

stewards of the land'

Tribal member Gabe Sheoships concluded the morning sessions talking about Pacific lamprey and the species' traditional importance to Tribes and their culture. They each detailed the current state of lamprey and went into detail of its past relevance to Tribes.

Sheoships, who worked for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission for 15 years, is an adjunct professor at Heritage University in Toppenish, Wash., a private university owned and operated by the Yakama Indian Nation.

"Gabe is a model example of an up-and-coming leader in Indian Country who knows how to work with Tribal communities," said Harrelson when he introduced Sheoships.

Sheoships began his presentation by explaining that Pacific lamprey as a species are older than the dinosaurs and that he gathered much of the information for his studies from talking to 32 Elders from the Grand Ronde, Siletz and Umatilla Tribes about their experiences with lamprey.

"Lamprey are the oldest living fish species," said Sheoships. "They are 450 million to 500 million years old. They actually predate and outlived the dinosaurs. They are far older than sturgeon."

Sheoships said it was the Tribes that first noticed that Pacific lamprey were in decline. He added that Willamette Falls near Oregon City is the last abundant harvest area for lamprey.

One of the Elders he worked with while gathering information



Tribal youth performed songs in Chinuk Wawa during the opening of the third annual Grand Ronde History and Culture Summit held in the Tribal gymnasium on Wednesday, Oct. 28. From left, Aiden Campbell, Brittney Mercier, Mikayla Mercier, Jayde Diaz, Ezri Bailey and Eva Jurado performed.

on lamprey was Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Carol Logan. Logan took Sheoships up to Rose Lodge Falls on the nearby Salmon River to show him one of the traditional harvesting locations that can no longer support a harvest.

"Carol is an amazing person," said Sheoships. "It was wonderful to work with her and all the other Grand Ronde Elders."

Sheoships showed a video that he and Logan shot of a lone lamprey that spent four hours that day trying to breach the falls.

"I want to thank you for doing this," said Logan during the question-and-answer period following Sheoships' presentation. "The healing that comes from our eels and our salmon, the impact is so strong. We need to help all of our people to help these to come back and to have the opportunity to go on. I look at that place (Rose Lodge Falls) as a very sacred place."

After the morning session concluded, the summit moved to Chachalu, the Tribe's museum complex, for several breakout sessions.

The breakout sessions covered indigenous archaeology, health and wellness, repatriation and collections and a session titled "What is Culture?" by Oregon Humanities Executive Director Dr. Adam Davis.

Tribal Council members Tonya Gleason-Shepek and Chris Mercier attended Davis' session and each said they learned something.

"It was a lot of great information," said Gleason-Shepek. "It was cool to see that we are telling our side of the story, our side of the history and creating that balance and accuracy. We are constantly trying to teach people who we are and what it means to be sovereign. People want to understand the true history."

Gleason-Shepek said she felt the summit was important because it gave the Tribe an opportunity to show people that we are unique.

"We want people to know we are good partners and we want to show people who we are," said Gleason-Shepek.

Mercier said he was happy that he attended the session.

"I liked it. It definitely got me

thinking," said Mercier. "One of the things I took from it was where you live and how much you love where you live makes a big difference in who you are. Being part of this Tribe, we are exposed to this world and culture that a lot of people are not."

Mercier said he agreed with Gleason-Shepek about the importance of the summit.

"I think it is important that people know who we are," said Mercier. "I think with Termination it would have been tempting for a lot of people to think that the Tribal communities didn't exist anymore."

"And I think people need to understand that there was a lot of history and there was a completely different group of people living lives out in this area hundreds of years ago of which little is known. We try to learn what we can and pass that along."

Harrelson and Jordan Mercier summed up the summit by saying it was a valuable experience and that they were proud of the Tribal community for coming together to make it happen.

"It was a success," said Harrelson. "It was more than we wanted it to be. Our lives are immensely rich because we get to do this as a career."

"People got a chance to hear ideas that they are not normally exposed to," said Jordan Mercier.

Harrelson thanked all of the presenters, the kitchen staff, the Facilities Department, Information Systems, the Culture Department, Public Affairs and Tribal government staff for helping make the summit so successful.

"Culture is really good for the health of the community," said Harrelson. "The sense of belonging can be healing." ■

Let's talk about food!

Wednesday, December 2nd - 5:30-7:30pm
Grand Ronde Community Center

Are you interested in gardening? Hunger and nutrition? Access to food? Local agriculture? Youth opportunities?

Join the community for dinner and a discussion about resources, opportunities, and barriers that exist to increase access to food.

Please RSVP to Francene Ambrose by Monday, November 30th:
<http://goo.gl/forms/IS1L9IPi8d> or 503-879-3663

This event is free and open to any community member.