

Thorsgard named to national group

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Grand Ronde Cultural Protection Program Manager Eirik Thorsgard has been named to the Core Working Group for the National Register Landscape Initiative based in Washington, D.C.

The June 26 appointment means that Thorsgard will join a national group charged with "defining the traditional cultural landscape; and deciding how to do landscape analysis under federal law," Thorsgard said. "It's about defining methodologies and seeing how they might work under federal law."

So far, the group has held one meeting — an educational meeting reviewing federal policy and practice with regard to landscape studies.

"What we're trying to figure out is what other agencies ought to be involved, best practices and how they intersect within each agency," he said.

It is still "real early" in the process, he added.

The group is led by the National Park Service with involvement from the Historic Preservation Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The appointment is open-ended,



Eirik Thorsgard

or until the project is complete.

"I'm really excited," said Thorsgard. "I have an interest in how we look at landscapes."

The Land and Culture Department also has a

contract with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to do similar work; specifically, a guide on how to develop landscape policy.

"We're getting an opportunity to develop and understand federal policy, and develop methodology for compliance. How many Tribes get asked to join federal working groups that will have a real impact across the country?" Thorsgard said.

Only three of more than 550 federally recognized Tribes are included in this working group. In addition to Thorsgard, the Zuni Cultural Resource Enterprise of New Mexico and the Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island also are members. ■

'When he brought it to me, he was grinning ear to ear'

RING continued from front page

housed in modular buildings, where the ring eventually went missing.

"I was coming out of what was called the Records Room behind modular No. 1 when my ring caught on the door handle and went flying," Garrison recalled. "I heard it hit, but didn't know where. I looked everywhere and figured (since the door was open) it must have flown behind the file cabinets, or fell onto the porch and dropped down."

"Well, when we moved over to the Community Center (in 2009), the file cabinets were moved, and no ring. Which left one other place it could be ... below the porch."

Early in July, Garrison learned that the Tribe was beginning to tear down the modular buildings. On Thursday, July 11, she called Tyson Mercier, described the ring to him and asked that he and his crew be on the lookout for it.

Mercier, the Tribe's Facilities Maintenance supervisor, had tasked four techs with "stripping anything out of the modular buildings that we could re-use," he said. He asked two of them to pull up the decking to look for the ring.

"She pretty much told me where it would be," Mercier said.

On Monday, July 15, as the techs were taking up the decking to look underneath, temp worker Levi Linton found the long-lost jewelry.

Within five minutes, Linton said, he came up with the ring. "They tore up some floorboards and I went down there and found it," he recalls.

"When he brought it to me, he was grinning ear to ear," said Mercier, who then delivered the ring to Garrison.

"It was a little beat up, and looked like it had been chewed on, but it was my ring! It was like seeing an old friend," said Garrison, "one that I had always hoped to see again."

"You have to understand, the few months leading up to losing the ring I had lost my mom, divorced, been in a car accident and was currently on crutches after being in an accident at home."

"I had lost so much already and was tired of being on, what felt like, the losing end. So, in a way, that ring became even more valuable to me, and it felt like one more piece of me was gone, too."

"It's been close to 12 years, and during those 12 years life, as it should, has become better. Will I wear it again? Probably not. It will stay where I know it's safe. Where I can take it out and look at it and remember where I was then and where I am now. I'm glad it's home."

"It's good to give her the ring after all those years," said Linton. "Glad to help her out."

"As it worked out," said Mercier, "it would have been simple to get it any time she requested." ■

Modular removal



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Charles Gleason, co-owner of CG Contractors with his son, Tribal member Charles Gleason Jr., demolishes a modular building on the Tribal campus on Tuesday, Aug. 13. The four moduls were installed in 1991 as the first buildings on campus and housed a number of departments, including Tribal Council, Education and the health clinic.

Forum attracts 10 candidates

By Ron Karten

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About 50 Tribal members attended the 2013 Tribal Council Candidates Forum held Wednesday, July 31, in the Community Center.

Ten of the 12 candidates running for Tribal Council introduced themselves, answered three rounds of questions and then gave closing statements. The forum lasted two hours.

The scheduled question-and-answer session was slated for two questions per candidate, but the first two rounds went so quickly that audience members requested a third round. Candidates were given one minute to introduce themselves and two minutes each to respond to questions and present a closing statement.

Questions from the audience covered such long-standing Tribal issues as per capita distribution, enrollment, casino operations, perceived wasteful spending and Tribal Council ethics. In response to a question from the audience for all candidates, none said they had been arrested in the last year.

Tribal General Manager Mark Johnston introduced the candidates and read questions while Assistant General Manager Chris Leno kept time.

AV Sound Technician Wendell Olson and Help Desk Technician Alec Mercier taped the event for simultaneous broadcast over the Tribal Web site, where it remains available for viewing at www.grandronde.org.

The 12 Tribal members running for Tribal Council are incumbents Jack Giffen Jr. and Steve Bobb Sr. and challengers Lonnie Leno, Ed Larsen, Cory Meneley, Mark Mercier, Brent Merrill, Brenda Tuomi, Ed Pearsall, Denise Harvey, Kalene Contreras and Kevin Simmons.

Pearsall and Simmons did not attend the forum. Simmons said at the Tribal Council meeting that occurred just before the Candidates Forum that a personal issue prevented him from attending.

Ballots were mailed to Tribal voters with verified signatures on July 24 and are due back by Election Day, Saturday, Sept. 7. Tribal members may create a verified signature card at any time up to and including Election Day.

As of June 30, the day of nominations for Tribal Council, 3,942 Tribal members were 18 or older, making them eligible to register to vote. In 2012, 1,255 ballots were cast out of 3,867 Tribal members eligible to vote. ■

Youth Education schedules orientations

The Tribe's Youth Education Department will hold orientations for parents and students who will be participating in the 2013-14 programs.

Orientations will cover general policies and procedures of the department, scheduling, student expectations and staff introductions. There also will be the required paperwork needed from parents and guardians.

Parents are encouraged to RSVP for one of the following dates:

- Noon to 1 p.m. or 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 20;
- Noon to 1 p.m. or 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 22.

A light luncheon and dinner will be provided.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Tiffany Mercier at 503-879-2101. ■