable for it,” McConville said in the 2013 interview. “That’s not us, we’ve been trying to take care of it but nobody cares what we think. We’re gonna start doing ceremonies on the river, spiritual ceremonies. Because it’s just so overwhelming that we had to do something to contribute. The best way we know how is through song and prayer.”

McConville began organizing and leading water ceremonies to help heal rivers across the Portland metro area, including the Willamette River, in 2013, while he was chair of the Portland chapter of the American Indian Movement.

Mr. McConville passed away a few years ago, though his legacy continues with the



On a misty Sunday morning, Water Ceremony attendees gathered under the St. Johns Bridge in North Portland, as members of the Portland All Nations Canoe Family made their way to the shore.

now annual water ceremony on the shores of the Willamette. Together, song, dance, and prayer are offered to help the Willamette River on its journey to healing.

“His idea was that before anything else can heal, the water needs to heal and this is where the healing starts,” said Farrell Lucei-Bryant, of Warm Springs, McConville’s grand-niece.

Ms. Lucei-Bryant has been asked to step in and lead the organization of the water ceremonies since her grand-uncle passed. She says, “It’s

praying by her, with her, for her, and the life that resides within her, because then from there that feeds us as humans, and then the plants on the ground, in the air. It’s all one. Water is life.”

Farrell feels that carrying on her grand-uncle’s vision is a great honor. This year her family joined, including her grandfather Norman Lucei, a good friend of Art McConville’s. Norman led a Shaker service at the bank of the Willamette River.

“What we’re doing is working,” Ms. Lucei-Bryant

said. “And if we can bring more voices and more people to the center and to all stand together in unity, in that belief that we have to take care of her [the river], because without her, we’re nothing.”

## The banks of the Willamette to the west banks of Palestine

Global Native unity could be seen in the black and white checkerboard patterned keffiyehs, a traditional Palestinian scarf that now represents a call for freedom, adorned the shoulders of some people during the water ceremony. As part of the day’s proceedings, representatives of different Indigenous communities were invited to share ceremony, song, dance, prayer, and offer words to the crowd.

Colleta Macy, of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, an outspoken activist for Palestinian people, introduced two Palestinian people to the gathered crowd. Ms. Macy recently converted to Islam. Her Islamic name is Kawthar, which translates to ‘abundant goodness.’

“We want to invite the Palestinians to come out and be in community with us, because they are also going through a genocide as we are here today,” Ms. Macy said. “They are fighting for their land, their people, their water, their way of life.”

Musaab Ikymayes shared

## Tribal Council agenda

(from page 1)

11: Federal lobbyist, Matt Hill.

11:30: State lobbyist, Michael Mason.

3:30 p.m.: Willamette Falls Trust board, Kate Brown and board.

**Tuesday, September 24—Thursday, September 26: Budget call-backs.**

**Friday, September 27**

9 a.m.: Secretary-Treasurer update with Robert Brunoe, Secretary-Treasurer.

9:30: October agenda, review minutes.

10: Draft resolutions with S-T.

11: Enrollments, Lucille Suppach-Samson, Vital Statistics.

1:30 p.m.: Legislative update calls, federal and state.

2:30: 2025 Budget discussion and October posting.

**To budget presenters:** Please bring 15 copies to distribute to Tribal Council. Items for future consideration: District meetings and General Council meeting in October.

how the struggles to care for the water and the land that Indigenous people across the globe have been faced with since the arrival of settlers is also what Indigenous people on the west banks of Gaza are facing in Palestine today. He urged solidarity among all Indigenous peoples fighting to protect their land and water, “from the banks of the Willamette to the west banks of Palestine.”

“Let this water ceremony be a reminder of the sacredness of life, about shared responsibility to care for the earth and the unity between all people who stand in defense of their homes and their histories,” Ikymayes said. “As we honor the tribes of the land and their unbreakable connection to the

will of that, we also honor the Palestinian people and their enduring relationship with their homeland.”

Later in the day, four representatives of the Mayan Nation in Guatemala invited everyone to gather along the banks of the Willamette River. There, they encouraged everyone to participate in a traditional ceremony. They lit a fire for offerings and prayed for the health of the sick river.

During the Mayan ceremony, singers and drummers from the Native American Washut faith offered a song as well, followed by other Native American people offering songs from their nations.

Water concludes on 6

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| Indian Head Casino   | Cottonwood Kitchen Steward | \$15.00/Hour       |
| Indian Head Casino   | Cottonwood Server          | \$15.00/Hour +tips |
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| Plateau Travel Plaza | Fuel Attendant             | \$17.00/Hour       |
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| Indian Head Casino   | Maintenance Worker II      | \$20.00/Hour       |
| Indian Head Casino   | Player's Club Ambassador   | \$17.50/Hour       |
| Indian Head Casino   | Revenue Auditor            | \$18.00/Hour       |
| Plateau Travel Plaza | Revenue Auditor            | \$18.00/Hour       |
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| Plateau Travel Plaza | Security Officer           | \$16.00/Hour       |
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