

Tribe helping name Marys Peak creeks

By Danielle Frost
Smoke Signals staff writer

CORVALLIS — Since time immemorial, Marys Peak in Corvallis has been described as a “place of refuge” for the Kalapuya people, who climbed it for safety to escape the floods that shaped the Columbia River Gorge.

Now, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, which includes the Kalapuya, will have input on naming several of the creeks on the east-facing slope of Marys Peak in an effort to help visitors recognize the mountain’s history by including indigenous names.

Earlier this year, David Eckert, a member of the Marys Peak Alliance, reached out to Oregon State University professor Natchee Barnd, a member of the Ojibwe Tribe, for help with including area Tribes that had ties to the mountain into the naming process.

Grand Ronde Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson had worked with Barnd on a lecture series this past fall and enjoyed their partnership, so when he contacted him about potential names in the Rock Creek tributary, Harrelson was happy to help.

“Marys Peak is one of our spirit mountains,” Harrelson said. “We took the protagonists from mythological stories ... of early oral histories for the proposed names. We will be meeting with the Oregon Geographic Names Board in the coming months. It is a rather lengthy process.”

Other groups involved in the naming process include the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Oregon State University Native American Longhouse, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, city of Corvallis, Starker Forests, Oregon State University and the Marys Peak Alliance.

The names Grand Ronde contributed include Ahntkwahkwah “The Frog,” Ahmoolint “The Wolf,” Ahsney “The Coyote,” Ahshahyum “The Grizzly” and Ahnhoots “The Panther.” ■



David Harrelson

Harp retires



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Part-Time College Program Coordinator John Harp shakes hands with Tribal Employment & Employee Relations Manager Sarah Harvey during his retirement party held in the Tribe’s Adult Education building on Thursday, Aug. 2. Harp has worked for the Tribe in this position for 16 years and his last day was Monday, Aug. 6.

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