

Tribal Canoe Family to begin annual journey

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

The Grand Ronde Canoe Family and Tribal support staff are set to begin the annual Canoe Journey when they leave Grand Ronde on Thursday, July 19, for St. Helens on the shores of the Columbia River.

Fifty Canoe Family members will practice paddling in the Columbia River for three days to become adept at navigating before they begin the miles of paddling starting from Samish, Wash., and ending in Puyallup, Wash. Stops are scheduled to occur at Swinomish, Tulalip, Suquamish and Muckleshoot.

This year's Canoe Journey is hosted by the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and has the theme "Honoring Our Medicine."

Landing Day is Saturday, July 28. Protocol is set to begin Sunday, July 29, and run through Saturday, Aug. 4, and attracts thousands. It includes singing, dancing, sharing stories and food. The order of protocol is the Tribe that travels the farthest to attend goes first.

According to the website, paddletopuyallup.org, 99 canoes are registered for the event, representing approximately 68 Tribes, First Nations and interTribal groups from all over the Northwest.

Grand Ronde's Canoe Family first participated in the 2005 Canoe Journey, which landed on Hollywood Beach in Port Angeles, Wash.

The Canoe Journey began in 1989 with the "Paddle to Seattle," which was held in conjunction with Washington's 100th anniversary of statehood. That year, the state and indigenous governments signed the Centennial Accord, recognizing indigenous sovereignty. Fifteen Tribes and First Nations participated in the Paddle to Seattle.

Today, upwards of 100 canoes representing as many as 90 U.S. Tribes and Canadian First Nations, and approximately 12,000 people participate in the annual journey, paddling canoes, operating support boats, acting as ground crew, singing, dancing and sharing their cultures and traditions.

Canoe Journey was designed as a family-friendly event to familiarize northwest Tribes with the trade routes used by their ancestors and to promote a healthy lifestyle free of substance abuse. ■



File photo by Teal Reibach

The Grand Ronde Canoe Family arrive to Campbell River, British Columbia, for Landing Day of the 2017 Canoe Journey last August. The Canoe Family will depart for the 2018 Canoe Journey "Paddle to Puyallup" on Thursday, July 19.

Elder Honor Day

The 2018 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Elder Honor Day was held in the Event Center at Spirit Mountain Casino on Monday, July 9. Almost 500 people, representing 37 Tribes, attended the annual event that included breakfast and lunch, recognition of veterans, drumming, singing and dancing by the Grand Ronde Canoe Family and a performance by Paradise of Samoa Polynesian dance troupe from Salem.




Photos by Michelle Alaimo

The Paradise of Samoa Polynesian dance troupe performs during the 2018 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Elder Honor Day.



Tribal Elder Julie Little, middle, delivers a man basket to Ned Tillequots Jr. (Yakama) after he won it during the 2018 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Elder Honor Day.



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