



APRIL 1, 2022

SMOKE SIGNALS

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AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE · SMOKE SIGNALS.ORG

Tribe leaves Willamette Falls Legacy Project

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde will no longer participate in discussions regarding the Willamette Falls Legacy Project, according to a March 17 letter from Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy that was sent to legacy partners.

The Legacy Project is a partnership between Oregon City, Clackamas County, regional gov-

ernment Metro and the state of Oregon that has been working since 2011 to open public access to Willamette Falls, including a public riverwalk alongside the Willamette River.

The Grand Ronde Tribe became a major player in the Legacy Project when it purchased the former Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City in August 2019.

“As the owners of the 23-acre Blue Heron property at Willamette Falls, we have already

made significant progress toward bringing new life and public access to the site,” Kennedy said in her letter. “We have released our vision for the project, which centers around a commitment to public access, environmental and cultural restoration, and thoughtful economic development. We have started demolition, embarked

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Tribe intensifies push to overturn consent decree

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is intensifying its push to overturn the 1980s consent decree that limits Tribal members’ ability to hunt and fish within their ancestral homelands.

In November, Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy published an op-ed in *The Oregonian* in which she called the consent decree “unjust.”

On the legislative front, Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate on Nov. 1, 2021, that would allow the Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes to renegotiate their consent decrees with the state of Oregon. An identical bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Oregon Rep. Kurt Schrader and co-sponsored by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici on Dec. 23, 2021.

Kennedy testified in support of Merkley’s bill on Feb. 16 before the Senate’s Indian Affairs Committee and also expressed her support for a similar bill affecting the Siletz Tribe. The House bill still awaits a hearing.

Recently, the Tribe posted three three-minute videos on its governmental website at www.grandronde.org featuring Communications Director Sara Thompson, former Tribal Council Chair Reyn Leno and Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier discussing the restrictive consent decree and how it affects Tribal members. The videos can be viewed by clicking on the History & Culture tab and then Removing the Consent Decree.

All of this, however, begs the question for the average Grand Ronde Tribal member: What is the

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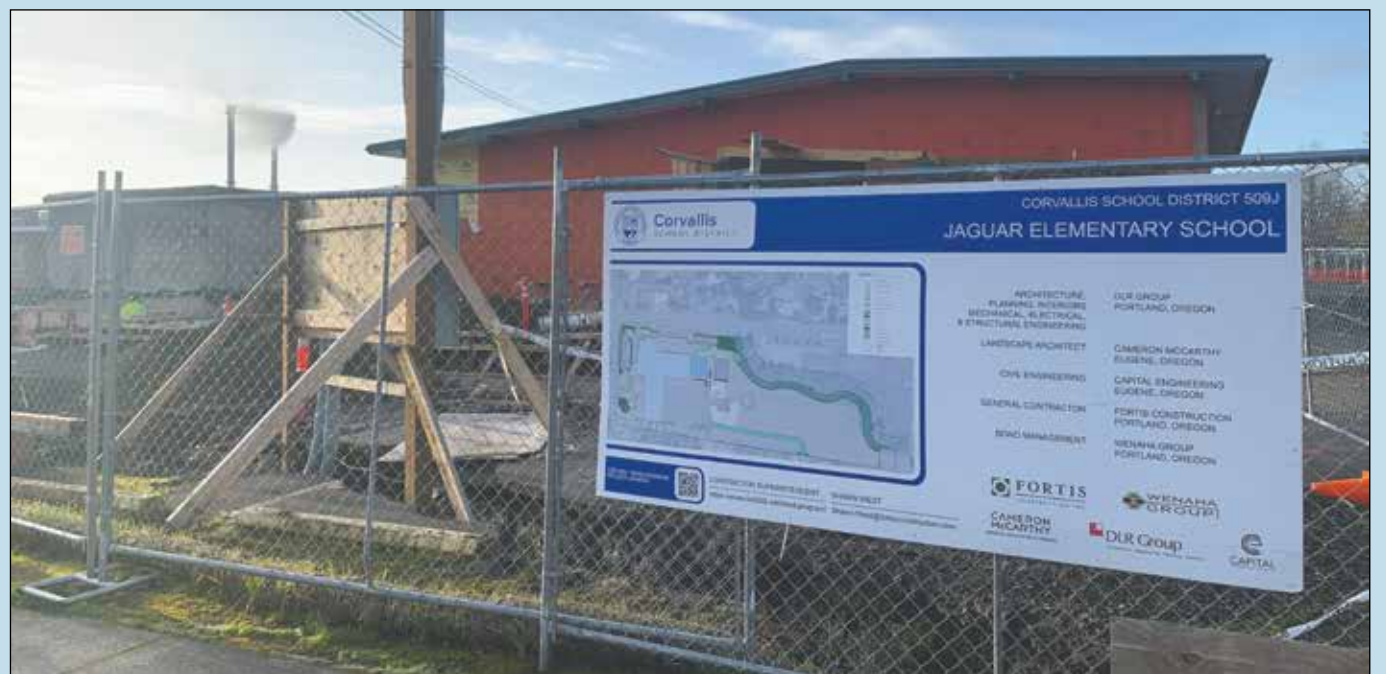


Photo by Kamiah Koch

The Corvallis School District will honor Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Kathryn Jones Harrison during a ceremony to be held 11:30 a.m. Thursday, April 14. Kathryn Jones Harrison Elementary School, located at 1825 N.W. 27th St., was renamed for the 2021-22 school year and honors one of the most revered figures in the Grand Ronde Restoration effort.

Corvallis School District to honor Harrison on April 14

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

CORVALLIS — The Corvallis School District will honor Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Kathryn Jones Harrison during a ceremony to be held 11:30 a.m. Thursday, April 14.

Kathryn Jones Harrison Elementary School, 1825 N.W. 27th St., was renamed for the 2021-22 school year and honors one of the most revered figures in the Grand Ronde Restoration effort and a Grand Ronde Tribal Council member for 17 years.

Harrison, 98, is also the Tribe’s eldest Elder and lives

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Map created by Samuel Briggs III