

Episcopalians repudiate doctrine, partner with Grand Ronde Tribe in repatriation efforts

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

The U.S. Episcopal Church at its 2009 General Convention in July passed resolutions supporting efforts of the Grand Ronde Tribe to bring the Summers Collection of artifacts home.

The artifacts are housed in the British Museum in London, where they have been boxed away for a century.

The 76th General Convention endorsed the Oregon Diocese's commitment to work with the Grand Ronde Tribe in its effort to secure return of the artifacts, and also agreed to renounce the Doctrine of Discovery.

The doctrine originated with King Henry VII of England in 1496. It held that "Christian sovereigns and their representative explorers could assert dominion and title over non-Christian lands with the full blessing and sanction of the church," according to Episcopal Life Weekly, a publication of the Episcopal Church.

The resolution calls on the church to renounce the doctrine; urges dioceses to reflect on their histories and seek a greater understanding of indigenous peoples; advocates for the federal government's endorse-

ment of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States opposed when the U.N. General Assembly adopted it in 2007; and directs representatives of the (Episcopal) House of Bishops and House of Deputies to ask Queen Elizabeth II in her role as the head of the Church of England to do the same.

The most immediate and concrete hope to come out of the resolution is the return to Grand Ronde of the Summers Collection of Tribal artifacts.

Simultaneous with these efforts, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have been busy on a parallel track seeking return of the artifacts.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy and Tribal Attorney Rob Greene have received documents from the Episcopal Church "honoring treaty rights and spiritual integrity, traditions, culture," said the Rev. Albert Krueger, Episcopal Indian missionary of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon, which has spearheaded the work.

Kennedy and Greene have met with members of the British Embassy as well as U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's office to

facilitate the effort.

In addition to years of effort by the U.S. Episcopal Church, Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., and Will Holler, Tribal lobbyist in Washington, D.C., were instrumental in gaining access for the Tribe to the British Embassy, said Tribal Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor.

The Episcopal effort to repatriate the Summers Collection has been in process for six years in Oregon, Krueger said.

"It's providential that (Reverend R.W.) Summers is at the center of this," Krueger said. "He's one of our guys."

Also within the church, Krueger said, a Native ministry network has long been on board with the idea, and an effort is under way to get more of the church faithful on board with the idea of renouncing the doctrine.

"The conventional attitude," Krueger said, "is that the Doctrine of Discovery is unarticulated and unquestioned within the church. (We need) a whole lot of attitude changing."

This year's resolution will help in that effort.

"We now have the authority structures of the Episcopal Church in the U.S. moving alongside of

the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in urging the return of the Summers Collection artifacts," Krueger said.

Working with Tribal member Greg Archuleta, Krueger uncovered a word in Chinuk jargon for the return: kilapaya.

"I'm hoping that the church in Oregon will recognize its journey as being connected with the journeys of all the Tribes in western Oregon. It will take time," Krueger said.

"The Doctrine of Discovery has been a sore subject for the Tribes for a long time," Tribal member and Tribal Cultural Resources Manager David Lewis said. "The repudiation of this is really needed to validate Tribal sovereignty over our cultural artifacts wherever they are stored."

Most recently, at a Dec. 6 evening service at St. Andrew's Church in Portland, Krueger led an Advent service attended by Tribal members Jon George, his son, Trey, Archuleta and Eric Bernando.

"It was a western hemisphere Advent service," Krueger said. "Tribal members contributed a coyote story."

"My theory is if we keep hammering away at it and don't give up, we'll eventually succeed." ■

Transportation to Grand Ronde

The Portland satellite office has a transportation day to Grand Ronde once a month for medical or dental appointments or enrollment cards. A minimum of three people must sign up. Call Lisa at 503-235-4230. You must be an enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member. The vehicle will leave the Portland office at 8 a.m. Please call in advance for the scheduled monthly date. ■

Youth Canoe Club

Every Wednesday 4-5 p.m., Youth Education Building

Contact Lisa Leno at 503-879-1471 or Travis Mercier at 503-879-2143 for more information.

No sales meant a suspension of revenue

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tively suspended our sale plan for a while."

"The Tribe has always taken the position that we are not going to give our timber away," Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno said. "We just don't do it. We'd rather sit on, sell it later and make more money, and the return goes to the member."

"The Timber Committee and Natural Resources Department are doing an excellent job of monitoring it and trying to get the most out of every piece of timber we have."

For Tribal members, no sales meant a suspension of timber revenue distribution checks.

However, thanks to some sales in 2009, the Tribe augmented declining Spirit Mountain Casino per capita distributions recently with a timber distribution, which had previously occurred once a year in June.

"Although we're encouraged by log prices stabilizing and actually rising a little bit, it's too early to say," Leno said about timber revenue in 2010. "The tell-tale sign is if the housing market is going to pick up in the spring and people are going to start constructing."

"We have sales on the shelf ready to go when the market starts to pick up."

Reservation timber facts

The 10,000-acre Grand Ronde Reservation is managed under a 10-year plan approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It establishes a sustained yield harvest volume of 6.1 million board feet per year.

Under this control, the Tribe is never harvesting more than what is growing over a 10-year period. The plan also established riparian buffers for streams, creation of elk meadows and other environmental goals.

A timber sale on the Reservation goes through many steps before a sale, including surveys for threatened and endangered species, harvest layout, timber cruise, appraisal and BIA review and approval.

From start to finish, the timber sale process takes a minimum of two years.

When the Tribe sells timber off the reservation, 10 percent of the revenue is funneled back into Natural Resource's budget for management of the Reservation per Bureau of Indian Affairs guidelines.

The remaining 90 percent is available for the Tribe to use as it wishes. Traditionally, Tribal Council has distributed timber revenue to the membership.

The rebounding timber market in 2009 prompted Natural Resources to evaluate a timber sale for the potential of marketing poles.

The Cosper's Corner sale was the first the Tribe marketed through the Tribe's Forest Enterprise Round Valley LLC thanks to the expiration of

a 1988 memorandum of agreement with the BIA on how the Reservation's timber is managed and sold.

The 20-year memorandum stated that all timber harvested from the Reservation would be sold at public auction and be restricted for primary manufacturing in the United States.

It also said that the Tribe "shall not bid for, purchase, cut or remove saw timber from the Reservation," which restricted the Tribe from marketing its own timber.

Round Valley hired Hofenbredl Timber, a local logging company owned by Tribal member Larry Hofenbredl Jr., for the Cosper's Corner logging.

"We did sell many loads of poles

from the sale and are receiving a much higher value than we would have otherwise," Wilson said.

"When we do a timber sale, we will be able to sell different grades of logs to different mills, so the Tribe will get top dollar for whatever grade," Leno said about the memorandum's expiration. "Now, under this deal, we have the opportunity to sell to all the mills and have the ability to export."

The Tribe also marketed the Big Toe sale in November.

Wilson said he does not think the timber market will rebound to the glory days of the 1997-98 when timber was going for close to \$1,000 per 1,000 board feet immediately following the spotted owl ruling, which took timber on federal forest lands off the market.

"I see things getting back to a regular schedule," Wilson said about Tribal timber sales. "I see it rebounding to \$400 to \$500 per 1,000 board feet, which is more sustainable."

"Natural Resources will continue to explore new markets, such as the export log market. The strategy is to get the best prices for our timber today while managing the Reservation for future generations."

"There might be an opportunity for distribution this summer or next fall, but it all depends on what the timber industry does," Leno said. ■