

Chankal property part of Tribe's ceded lands strategy

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The ceded lands of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde are vast.

They run from northern California, up through the Willamette Valley to southwestern Washington and snake their way up the Columbia River Gorge to Mount Hood.

About 150 years after losing almost all of the land in treaties with the federal government, the Tribe is starting to buy back some of that property.

And one of the most culturally important, the Chankal site in the Salem Hills, was purchased in 2007 and opened to a Tribal tour on Sept. 20, said Tribal member and Cultural Resources Manager David Lewis at the Oct. 5 General Council meeting held in the Community Center in Grand Ronde.

Lewis said between 75 to 100 people attended the Sept. 20 event.

The Tribe is currently working on restoration of the site with the eventual goal of putting the approximately 100 oblong stones, or menhirs, back in their original sacred circle. The Kalapuya word "chankal" refers to a place with phallic-shaped stones.

About 65 stones have been pulled from the ground, labeled and stored in Tribal collections while others are in the Horner Collection at Oregon State University or remain in private collections. Continued archaeological research at the Chankal property next year will likely reveal more buried stones, Lewis said.

"The Chankal site is part of the Tribe's ceded lands strategy," Lewis said. "We're looking for property and to purchase land that was originally ours, especially sacred, culturally



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member and Cultural Resources Manager David Lewis gives an update on the Chankal site in the Salem Hills that the Tribe owns during the General Council meeting held on Sunday, Oct. 5, in the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde.

significant lands ... and this is how the Tribe practices its sovereignty."

Lewis said the sacred site, which may have been used for fertility rituals, world renewal ceremonies, healing rituals or puberty rites, also might have been a communication site since its vista includes the ability to see Spirit Mountain, Mary's Peak, Mount Hood and good views as far as 40 miles south in the Willamette Valley.

For those who were unable to attend the Sept. 20 tour, Lewis said Cultural Resources can schedule tours on a monthly basis. To inquire,

contact Lewis at 503-879-1634 or david.lewis@grandronde.org.

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy asked if the Tribe needed an archaeological expert to put his or her "stamp of approval" on the Chankal location as a historically important Native American site.

Lewis said the Tribe is in the position of being able to make that determination itself by having its well-trained and qualified Tribal employees write those academic reports.

"We can set the context ourselves and create our own history because

we have two trained archaeologists and an anthropologist," Lewis said.

"We are one of the few Tribes that have the capability to do that," Kennedy added.

In other action, the next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 2, in the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde to review the proposed 2009 budget.

Also, Tribal members Georgene Gray and Barbara Feehan, as well as Duane Colson, won the \$50 door prizes, and Tribal member Cindy Watkins received the \$100 door prize. ■

Evening was emotional for Reibach

REIBACH continued from front page

Niagara Falls, N.Y.

He won Flutist of the Year at the Indian Summer Music Awards handed out Sept. 5-7 in Milwaukee, Wis.

Both awards were for his 2007 release "Unity."

At the NAMMYS, Reibach was up against J.J. Kent (Oglala Lakota) for "I Am Red," Moontee Siquah (Hopi/Choctaw) for "Freedom," Tommy Wildcat (Cherokee) for "Red Fire People," Tim Yett (Cherokee) for "Creating Sacred People" and Xavier Quijas Yxayotl (Huichol) for "The Color of Morning."

The evening was an emotional one for Reibach, and not only because he won his first NAMMY for Flutist of the Year in front of his family.

Before the ceremonies, he met

fellow nominee Kent, who told him some of the tragic back-story of "I Am Red." Kent's wife, Cathy Gregory, who helped produce and sang on the CD, died in a rollover car accident on June 24 near Chardon, Neb.

Kent drove from Goodlettsville, Tenn., outside of Nashville to the NAMMY Awards ceremony in upstate New York, staying in inexpensive motels along the way in the hope he would win and be able to honor his deceased wife.

With that knowledge, Reibach, 42, said his enthusiasm for winning diminished.

"That was a life-changing moment," he says. "I realized it isn't always about us. It's about many other things."

And when Robert Tree Cody, last year's Flutist of the Year recipient, read Reibach's name as this year's winner, he admits to not being ready to accept the award, thinking instead about his upcoming perfor-

mance scheduled for right after the awarding of Flutist of the Year.

Reibach took the stage, thanked the Creator; his wife, Rhonda, and son, Shane; his Tribe and the Kalapuyan people. Then he called Kent up on stage and dedicated the award to Kent's deceased wife.

"Ohmigoodness, I didn't expect Jan Michael to pay tribute to my wife," Kent said during a phone interview after the awards ceremony. "It was wonderful and pretty emotional. I lost it, I guess, and broke down. I'm still putting the pieces of my life back together ... I was just amazed. I was thrilled Jan Michael received the award. He is just a great guy."

"The award belongs to everyone, every Tribal member," Reibach says. "I want to share it with all of them. I also want to thank my cousin, Val Sheker, who went to last year's NAMMY Awards and introduced me, and I'm grateful to the Native

American Music Awards for all that they do. There was such a spirit of unity there."

Reibach has more than 20 nominations to his credit since 2004, including being the only Native flute player to be nominated by both awards programs in the same year for Flutist of the Year and now being the only Native flute player to win both awards in the same year.

His recent publicized talk of taking a few years off from the music business while his 14-year-old son goes through McMinnville High School has changed.

"I've underestimated where my music has gone," he says. "This qualifies me for the Grammy Awards next year for best native CD. I will continue to make music. I know what my gift is ... and that gift is to make music." ■