

# 'Fire in the Valley' dinner has Tribal flavor

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

OREGON CITY — Willamette Partnership's "Fire in the Valley" dinner held Thursday, Sept. 25, at the Museum of the Oregon Territory was steeped in Grand Ronde seasoning.

Held on the museum's third floor, the more than 100 attendees looked down on Tumwater Falls, where Grand Ronde ancestors lived in a village for tens of thousands of years along the Willamette River and caught abundant salmon and lamprey. Today, Grand Ronde claims the area as part of its ceded lands through the 1855 Willamette Valley Treaty and continues its traditions by harvesting lamprey and salmon from the site annually.

The menu featured the traditional foods of salmon, venison, huckleberries and, in a light-hearted touch, mini ELTs — smoked lamprey sandwiches on fry bread.

And, of course, there was the modern infusion of the Grand Ronde Tribe, which included opening prayers and songs from the Tribal Canoe Family, as well as an opening speech from Tribal Council member Jon A. George.

Willamette Partnership Executive Director Bobby Cochran thanked the Grand Ronde Tribe for its participation in the partnership, which started in October 2004.

"In 2014, we've done really cool things," Cochran said. "This year, we want to achieve environmental goals that we've been working on."

The dinner celebrated some of the partnership's accomplishments. Among them, according to a pre-dinner slide show, is restoring four miles of stream along the Rogue River across five separate projects

to reduce water temperature. The area near Medford also is within the Tribe's ceded lands.

In addition, 140 acres of prairie in Thurston County, Wash., in the Puget Sound area, are in the process of being acquired for environmental conservation.

And five Willamette Valley vineyards have signed up for the partnership's Salmon Safe program, which aims to prevent agricultural runoff into Oregon streams and rivers that could adversely affect fish.

Even the name of the dinner — "Fire in the Valley" — harkened back to Native practices in being good stewards of the environment in the Willamette Valley. The dinner's name was suggested by Tribal cultural consultant Greg Archuleta.

George said during his opening remarks that it was an honor to stand in the Tribe's ancestral homelands and "hear our drums over the falls again."

George thanked Willamette Partnership for working with the Tribe.

"We want to say thank you for the partnerships that we have, especially in Clackamas County. The (Willamette)

Partnership lets you know that this is what we (Tribal ancestors) did," George said. "It is important to take care of the land. It's also nice that people don't think that everywhere we go we want to put in a casino."

Land and Culture employee Bobby Mercier, who led the Canoe Family in two songs, discussed how Clackamas Chief Wachino used to



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Above, Tribal Council member Jon A. George says thank you after receiving a drawing of a heron from the Willamette Partnership during the "Fire in the Valley" dinner at the Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City on Thursday, Sept. 25. At left, Tribal Services Representative Lisa Archuleta, waits for Ruben Samoilich, right, to add vegetables to a venison dish so she can top it with a camas bulb during the Willamette Partnership's "Fire in the Valley" dinner at the Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City on Thursday, Sept. 25. Her brother, Greg Archuleta, gathered the camas. In the background is Janel Bennett, the wife of Matt Bennett, who was chef for the dinner. Samoilich is a cook at Bennett's Albany restaurant, Sybaris.**



control the falls below.

"This was a wealthy place," Mercier said. "Other Tribes used to come here to take salmon from the falls, and they brought their wares to trade."

Willamette Partnership Board Chairman John Miller thanked the Tribe and other partners for their contributions over the last decade.

"There are some real innovators in this group," Miller said. "People came to the table with a lot, but they went away with more than they came with."

Matt Bennett, who owns Sybaris restaurant in Albany, continued his five-year association with the Grand Ronde Tribe by serving traditional foods of the first Oregonians in modern cuisine.

Attendees were served smoked salmon head chowder, 36-hour venison shoulder with wild herbs and huckleberry s'mores. The venison dish included camas picked by Archuleta and cooked for the required week.

"If you eat it (camas) before it is fully cooked, like Lewis and Clark did, then you can get really not happy," Bennett said.

Bennett told an amusing story about how he learned to cook camas from Tribal member Eirik Thorsgard. About five years ago, he said, he asked about camas and Thorsgard told him the traditional method for cooking the root vegetable is five days underground like you would a pig.

Then Thorsgard told Bennett he was going to have camas for dinner that night. "You really cook it underground like that?" Bennett said he asked Thorsgard, who replied,

"No, we use crock pots."

Grand Ronde Tribal members and staff who attended included Tribal Attorney Rob Greene, Tribal Historian David Lewis, Land & Culture Department Ceded Lands Specialist Holly Partridge and Tribal Elder Dolores Parmenter. Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor and Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark were instrumental in organizing the dinner. Clark and Portland office Tribal Services Representative Lisa Archuleta helped serve the meal.

The event wrapped up with George being presented a drawing of a heron created by seventh-grader Jada Fouch. The drawing appeared in Willamette Partnership's annual "Honoring Our Rivers" anthology, which received 900 writing and art entries from students in 30 Oregon counties in 2014.

The dinner was sponsored by the Port of Portland, Wildwood Mahonia, Northwest Natural, Clean Water Services, the city of Portland, Perkins Coie law firm, The Freshwater Trust, McDonald Jacobs accounting firm, Tonkon Torp law firm, Bethel Heights vineyard, Mahonia vineyard, Maysara, King Estate and Oregon State University College of Forestry.

"I want to give a big thank you to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde," Cochran said. "Our partnership and friendship gets stronger every year." ■

## ATTENTION TRIBAL MEMBERS WITH CONTRACT HEALTH SERVICES

As most of you are aware, Contract Health Services (CHS) is federally funded program and a payor of last resort. With all of the health care changes recently, we would like to take a minute to remind you that ANY alternate resource you have needs to be utilized correctly. That means in order for CHS to cover a "patient responsibility," you must use providers who are in network with whatever health care coverage you have primary, including the Tribal Health Assistance Program: Skookum.

If you choose not to use providers that are in-network or receive services that are not covered, you will be responsible for any patient balance. Services include: Medical, Dental and Behavioral Health. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you, but in order to keep serving our Tribal community, we must exhaust all other resources available to our membership.

CHS also wants to remind you that there are some services that are not covered by CHS, but are covered by Skookum.

If you choose to receive these services, you will be responsible for paying the co-payments. They are as follows: Chiropractic care, Naturopathic care, Massage, Acupuncture, as well as outpatient drug and alcohol treatment.

This does not mean that you cannot use those services; it simply means that CHS will not be responsible for any patient balances.

You can still keep those appointments; you just need to pay whatever your co-pay is. We understand that this can all be a little confusing, so please feel free to give us a call if you have ANY questions and we'll be happy to help.

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