

# DEQ OKs agreement

**BLUE HERON continued from front page**

to the Tribe.

“This is a historic day for the Grand Ronde Tribe and our people,” said Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy in a press release. “Since 1855, the government has worked to disconnect our people from our homelands. Today, we’re reclaiming a piece of those lands and resurrecting our role as caretakers to Willamette Falls – a responsibility left to us by our ancestors.”

The site was once home to the Charcowah village of the Clowewalla (Willamette band of Tumwaters) and the Kosh-huk-shix village of Clackamas people, who were both forcibly removed from Willamette Falls and relocated to the Grand Ronde Reservation in the 1850s.

The purchase is a continuation the Tribe’s reconnection with the falls. In October 2018, the Tribe built a removable platform at the falls, which allows Tribal members to traditionally fish using dipnets. Tribal fishermen returned to the falls in May and caught the first fish from the platform.

Tribal members also return to the falls annually to harvest by hand Pacific lamprey, a traditional first food.

The Grand Ronde Tribe has been working with various local, regional and state partners throughout the sale process to shape the future of the property, said Deputy Press Secretary Sara Thompson in a press release.

The Tribe has worked with regional government Metro and the Willamette Falls Trust on the Willamette Falls Riverwalk Project and established a cleanup plan with the



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

**The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde completed its \$15.25 million purchase of the 23-acre Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City on Thursday, Aug. 15. It is the first time in 164 years that the Tribe has officially owned land near Willamette Falls.**

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

On Wednesday, Aug. 21, the Tribal Canoe Family paddled štankiya on the Willamette River near the falls and were joined by Gov. Kate Brown to commemorate the purchase of the property.

Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez said that the Tribe has initially committed \$3 million to clean up the property, which has been used for numerous industrial purposes since the 19th century and includes more than 50 buildings.

The Tribe placed the property under a purchase and sale agreement in May and the Aug. 15 closing concludes a three-month purchase and due diligence process.

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The state Department of Environmental Quality signed a prospec-

tive purchaser agreement with the Grand Ronde Tribe in early August regarding the Blue Heron Paper Mill site after holding a public meeting in mid-July at the Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City.

A prospective purchaser agreement releases the Grand Ronde Tribe from liability regarding pre-acquisition hazardous substance releases at or from the property.

The July 17 public meeting was attended by approximately 30 people with about half of the audience being either Department of Environmental Quality or Tribal government staff members. Three public and two written comments were accepted at and after the meeting.

Mark Pugh, project manager with the Department of Environmental Quality, said environmental concerns at the site range from asbestos and lead-based paints in the buildings to mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls in the soil. However, Pugh said, intermittent flooding of the property over the years has kept soil contamination lower than one might expect.

According to a Scope of Work released by DEQ on July 1, the Tribe “intends to conduct investigation and remediation utilizing cleanup standards most applicable to the type of development, and in a phased approach over the course of the property’s future redevelopment and reuse.”

High priority remedial actions include cleaning up a waste pile beneath a bleach plant, two catch basins with tailrace sediment and leaking underground storage tanks.

Now that the consent order with DEQ has been signed, the Tribe has 60 days to prepare an initial summary report, 90 days to begin evaluation and implementation of site stabilization efforts, a year to create an “overarching” work plan, 18 months to start work on the high priority remedial actions and two years to start working on other potential remedial actions.

Low priority items will be remediated as redevelopment of the property occurs.

The order of consent lists Tribal Engineering and Public Works Manager Jesse White as the project manager. ■



## Free Playgroup in Grand Ronde!



**When:** First Thursday of each month 10:00 am-11:30 am  
**Where:** CTGR – Community Service Center 9615 Grand Ronde Road Grand Ronde, OR 97347  
**Who:** Parents and caregivers of children under 5 years.  
**Why:** Come to play, have a snack and have fun!




# REWARD

**offered for information leading to the resolution of this case:**

**Up to \$5,000** is being offered for information that leads to solving a missing person case. Heather Cameron was last seen Aug. 18, 2012, with Daniel Lusby, heading to Keswick Dam, a remote area approx. 20 minutes outside Redding, Calif. in Shasta County. She placed multiple calls to 911 from that area from Lusby’s cell phone and has not been heard from since.



**Call or text the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department tip line with any information: 541-921-2927**

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department Reward Policy sets forth procedures for reward availability, eligibility, and payments. Contact the police department for more information or to obtain a copy of the policy.



To listen to the podcast regarding Heather Cameron go to [www.spreaker.com](http://www.spreaker.com) and then search for “Smoke Signals podcasts.”