

‘We are still here, still resilient’

**OUTREACH continued
from front page**

Rogue River Tribes that ceded a large swath of southern Oregon that now includes Medford to the federal government and the 2011 memorandum of understanding with the Bureau of Land Management and Nature Conservancy regarding a management plan for the Table Rocks area north of Medford. Table Rocks was the site of a temporary reservation that held Tribal members before they were force-marched north to the Grand Ronde Reservation in February 1856.

Tribal Council member Jack Giffen Jr., who has been a proponent of the Tribe continuing and increasing its outreach in the southern part of the state, said that he was happy with this year’s attendance, which totaled 11 not counting Tribal Council members and Tribal staff.

“It’s just a step in the process in building relationships by coming down,” Giffen said after the 2.5-hour session. “Each time I come down, I see the same faces and some new faces. To me, that’s telling us that we’re making progress and building relationships with other people rather than just the BLM and certain agencies.”

The event opened with Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George, Tribal Historic Preservation Office Manager Briece Edwards and Cultural Consultant and Tribal Elder Greg Archuleta drumming and singing. George then gave the invocation.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy, who is a direct descendant from two Rogue River Treaty signers, welcomed Tribal guests.

“We always look for people to partner with, who have the same heart, the same gift of life so that we can help one another because we are all here together and we’re going to make this a better place,” she said.

Kennedy said the Rogue River Tribes signed two treaties with the federal government in 1853 and ’54



Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tribal Council member Jack Giffen Jr. passes out gifts to Lomakatsi Restoration Project Tribal Partnership Manager Belinda Brown, left, and Restoration Project intern Laliyah Watah at the end of the eighth annual Coffee & Conversation held in Medford on Friday, Sept. 20. The event commemorates the 1853 treaty signing at Table Rocks and the 2011 signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Bureau of Land Management and The Nature Conservancy regarding management of the Table Rocks area north of Medford.



Tribal Historic Preservation Office Manager Briece Edwards, right, receives help from Cultural Consultant and Tribal Elder Greg Archuleta during a presentation at the eighth annual Coffee & Conversation held in Medford on Friday, Sept. 20.

to preserve the people.

“We are still here, still resilient,” Kennedy said. “We still continue to love the land and will continue to care about what happens here. ... We have to put our minds, hearts and science together and learn how to preserve this area in a better way.”

Edwards and Archuleta briefed attendees on southern Oregon Tribal places names that survive in print today and how those names indicate a “preponderance of connection.”

“This is a multi-national place,” Edwards said, explaining that Tribal names were not nouns, but action verbs for a certain place used for a gathering, hunting, fishing or other cultural activity.

“When understanding these places and the names, then we can under-

the general population to agree that we want our water and our lands cleaned up to the standards before the Industrial Revolution, we’re just spinning our wheels. ... We don’t want today’s standards. We want where it was 150 years ago.”

George was hopeful, saying that current children and grandchildren will be the ones to make a true difference in healing the Earth.

“The foundation of what’s being done today, they will finish,” he said.

Kennedy added that Native peoples are always in the forefront of opening the eyes of the powers that be and raising environmental awareness of all Oregonians.

“I believe it goes back to legends that I heard growing up and those legends were kind of warning signs,” Kennedy said. “When we get so misbehaving toward our sustainer, which is the Earth, and we’re out of control, then these things (natural disasters) are to cleanse it and not to punish us as people.”

“The challenge for every one of us is what we can do to raise awareness of all Oregonians because I do believe they want to do what is right, but they don’t know the situation we are in.”

Ellie Cosgrove, program coordinator of the Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou Monument, said she is surprised that today’s youth are not as interested in visiting the wilderness and getting dirty.

“Being outside is not something you need to be afraid of,” Cosgrove said. “The only way to have appreciation is to spend time out there.”

Molly Allen, environmental education specialist with the Bureau of Land Management, said she has led hikes for approximately 75 youth up Lower Table Rock as part of her job to reconnect youth with the land.

Tribal staff who attended also included Tribal Attorney Rob Greene and Cultural Resources Department archaeologist Cheryl Pouley.

NonTribal staff who attended included Bureau of Land Management employees Molly Allen, Teresa Trulock, Jen Sigler and Elizabeth Burghard, Nature Conservancy representative Molly Morison, Lomakatsi employees and Pit River Tribal members Belinda Brown and Laliyah Watah, and Friends of the Cascade-Siskiyou Monument representatives Stasie Maxwell, Shannon Browne and Ellie Cosgrove.

After the event concluded, the Tribe presented gift baskets to attendees that included a Grand Ronde logo coffee cup, chocolates and reusable grocery bags.

Unlike in previous years, a cultural encampment was not held nearby along the shores of the Rogue River or in the foothills of the Table Rocks. However, Greene, Archuleta and Tribal member Chris Rempel hiked to the top of Lower Table Rock in the afternoon. ■

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stand how this landscape was working and how this place here actually connects with that place over there,” Edwards said.

Archuleta also briefly discussed Tribal oral histories that have been passed down through the ages from the Rogue River and Chasta peoples.

“We do have strong connections to here,” he said about the histories.

After the formal presentation, a roundtable discussion centered on the Tribal practices that help the environment, such as controlled burns to reduce fuel levels in forestland, and how to encourage tech-oriented youth to reconnect with the land and develop a sense of place and wonder.

Giffen said he hopes the Tribe and organizations represented at the Coffee & Conversation event will work to return to the water and air conditions that existed before the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century.

“We have to educate the entire state population,” Giffen said. “Today, I can’t go up into any forest and drink out of a creek. That’s not the standard I want to see. Until we get



Friends of Cascades-Siskiyou National Monument Program Coordinator Ellie Cosgrove makes a point about the importance of children making a connection with the outdoors as Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Board member Stasie Maxwell, left, and Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George look on during the eighth annual Coffee & Conversation.