

Grand Rondes Seek Inclusion In The Gorge Act

■ As participants, the Grand Rondes will help manage the area.

By Ron Karten

The Grand Ronde Tribe has been working at the federal level to be included among the list of Tribes consulting on issues in the Columbia Gorge. Federal, state and local governments, as well as legislated special interest groups like the Gorge Commission all now seek the advice of four Northwest Tribes — the Warm Springs, Yakama, Umatilla and Nez Perce — in managing the Gorge area.

The lower Columbia River, including the Gorge contains the land that the antecedent bands and tribes of Grand Ronde ceded to the federal government by Treaty in 1855. But the Grand Ronde was left off of the list of Tribes included in the 1986 Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act. The fact is, however, that the area includes the ancestral homelands of many Grand Ronde families.

Two signers of the June 22, 1855 Treaty — Chiefs Tumulth and Obanaha of the Watlala Band of Tumwaters — had villages in the area of Cascade Rapids. Their descendants include Tribal member Marilyn Portwood of Portland, and her cousin, Tribal member Chuck Williams, of The Dalles.

Grand Ronde's inclusion in the Gorge Act, passed in 1986, "is a matter of fairness," said Tribal Attorney Rob Greene.

"I think they have an equal right to be part of the management processes with the other four tribes," said Daniel Boxberger, Chair of the Anthropology Department at Western Washington University. "Probably the reason Grand Ronde was left out is that the scenic area was established during the period when Grand Ronde was scrambling to get back on their feet from Termination."

The Grand Ronde was restored in 1983. In the next few years, when the other Tribes were included in the Gorge Act — none of which lost their land base through termination — were working out the details of the new legislation, Grand Ronde was busy restoring its reservation. It was 1988 before Congress restored 9,811 acres to the Tribe.

"The Tribe couldn't do everything at once," said Greene, "but Grand Ronde should have been among those other Tribes included in the scenic act."

Tribal member Marilyn Portwood, now of Portland, remembers picking blackberries as a youth in Skamania on land her great grandmother bought and homesteaded in the 1870s. "My great grandmother (Mary Stooquin) of the Cascades Band traded a team of horses for property up in Skamania. She took what pioneers were given and then

she bought more."

"Her daughter raised her family up there and my mother and her 10 brothers and sisters were all born in Skamania County.

The first nine children joined the Yakama Nation. The two youngest found out they were eligible for Grand Ronde," said Portwood. This was back in the late 1980s.

"We think hobos burned it down," said Portwood. "We sold it (150 acres) only ten years ago in Skamania." (It is now part of a wildlife refuge.)

But the family also includes Portwood and Williams' great great grandfather Chief Tumulth of the Watlalas who signed the January 22, 1855 Willamette Valley Treaty.

Portwood recently attended the funeral of a cousin. He was to be buried in a pioneer cemetery. "Tumulth is there. He was moved from a Memaloose Island site. My great aunt and mother are buried there, and now my cousin. He was the husband of Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Josephine Towers, who still lives at White Salmon.

"Fishing up there was very important to my mother's family, said Portwood, "especially during the depression. With 11 children, that was a big part of their staple diet."

Another Treaty signer was Chief

Obanaha, whose descendents also are members of the Grand Ronde.

"On top of the two chiefs that you mentioned, the other one of note is Lal-Bick, sometimes referred to as Oregon City John, whose father was Tamaquin, who was the chief of the Cascade people at the second cataract of the Cascade Rapids," said Tribal Cultural Protection Specialist Eirik Thorsgard of his own ancestors.

"Oregon City John's other Indian name is: Kwychyawhesuschk. His son was Homer Hoffer whose children were Mary Ann Michelle, Andrew Hoffer, Joseph Apperson and Moses Apperson, all of whom have descendants in Grand Ronde.

"The Cascade people had fishing rights and ownership at the Cascade Rapids as well as the Oregon City Falls or Tumwata Falls.

"The bands often referred to as Tumwata were in fact the same people, and held lands in both areas rather than being separate people. Additionally, they often wintered over in Oregon City and Vancouver, Washington as well as the islands around that area such as Hayden Island and Sauvie Island."

"The Grand Ronde has significant historic and cultural ties in the Columbia River Gorge," said Greene. "Grand Ronde should have the same voice that other Tribes do for matters in the Gorge." ■

Tribal Career Development Program Off To Good Start

CAREER continued
from front page

interim manager of the Training and Employment Department.

Henny and the TCD program also work closely with the Tribe's Vocational Rehabilitation & 477 Program. Jim Wigington, Program Supervisor, explains that he works under similar circumstances as Henny and, on many occasions, with her and her clients.

"My role has been one of an active participant between Vocational Rehabilitation/477 and Spirit Mountain Casino," said Wigington in an email response about the program. "As we share many of the same clients, the need for us to work closely is very apparent and strongly needed."

Henny also explained that the need for the program is to help identify an individual's interests and to find an occupation that is a "good fit" for that person's needs and wants.

"The casino field is not for everyone," explained Henny. "It is our responsibility to get them to someone else to help them find a field they are interested in."

The Tribal employee population at the casino is more than 140. With that being said, it is obvious that with a two person crew, the hours can be long and the duties can be a heavy workload. Henny

stated that in the month of February alone, her and DeHart worked with 28 individuals. She said that 11 of those are working on developmental plans, 13 are working on retention plans, and four Tribal members are reentering the work force. Also for the month of February, Henny and DeHart conducted 29 one-on-one meetings, 17 manager meetings and seven meetings with casino directors.

"This program is a strongly focused effort for our Tribal employees," said Henny. "We get great support from our General Manager Randy Dugger as well as all of the directors."

"In my opinion, this program has been very successful," said Wigington. "We have presented four different classes. The interaction was good and we have had very positive results and feedback," he added. "The consistent factor with all the classes was a request to continue with these types of presentations and we plan to do just that."

Through the interviews I have conducted, it seems that not only getting Tribal mem-

bers on the right path but keeping them there and not giving up are among the top overall goals of the TCD program.

"These are strong beginnings and we have made a difference so far," Wigington said. "We need to continue with these programs and expand them to include more departments to insure that we are doing as much for our Tribal

members as possible. We have determined that there are some inherent problems that we are going to consistently deal with but through education, training, and guidance, we feel that we can make a difference," continued Wigington.

"We can't solve all of the problems," added Henny, "but if we make a difference at all, this program is successful." ■



Tribal member David DeHart and Tribal Elder Sam Henny work together in the Tribal Career Development Program for Spirit Mountain Casino's Human Resources Department.