

## Tribe concerned about administration's apparent changes regarding harbor

By Dean Rhodes  
*Smoke Signals editor*

An apparent change of course by the Trump administration regarding cleaning up toxic pollution along the Willamette River in Portland is of concern to the Grand Ronde Tribe as well.

Tribal Council member Kathleen George, who has a history of working on environmental conservation issues and sits on the state Department of Environmental Quality Commission, raised the issue at the Tuesday, Oct. 10, Legislative Action Committee meeting.

Trump's Environmental Protection Agency has been negotiating part of the plan with some of the companies responsible for cleanup, according to Richard Whitman, director of Oregon DEQ.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown made Whitman's letter public on Monday, Oct. 9, and urged the EPA "to honor its commitment to work collaboratively and transparently with the state, city and all responsible parties."

"Apparently, the state Department of Environmental Quality was not included and certainly the Tribes who have been working on this site for 20 years, years before the listing, were not included at all," George said. "While all the details appear not clear yet, it certainly seems to undercut the work that's been done and the agreements that have been made, and, in many cases, seems to take the work of cleaning up Portland Harbor ... seems to want to set that back."

On Jan. 6, two weeks before President Barack Obama left the White House, the EPA announced a final \$1.05 billion cleanup plan for a 10-

mile stretch of the Willamette that became polluted from a century of industrial use.

Whitman said a draft agreement between the EPA and some companies responsible for the cleanup calls for more sediment samples to be taken and for fish consumption rates to be updated. He said such tactics appear intended to call into question the underpinnings of the cleanup plan announced in January.

Furthermore, Whitman wrote that the EPA's failure to coordinate and consult violates a memorandum of understanding between federal, state and Tribal entities.

In an e-mail to Michelle Pirzadeh, acting regional EPA administrator in Seattle, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Nick Fish said they are deeply troubled that state, Tribal and local stakeholders have been excluded from an opportunity to review changes.

If true, it would not be the first time the Trump administration has rescinded an Obama-era environmental policy, having already pulled out of the Paris Climate Accord and starting to roll back the Clean Power Plan, which is designed to curb U.S. output of carbon pollution.

George said she is worried that decades of work by Tribal employees on helping to clean up the Portland Harbor superfund site will go for naught and asked that Tribal Council hold a work session on the issue.

"This was a very disappointing piece of news," she said. ■

*Includes information from The Associated Press.*

## Former Tribal Council member Wesley West walks on at 75

By Dean Rhodes  
*Smoke Signals editor*

Former Tribal Council member Wesley "Buddy" West walked on Saturday, Oct. 7, at the age of 75.

He was born on Oct. 1, 1942, and grew up in the eastern Oregon community of Odell. He graduated from Wy'East High School in 1960.

West was elected to Tribal Council in 2004 in his fourth attempt along with Angie Blackwell and Chris Mercier on a platform that there needed to be new voices in Tribal leadership.

"I believe I can make a positive difference for you on Tribal Council because I'm not a career politician," he wrote in his 2004 Tribal Council Candidate Statement. "I won't make empty promises or give special favors to certain families. ... I will spend the next three years with all of us in mind, guiding me in my daily actions."

West said he was descended from Chief Joseph Sangretta through his grandmother, Adeline Menard-Haller. His parents were Wesley West and Marion Haller-Davidson.

After graduating from high school, West served more than 20 years in the U.S. Army and was a member of the 101st Airborne Division. He served three tours



Wesley West

of duty in Vietnam, where he was wounded. He received numerous medals, including two Bronze Stars,

which are awarded for heroic achievement, heroic service, meritorious achievement or meritorious service in a combat zone.

He ran for re-election in 2007 and finished seventh in the voting. He also ran for Tribal Council five other times with his last campaign occurring in 2011.

West also ran for a seat in the Oregon Legislature representing the 23rd District in 2008, but was unsuccessful in the Democratic primary. He ran on a platform of tackling issues like crime, meth and drug addiction, and poverty in the district.

West attended the 20th anniversary celebration of the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center on Friday, Oct. 6, the day before he walked on and was recognized as a former Tribal Council member during the ceremony.

A full Walking On notice appears in this issue of *Smoke Signals* on page 17. ■

### Gift Making Workshop





All are welcome!!

Join us and help make giveaway gifts for Tribal Events hosted throughout the year.

This is a wonderful way to be a part of our tradition of giving, creating gifts filled with good thoughts and blessings for our fellow Tribal Families and guests.

Main events: Plank house Birthday Celebration, Restoration Celebration, Round Dance, Canoe Journey, Youth Powwow's, Elder's Honor day and Cultural Exchanges.

(the workshop is a year round event, future events will be advertised at a later date)

Dinner provided

October 19th

October 26th

November 9th

November 30th

December 14th

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

at the Tribal Community Center

Sponsored by the Cultural Education and Youth Prevention Programs

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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Making Day



FRIDAY, OCT. 20, 2017 9 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.

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