

All they are saying is give trees a chance

Fund cyclists stop in Grand Ronde to raise money, talk trees

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

The riff from the John Lennon classic "Give Peace a Chance" was just one of the surprises when the Naperville, Ill.-based Tree Fund came to town.

The team of volunteers and staffers from across the country included 113 volunteer cyclists, a clown-prince of tree education and communication specialists. The action took place on Tuesday, Aug. 7, near the fish weir overlooking a bend in Agency Creek.

The Tree Fund planted three Oregon oak trees on the hill as part of the 20th anniversary of its signature fundraiser, the STIHL Tour des Trees.

The land above Agency Creek had been shored up with logs planted vertically and the Tree Fund punctuated the effort with the tree planting. One day, those oaks will dwarf everything else in the area. Their roots will further secure the land and provide shade.

The event also included an education for the Education Department's Chinuk Immersion class (Lilu - wolves) and the 2-year-olds' class (Kwis Kwis - chipmunks).

"The focus (of the education for



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

As children from Early Childhood Education's Chinuk Immersion class sing "Tomala," William Stone covers his ears during a loud part while they perform for cyclists who stopped at the Tribal campus while on the STIHL Tour des Trees bike tour on Tuesday, Aug. 7. Teacher's aide George Neujahr, sitting, led the children in the song.

the children) is the miracle of a tree," said Professor Pricklethorn, known among adults as Warren Hoselton, a Toronto, Ont., certified arborist and supporter volunteering his time and money to the nonprofit's educational campaign. "We tell them about all the good things that trees do."

He said that trees "clean the air, create oxygen, reduce heat in the summer and clean storm water

runoff." In so many ways, he said, "trees are the answer."

A Tribal drum group sang a welcome to the assembled group. The children from the Tribal classrooms sang a traditional song, "Tumala," (tomorrow will be a better day).

Dozens of cyclists swarmed in. All were volunteers who had raised \$3,500 each for the Tree Fund and now were riding more than 100 miles a day singing the praises of trees in a number of different venues, planting a few at each stop and having fun.

"It's an awesome time," said cyclist Doreen Crenshaw, 51, of Indianapolis, who is riding with the group for the fifth time. "There are a lot of people who like to cycle from all over. You see the country."

A majority of the cyclists are professional or semi-professional arborists, but Robert Jones, 53, is an export shipping clerk for STIHL Inc. in Virginia Beach, Va. STIHL has been sponsor for the tour since

2001 and is title sponsor of the event from 2009 to 2014.

The Tribe was a \$1,000 underwriter of this program that Tree Fund President and CEO M. Janet Bornancin described as "a commitment to insuring that we leave behind a legacy." Bartlett Tree Experts and Hoselton also were listed as underwriters.

Last year, Tree Fund awarded more than \$112,300 to support new research projects in its areas of interest, including "root and soil management, planting and establishment, risk assessment and arborist safety, and urban forestry." The group also purchased "new materials and scientific equipment for thousands of middle school students attending outdoor 'Science Camp' in California," according to the annual report.

"We're glad you made Grand Ronde one of your stopping points," said Tribal Council member Chris Mercier. "We're really excited to be a part of this."

"Our natural resources are very important to us," said Tribal Council member Toby McClary.

"It was an opportunity to partner with a group devoted to the health and care of trees," said Michael Wilson, Natural Resources Department manager.

The department also took the opportunity to mount an education offensive of its own, with posters showing successful environmental projects coming from Tribal employees.

"For many of them, this was their first opportunity to encounter a Native American Tribe," Wilson said, "and I think they were impressed."

The department, he added, also selected the spot for the trees and provided the trees that were planted.

Bornancin gifted copies of the book "I Can Name 50 Trees Today" to the Grand Ronde Tribal Library. Executive Officer Chris Leno accepted the gift and other copies were gifted to the children as the event ended. ■



A group of cyclists plant an Oregon white oak tree near the fish weir while on their stop at the Tribal campus on the STIHL Tour des Trees bike tour on Tuesday, Aug. 7. Three Oregon white oaks were planted.



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