

# Membership briefed on Natural Resources program

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

PORTLAND — General Council returned to the Monarch Hotel near Clackamas Town Center on Sunday, Feb. 7, for the first time since March 2013 and a good turnout of Tribal members heard Natural Resources Department Manager Michael Wilson present an overview of his department's numerous activities and accomplishments.

Wilson's presentation was originally scheduled for the January General Council meeting, which was canceled because of a lack of quorum caused by inclement weather throughout western Oregon.

"I've had the opportunity through firefighting and the Tribal Timber Council to visit a lot of different Reservations across the country, and we have a very beautiful Reservation that I enjoy working on every day," Wilson said as he displayed a snow-covered picture of the Reservation taken recently by one of the department's foresters. "Staff understands that. We understand that this Reservation, your Tribal lands, are valuable for many different reasons: for hunting, fishing, gathering, solitude ... just being out on the land. We understand that."

Wilson discussed many different Natural Resources programs, including timber management that works to maintain a sustainable supply of timber on the Reservation. Currently, the Tribe harvests approximately 7.1 million board feet annually, which is conducted under the guidance of a 10-year management plan approved by Tribal Council and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"All the impacts we are going to have on the Reservation are well timed out," Wilson said.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Michael Wilson, the Tribe's Natural Resources Department manager, updates the membership on his department's numerous programs during the General Council meeting held at the Monarch Hotel & Conference Center in Clackamas on Sunday, Feb. 7.**

Natural Resources has started growing traditional plants, such as camas, in raised beds at the offices off Hebo Road to help restore them to Tribal lands.

Natural Resources continues working on its Pacific Lamprey Translocation Project, where staff transport lamprey from Willamette Falls to above Fall Creek near Eugene to encourage the species to migrate farther up the Willamette River basin.

"This is a species that is culturally important to us, but not a lot of money is going toward it," Wilson said about the potentially threatened fish. "We can help the species and be a leader in this area, and also get the hands-on work in the water and in the streams by our staff."

Natural Resources is now issuing Tribal hunting tags for ceremonial elk and deer hunts and is managing two conservation properties – Chahalpam on the North Santiam River in Marion County and Rattlesnake Butte near Junction City in Lane County. At Chahalpam, the Tribe's management practices helped delist the Oregon chub as an endangered species, he said.

Most impressively, Wilson said the 2015 wildland fire season was one of the busiest ever. The Tribe's 20-person hand crew was dispatched to four full-time fire assignments that occurred over 64 days. Fire crews put in almost 18,000 hours working on fires in Washington, Oregon and California and made about \$1.2 million in reimbursements. All of this without any injuries, extending the department's safety streak to 2,600 days.

"We have an outstanding safety record," Wilson said.

The Tribe's fire engines were out for 193 days and brought in \$165,000 in reimbursements, he added.

Wilson also thanked the general membership for its understanding in August when the Tribe closed the tinder-dry Reservation because of forest fire concerns.

During the question-and-answer portion of his presentation, Wilson said the department is working with the state to establish a Tribal smelt harvesting season on the Sandy River.

Natural Resources also recently installed sonar equipment at the fish weir on Agency Creek that will help track returning Coho and steelhead salmon to the Reservation.

"The reason why that is so important is that the data that the sonar tracking device will bring to the Tribe will allow us the opportunity to manage that resource," said Tribal Council Vice Chair Jack Giffen Jr. "This new technology will pinpoint species coming back and that documentation will be the key to establishing how many of those we could actually harvest. It's a key resource for future generations."

Wilson also acknowledged the two committees Natural Resources staff members work with on a regular basis – the Timber and Fish and Wildlife committees.

In other action, it was announced by Richard Ray, Linda Brandon, Louise Coulson and Cherie Butler were elected to the four open seats on the Elders Committee.

Mike Giffen, Charles Lackler, Annette Ingram, Adrainne Llaneza and Dawn Doar won the \$50 door prizes and Floriene Hoff, Ralph Baker and Carol Haskins won the \$100 door prizes.

Lisa and Greg Archuleta, Jade Unger, Eric Bernando and Tribal Council member Jon A. George participated in the cultural drumming and singing to open the meeting.

The next General Council meeting will return to Grand Ronde on Sunday, March 6, for an 11 a.m. session at the Community Center.

The meeting, in its entirety, can be viewed on the Tribal website, [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org), by clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

## Canoe Meetings

**Hello Community! We would like to invite you all to the Canoe meetings set for this year.**

**When: March 12,  
April 9, May 14, June 12**

**Who: Those people interested in participating in Canoe Journey**

**Time: 12-3pm (Lunch is provided)**

**Where: Grand Ronde Tribal Gym**

**Please contact Cristina Lara for more information  
503.879.2040**

## Grand Ronde Preschool is expanding

The Grand Ronde Preschool is expanding and is seeking Tribal families with children who were aged 3 or 4 before Sept. 1, 2015.

Call 503-879-2161 to request an application or contact Early Childhood Education Manager Angie Blackwell at 503-879-2287 for more information.

If you have an application on file, you do not need to re-apply. The classroom is scheduled to open in mid to late February, although the exact date is not yet known. ■

## Housing Board seeks community input

The Grand Ronde Housing Board is inviting Tribal members and Tribal housing residents to provide input to assist its members in carrying out its advisory role to the Housing Department and Tribal Council regarding policy guidance.

The Housing Board meets at 3 p.m. the third Thursday of each month in the Housing Department conference room, 28450 Tyee Road. Its chair is Matt Thomas.

For more information, contact the Housing Department at 503-879-2401. ■