

General Council briefed on Natural Resources efforts

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

EUGENE — Tribal Natural Resources crews have planted more than 100,000 seedlings on the Reservation so far in 2018, outpacing the department’s average seedling planting of 64,000 annually, Silviculture and Fire Protection Manager Colby Drake said at the Sunday, April 8, General Council meeting held in the Many Nations Longhouse at the University of Oregon.

“We’re getting a lot of good stuff put into the ground,” Drake said about the Tribe’s reforestation efforts.

Drake joined Natural Resources Department Manager Michael Wilson in giving a 34-minute presentation to Tribal members who packed the longhouse.

Wilson started the presentation with an overview of Willamette Falls and Tribal collection of Pacific lamprey and dip-netting for salmon at the site in Oregon City.

“A very important place,” Wilson said. “Very important in our past, in our culture. It’s important to us today and it will be important in the future. ... It’s a beautiful place.”

Wilson said water quality in the Willamette River is important as well because whatever pollutants are placed in the river in the Eugene area will eventually make their way downstream to the falls.

“Natural Resources is taking the lead in promoting water quality and working with a lot of different agencies, making sure that water stays healthy and continues to get better,” Wilson said.

Wilson also discussed Tribal efforts to understand the life cycle



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Natural Resources Department Manager Michael Wilson discusses his department’s efforts on the Reservation and in the ceded lands during the Sunday, April 8, General Council meeting held in the Many Nations Longhouse on the University of Oregon campus in Eugene.

of the Pacific lamprey, work on keeping Reservation lands healthy and how that benefits a variety of wildlife, and the Tribe’s efforts to grow Native plants, such as camas.

Drake, who said that he is learning that forestry “is a very slow process,” discussed Tribal efforts to re-plant its Reservation lands.

“These 70-year rotations make it difficult to make a quick change on something,” he said. “Our mission statement is to promote the tradition of being good stewards to all natural resources, not just the forest or the Reservation, by accomplishing this by protecting and maintaining our forest health and maintaining the productivity for future uses.”

Drake discussed the cycle of growing trees, which starts with using

fire to clear the land. All Tribal burn plans on the Reservation must be pre-approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and on fee lands arranged in consultation with the Oregon Department of Forestry to control smoke pollution.

Drake said the Tribe primarily – 94 percent – plants Douglas fir on the Reservation because it is merchantable timber, as well as western red cedar in the lowland areas and hemlock in the shade areas to maintain diversity.

Drake also briefed the membership on the Wildland Fire program that is self-sufficient and earns the Tribe approximately \$200,000 annually.

Wilson and Drake fielded seven questions and comments from the audience after their presentation.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy complimented the Natural Resources Department for using traditional Tribal practices to care for the ceded lands in western Oregon.

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George and Eric Bernando performed the cultural drumming and singing to open the meeting and Kennedy asked everyone in atten-

dance to introduce themselves so that Tribal members could connect with family.

In addition, Natural Resources staff members Torey Wakeland and Michele Volz supervised a fish distribution.

Jessica Volpe, Matthew Wilkinson and Levina Mankajon won the \$100 door prizes and Mya George, Elder Barbara Feehan, Kiera Ching, Les Houck and Tribal spouse Bob Chapman won the \$50 door prizes. Two necklaces made by Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George also were raffled off.

The next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, May 6, in the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde.

Following a lunch provided by Baja Fresh and a brief Other Business session, which included former Tribal Council member Andy Jenness and Tribal Elder Monty Parazoo thanking Tribal Council for visiting the Eugene area, the meeting was adjourned and about 30 Tribal members participated in a Community Input meeting that solicited ideas for possible advisory vote issues to be placed on the September Tribal Council ballot.

Tribal General Manager David Fullerton and Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez facilitated the meeting. There also will be another Community Input meeting regarding possible advisory vote topics after the May 6 General Council meeting.

The entire meeting can be viewed on the Tribal website at www.grandronde.org by clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

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If you have questions about the temporary pool, please come by the office or call 503-879-2109

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YOUTH COUNCIL ACTIVITY DAY

SUNDAY, **APRIL 22** 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Youth Education Building

Door Prizes
Snacks

Scavenger hunt – will be outside
Topic: Learn about our traditional plants

Open to all youth in grades 6-12th

For more information please contact Shannon Simi at 503-879-2301 or Shannon.simi@grandronde.org

For future Youth Council Meetings & Events please visit our Facebook page @CTGRYouthCouncil

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