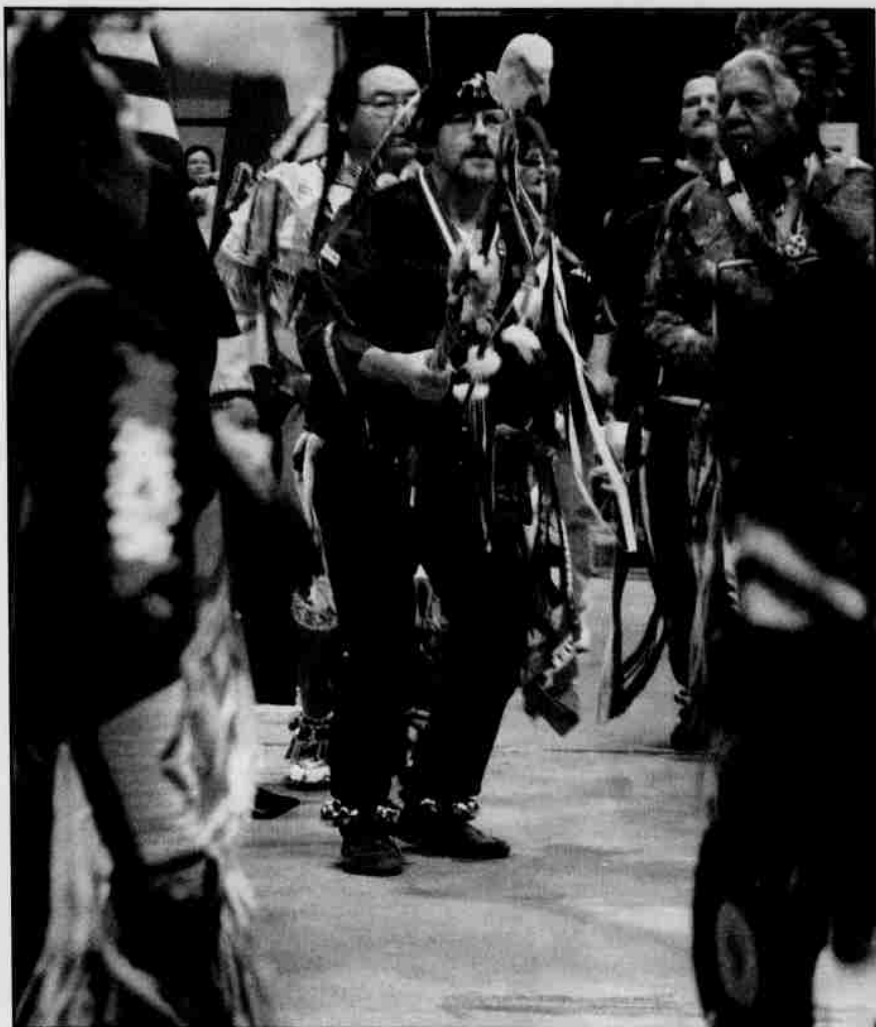


Willamette Powwow



Grand Ronde Honor Guard member Steve Rife dances next to Vernon Kennedy (Burns/ Paiute) during the Grand Entry of Willamette University's sixth annual Social Powwow at the Salem university on March 8.

Photos by Michelle Alaimo



Tribal Elder Bob Tom performs his duties as master of ceremonies for Willamette University's sixth annual Social Powwow.



Members of the Honor Guard participate in the Grand Entry of Willamette University's sixth annual Social Powwow at the Salem university on March 8.

BIA-Tribal timber agreement expires in September

Natural Resources director says it will open up options for Tribal sales

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Expiration of a 20-year-old timber agreement between the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Bureau of Indian Affairs will give the Tribe additional options regarding what it can do with timber harvested off the reservation, said Natural Resources Division Manager Michael Wilson during the March 2 General Council meeting held in Grand Ronde.

"It's a great thing for all of us," Wilson said.

Signed Sept. 9, 1988, the 20-year Timber Memorandum of Agreement governs how the Tribe can harvest and sell timber off the reservation. The agreement states that the Tribe has to practice sustainable yield practices, sell the timber at public auction for the domestic market and sell its timber on contract.

"It was fairly restrictive," Wilson said.

Wilson complimented the Tribe for honoring the agreement through the two decades, even in the mid-1990s when timber prices soared and it would have been tempting to increase the reservation harvest.

"I really like to stress how we honored all parts of this agreement with the government," Wilson said after the meeting. "Considering that the government had trouble even ratifying their own agreements, let alone following them, I think this is something we should really be



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Tribal Council Vice Chairman Reyn Leno, left, and Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy gift Tribal Elder and Vietnam War-era veteran Gene LaBonte with a Pendleton blanket during the March 2 General Council meeting. LaBonte was honored for being appointed to the Advisory Committee to the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.

proud of."

As the sunset approaches on the agreement, Wilson said Natural Resources staff, Tribal Council members and members of the Timber Committee are evaluating options.

As an example, Wilson said the Tribe could hire loggers and market its own timber.

"We could try that on a small scale and move forward from there," Wilson said.

However, those options will depend on the timber market, which Wilson said is currently depressed. "We want to provide for the mem-

bership, but not get to the point of giving our timber away," he said.

So far in 2008, the Tribe has harvested 5.2 million board feet off the reservation, earning \$1.882 million. Wilson said projections for the rest of the year are to harvest 7.4 million more board feet, but because of market conditions, no projected earnings could be estimated.

"We have no idea how much money that will bring in," he said.

Wilson added that the Tribe and BIA has resolved a disagreement over forest management deduction dollars and that the Tribe is once again managing its money and the BIA is back to approving Tribal timber sales.

In other action during the March 2 General Council meeting:

◆ Three members of the Culture Committee — Carol Logan, Patsy Pullin and Bob Tom — discussed two opens seats on the committee and the need for Tribal member input in restoring Tribal culture.

"We want to bring back as much culture as we can," Pullin said.

The Culture Committee meets once a month for four to five hours.

Tom said the goal is "to remain an Indian Tribe and not a corporation."

Upcoming cultural-related events include the March 22 Food Gather-

ing Ceremony in the Community Center and a June blessing of camas and huckleberries. Other possibilities include a cultural/spiritual conference and a healing lodge in the near future.

Tribal members interested in serving on the Culture Committee should contact Tribal Council Relations Coordinator Dakota Whitecloud at 503-879-1309 or dakota.whitecloud@grandronde.org about filling out a volunteer form that will be sent to Tribal Council for appointment.

◆ Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy and Tribal Vice Chairman Reyn Leno gifted a Pendleton blanket to Tribal Elder and Vietnam War-era veteran Gene LaBonte, who has been appointed to the nine-member Advisory Committee to the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs by Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski. He will be installed at a March 19 ceremony in Salem.

◆ The next General Council meeting will be held 11 a.m. Sunday, April 6, at Valley River Inn, 1000 Valley River Way, in Eugene.

◆ Tribal members Marlena Lancour, Robert Nagel and Maxine Clements won the \$50 door prizes and Tribal Elder Marcella Selwyn took home the \$100 door prize.

◆ Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy honored the Tribal Elder birthdays of Norma Lee (82) on March 2 and Betty Reed (80) on March 1. ■