

Mini-pitch court unites through sports and culture

CELILO – On the morning of its December unveiling ceremony, and within moments of opening, the sounds of bouncing basketballs and swishing hoops filled the air around the freshly built ‘mini-pitch’ court in Celilo Village at the Columbia River.

The court is a combined basketball court and soccer field. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Wave Foundation led the project, working with the community, tribes, and tribal organizations to bring much-needed sporting infrastructure to the community. “Historically underserved communities have limited access to sports, physical activity, and healthier lifestyles,” said Wave Foundation president Justin Zeulner. “Tribal communities in the Pacific Northwest region are some of the most



CRITFC Celilo Village resident youth took to the freshly built mini-pitch court the moment it opened.

economically and socially disadvantaged areas in our nation.” The Wave Foundation’s mission is to serve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, or BIPOC, rural communities by supplying them with “healthy, sustainable, and culturally relevant foods.” The Portland-based foundation began serving

rural BIPOC communities in 2020. They have since served more than six million meals in total. Many of those meals served have been on reservations in the Pacific Northwest. Students from Whitman College in Walla Walla travelled to Celilo for the mini-pitch unveiling. The students held a

soccer lesson for area youth directly following the event. Getting tribal input and buy-in was key to the success of the project and ensured that it aligned with the community’s priorities. In addition to the village residents and tribes, the project team involved the Gorge Native American Collaboration, a tribally-led group addressing key needs of Native families in the Columbia River Gorge.

The next court is planned for Simnasho on the Warm Springs Reservation...

Until now, Celilo Village children only had a small play structure to occupy their time. Most of the youth participate in sports, but during the off season and summer, they lack access to

their favorite place: the court. If they wanted to play a game or practice their skills, they’d need to get a ride to the nearest basketball court 10 miles downriver in The Dalles.

Basketball and modern Native culture Basketball has long been cherished as a relative or dear friend of people in Native communities.

CELILO continues on 7

CRITFC looks back at eventful year

from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Looking back at 2024, we reflect on a year of monumental events, milestones, and celebrations that highlight the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission’s dedication to cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment. Each month brought unique opportunities to honor our shared traditions, advocate for tribal sovereignty, and support sustainable practices. Here is a look back at the moments that defined 2024 for CRITFC and our member tribes.

Fiftieth Anniversary of the Boldt Decision

The year marked the Fiftieth Anniversary of the landmark Boldt Decision, a pivotal moment in affirming treaty fishing rights for Columbia River tribes. A commemorative event held at Muckleshoot honored this victory, showcasing how it has shaped tribal fisheries and strengthened sovereignty across generations?.

Two Cultures, One Community Powwow

The first annual Two

Cultures, One Community Powwow, held in February in Pendleton, celebrated the unity and shared heritage of local tribes and communities. Vibrant dancing, drumming, and storytelling created a memorable event that brought people together.

Pi-Ume-Sha Treaty Days

This annual celebration of treaty rights brought together families to honor shared history and traditional practices through song, dance, and ceremonies. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs holds the event during the last weekend of June of each year.

Miss Indian Northwest Pageant

The Miss Indian Northwest Pageant returned in 2024 after nearly a 30-year hiatus. Young leaders demonstrated their cultural knowledge and pride at this year’s pageant, showcasing regalia, storytelling, and skills that celebrate their identities during the talent portion. The Miss Indian Northwest was crowned during the Delta Park Pow Wow June 14.

Tribal Climate Summit

From April 15-17, 2024, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI)

hosted the National Tribal Leaders Climate Summit at the Muckleshoot Casino Resort in Auburn, Washington. The summit’s theme, “Honoring Traditions, Shaping Futures,” emphasized the commitment to preserving cultural heritage while forging a sustainable future for upcoming generations. Key discussions included empowering young tribal leaders in climate action, nurturing well-being in tribal communities across borders, and exploring sovereignty, stewardship, and global perspectives.

Columbia River Round Dance Honoring MMIWR

The second annual Columbia River Round Dance to Honor Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) brought healing, laughter, fellowship and awareness to the Nch’i Wana (Columbia River) community. More than 550 people attended the round dance, held at the Fort Dalles Readiness Center on night in early May.

Lamprey Celebration

Over 600 attendees gathered at Clackamette Park in Oregon City in July to honor the Pacific lamprey, a sacred First Food for the region’s tribes.

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