

Ashland interpretive signs unveiled

By Ron Karten
Smoke Signals staff writer

ASHLAND — On the Tribe's side, the development and installation of two interpretive signs in North Mountain Park in Ashland has been almost three years in coming.

However, for the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department, it has been in process for more than a decade.

It could not have come out better, though, for project coordinator Mike Karnosh, the Tribe's Ceded Lands coordinator.

"They have gone above and beyond to make sure all our concerns were addressed," Karnosh said. "They came up to Grand Ronde to get a firsthand look at the Tribe and meet the people. And the finished product is really, really impressive. I can't say enough about everybody's contribution. I'm overwhelmed."

This latest addition to the Tribal Historic Signs Project was officially unveiled in the park's Nature Center on Saturday, June 23, under tentative skies that held for four hours for about 50 people who attended to honor the occasion.

The Nature Center starts at the north end of the 40-acre teaching park located next to Bear Creek in Ashland. The park also includes demonstration gardens, playing fields and several acres of wildlife-friendly open space and trails.

"Ashland Parks does a lot of public education and outreach," Karnosh said, "including programs with school kids. They are really progressive because they try to teach everyone that comes through the park, and they try to make sure they get everything right. They have reached out to the Tribe in the past, so we knew we wanted to work with them on this signs project."

"Our hope is that people will see this and want to learn more and maybe realize that they can be



The Changing Landscape: Influences of Nature and Culture

Traditional Tribal Homelands Ceded in Treaties

Since time immemorial, the members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde lived in their traditional homelands which extended over 14 million acres. They always existed already upon contact with gold miners and pioneer settlers from the west, and after years of land and treaties.

- 1853: The Rogue River Treaty, Table Rock Reservation established. (Signed by various tribes, tribes people leave the reservation to hunt, fish, and gather along land and waters.)
- 1854: Second Rogue River Treaty. Additional ungrazing tribes joined on the Table Rock Reservation.
- 1855: Signing means also represented attack by volunteer militia of whites and soldiers.
- 1856: Tribes returned to Grand Ronde Reservation.
- 1867: General Allotment Act provided for land to tribal members. Remaining surplus is sold to non-Indians primarily for grazing and timber extraction.
- 1868-1870s: Reservation, US Government transfer of promises made in original treaties.
- 1890: General Allotment Act reduced size of reservation to 597 acres (from original 41,197 acres).
- 1906: Loss of access to government services. Members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde lost their remaining reservation land and their identity as a federally recognized tribe.
- 1970s: What others begin working to restore the tribe.
- 1983: Reestablishment. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is restored and once again becomes a sovereign nation.

Present day: The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is a sovereign, self-governing, and self-sustaining community of 14,000 members, the tribe is a vibrant nation currently growing strong in the 21st century while continuing to work for its sovereignty, resurgence, and cultural preservation.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, center, is flanked by Tribal Council member June Sherer, far left, Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen, Jr. and Senior Miss Grand Ronde Nakoosa Moreland just before the unveiling of two interpretive signs in Ashland on Saturday, June 23. One of the signs is covered in black.

At left, one of the two interpretive signs telling the story of the Grand Ronde Tribes' ceded lands now on display at North Mountain Park in Ashland.

Photos by Ron Karten

They've really got a community buy-in for the project, and in my eye, hey, that's the key to success. Culturally, this is a very important part of our ceded lands."

"The region is the homelands of the northern Shasta and the Takelma," said Tribal Cultural Resources Department Manager David Lewis. "The line between the two Tribes is not well known and it is thought that Ashland is the northern extremity for the Shastas. They would have camped and lived at Bear Creek, which goes directly through the park."

"The Takelma inhabited the area of Table Rocks, and Bear Creek enters the Rogue River at Lower Table Rock, across from the Tribe's Rogue River Treaty signing of 1853. The region does not have a lot of interpretation about the Tribes that originally inhabited it nor about the Table Rock Reservation. Many people in the area do not know the history of the Tribes and how this area is incredibly significant to our Tribal history. The signs project answers part of this need."

"I feel that they fully understand that this fantastic valley was sculpted by our ancestors," said Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen Jr., "and they're very open to telling this to the community."

"We've learned a lot more about the area than we had known," Lewis added. "Re-familiarizing ourselves with the land is very important.

When you put something like this up, (the signs) exist for 10 years or more, and so it's very important that we get it right."

He added his voice to the chorus thanking the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department for taking the time to get it right.

Julie Brown, Collections assistant in the Cultural Resources Department, also thanked Ashland staffers for "truly embracing what we were feeling in our hearts as Native Americans."

Illustrator Nancy Wylie called the project "a learning process. The work here was in the detail, and the difficulty was in how to bring all the information together into one illustration."

"I've learned so much about Native ways," said graphic designer Karin Onnka. "Everytime I'm out, I honor this land as you and your ancestors do."

Grand Ronde Royalty — Nakoosa Moreland, Iyana Holmes, Amelia Mooney, Makenzie Aaron, Amaryssa Mooney, Elizabeth Watson-Croy and Madison Aaron — performed along with singers/drummers Justin Robinson, Greg Archuleta, Miguel Adams and Jordan Mercier.

Tribal Elders in attendance included Bernadine Shriver and Dolores Parmenter. Portland office Tribal Services Representative Lisa Archuleta also attended and Tribal Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor coordinated the event.

The unveiling also included dance



Karin Onnka unveils one sign as Kari Gies and David Lewis watch on Saturday, June 23, in North Mountain Park in Ashland.

demonstrations and presentations of traditional Native crafts, including basket weaving and the process of turning stones and clays into paint-type colors.

"We're all about stewardship of the land," Gies said. "This project gives us a look at the wisdom of the past, and how well the indigenous people stewarded this land."

The Tribe also has new interpretive signs coming out at the Dallas Arboretum in July and at Salem Riverfront Park. Still others are in development. ■



Cultural Resources Manager David Lewis, center, and Karin Onnka, graphics designer for the project, left, listen as Kari Gies, Nature Center education coordinator for Ashland's Parks and Recreation Department, describes the process of putting this project together to Tribal and other visitors at North Mountain Park in Ashland on Saturday, June 23.



Nakoosa Moreland leads Grand Ronde Tribal Royalty in introducing themselves and describing their regalia to the crowd during the interpretive sign unveiling at North Mountain Park in Ashland on Saturday, June 23. From right are Moreland, Amelia Mooney, Makenzie Aaron, Amaryssa Mooney, Elizabeth Watson-Croy and Madison Aaron. Iyana Holmes is mostly hidden behind Moreland although the top of her crown is visible. Behind them are displays of traditional Native crafts.