

Breakout sessions part of summit

HISTORY continued
from front page

who grew up here, to see where we have come from to what you see today is all from our past leaders' work. It is important to share these stories," Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George said to open the event.

Tribal Council members in attendance included Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Brenda Tuomi and Jack Giffen Jr.

Elder and past Tribal Council Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison, who also was a key figure in the Tribe's Restoration efforts in the early 1980s, gave the invocation. She thanked the "ancient ones" for their strength and wisdom that was passed down through the generations.

Cultural Resources Department staff members Bobby Mercier, Brian Krehbiel and Jordan Mercier led the Tribal drumming to open the event.

Over the course of the two-day summit, attendees participated in group lectures about land and water, traditional gatherings, historic preservation and chinuk wawa.

In the afternoons, breakout sessions were held in the Adult Education Building on topics that ranged from first foods to traditional games to repatriation of sacred objects.

At the end of the first day, a dinner was held at achaf-hammi, the Grand Ronde plankhouse.

"This event is an opportunity to share the work that goes on here and the partnerships that have been developed," Historic Preservation Manager Briece Edwards said.

Ceded Lands Manager Michael Karnosh's primary responsibility is protection of the Tribe's sovereign rights, interests and responsibilities over its ceded homelands.

"We are in the Willamette Basin, the area of the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855," Karnosh said on Wednesday as one of the first summit presenters. "There is a misconception that the area was an untouched, pristine wilderness before settlers came to the area, but in fact it was actively managed by different Tribes. ... These natural landscapes are where Tribal history is written and alive."

Karnosh discussed the three main habitats of the Willamette Valley, which are rivers and floodplains, riparian forests and open meadow.

"Rivers nowadays are considered a nuisance to get over to go to work or the store," Karnosh said. "But in traditional cultures, the river was the store. It wasn't a barrier. It was a part of everything. ... Rather than change the river to make life easier, the way of life was fitted to the way of the river."

Linguist Jedd Schrock, who has been active in the efforts to revitalize chinuk wawa, spoke about Kalapuyan stories, which he is working to catalog and include in a database, from a collection of notebooks dictated by Grand Ronde member Eustace Howard in Santiam. The notebooks were written



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder Connie Graves shows Harris Reibach how to prepare a piece of cattail to use for weaving as she teaches a weaving workshop held at Adult Education during the Grand Ronde History & Culture Summit on Wednesday, Nov. 1.

down by Melville Jacobs of West Linn in 1929, but weren't translated until 1935 by John Hudson and never published.

"What we end up with is a big corpus of Eustace Howard stuff, mostly traditional stories," Schrock said.

One re-occurring story is "Coyote in the land of the dead."

"What is cool is we take all of these Grand Ronde Elders who told this story and there is tremendous cohesion," Schrock said.

The second session on Wednesday included speakers discussing traditional burning practices, paleo landforms and Willamette Falls.

"Fire is often seen as the enemy," archeologist Kelly Derr said. "There are more fires now, and part of that is climate change, and part is removal of the people from the area. ... What is important to consider is that the people who burn have been removed, and humans are a part of those ecosystems. Removal can alter them."

Tribal Elder and artist Greg Archuleta and Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen discussed restoration of historic fishing rights on the Willamette River and continued Tribal connections to the Willamette Falls area, known as "Tumwater" in chinuk wawa.

"Professionally and personally, Willamette Falls is a very powerful place," Dirksen said. "There has been very significant progress on restoration of Tribal fishing rights at the Falls."

Archuleta discussed the treaties the U.S. government made with local Tribes, trying to remove them from the area, including the Willa-

mette Valley Treaty of 1855 that forcibly removed the Kalapuyans, Clackamas and Molalla to Grand Ronde.

"Today, we continue to, thanks to the efforts of Tribal Council, have ceremonial fishing at the Falls," Archuleta said. "I am very grateful to staff who helped make that a reality. ... During relocation, the Indian agents tried to keep (the people) from going to Willamette Falls, but that never became a reality. That connection remained with us."

During the Wednesday afternoon session, Washie Squetimkin, a local resident and Colville Tribal member, discussed his experiences traveling to powwows and the different styles of dance and history behind each. He helps teach a powwow class in the community.

"The powwow originated as a social gathering of people and general way of life that speaks to everyone," he said.

Tribal Cultural Adviser Bobby Mercier talked about the Round Dance, one of the many Tribal traditions that continues today.

"We see a lot of our young people getting into this style, so we want to teach them what it is about, the history and why we want to bring it here," he said.

While powwows typically occur in the summer months, Round Dance traditionally is held after harvest in the fall and continues through the winter.

"Every spring, we hold a Round Dance to honor those who have passed in the last year," Mercier said.

Tribal member and Cultural Education Coordinator Jordan Mercier talked about the plankhouse and

what its construction has meant to the community. He said that for years, plankhouses were discouraged or even outlawed.

"The fact that we have one today is a huge blessing," he said. "It is something we have to house our own spiritual practices and beliefs. Most valuable to me is the sharing that occurs in these houses. It connects us to other Tribes, and is there for us to gather as a community and share with each other. It is helping to heal a lot of things."

Tribal member and Youth Prevention Coordinator Cristina Lara talked about Canoe Journey, which teaches young Tribal members life skills and gives them an opportunity to bond with other community members.

"We like to offer these experiences to our young people so that they feel connected in a way they weren't before," Lara said.

Breakout sessions covered such topics as first foods, weaving, records research, language and landscapes, and indigenous experimental films.

During the records class, taught by Tribal Elder June Olson, attendees heard from Harrison about her struggles in obtaining important family artifacts.

"Don't give up," Harrison said. "You can get your things back. It took me 34 years, but I am proud of what we got back. As soon as I saw the artifacts, I started crying. It is not impossible, so I say don't give up."

Harrison said she believes a reason she is still on Earth is to continue to tell the story of her Tribe. "Our history needs to be told over and over, so it is told correctly and everyone will know," she said.

Thursday presentations focused on chinuk wawa and historic preservation, with breakout sessions about beading, traditional games, technology and repatriation.

The morning TED-like sessions discussed schooling in the early days of Grand Ronde, mound sites, stone tools, best museum practices, the West Coast Ocean Partnership and Tribal language immersion programs.

Chinuk Language Program Manager Ali Holsclaw discussed the weekly language lessons and after-school programs.

"It's just another way for us to get the language out there," she said. "It is also offered at Willamina High School as an elective and for college credit."

Additionally, there are adult classes held at Lane Community College and in Grand Ronde and at the Tribe's Portland office.

"We want to develop the language

See HISTORY
continued on page 13