

Kennedy testifies before House regarding Thompson Strip issue

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy returned virtually to the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday, April 27, once again seeking to correct an error made in a 1994 piece of legislation that adversely affected the Grand Ronde Reservation Act.

The new legislation would allow the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to address future survey errors discovered on its original Reservation with the federal government.

Kennedy testified before the House Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples seeking to correct the mistake.

The Bureau of Land Management discovered a survey error on the Grand Ronde Reservation that dates back to 1871. The error



Cheryle A. Kennedy

was discovered after passage of the Grand Ronde Reservation Act in 1988 that returned 9,811 acres to the Tribe.

Surveyor David Thompson had incorrectly surveyed the eastern boundary of the Reservation, missing 84 acres that should have been included. The land also was excluded from a 1904 sale of unallotted lands within the Reservation and Grand Ronde was not compensated for it.

Until the error was discovered, the Bureau of Land Management treated the land as Oregon and California Railroad Grant Lands and permitted private companies

to harvest timber on the acreage.

After being informed of the survey error, the Grand Ronde Tribe determined the parcel, called the Thompson Strip, was unmanageable because of narrow boundaries and divided ownership interests. The Tribe agreed to accept a 240-acre parcel of grant lands adjacent to the Grand Ronde Reservation in exchange and surrender its claims to the Thompson Strip.

However, the Department of the Interior in 1994 “developed broad language that relinquished any future claims of this type within the state of Oregon” by the Grand Ronde Tribe.

“In agreeing to this land exchange in 1994, the intent of the parties was for Grand Ronde to relinquish its rights only to the Thompson Strip,” Kennedy previously testified. “There was no intention by BLM or BIA officials involved in this land swap to extinguish the Tribe’s land claim rights for the entire state of Oregon.”

Kennedy said the Tribe discovered the issue while working on a different amendment to the Reser-

vation Act.

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley re-introduced Senate Bill 559 on March 3, 2021. It would replace the phrase “state of Oregon” with the phrase “84 acres known as the Thompson Strip” in the Grand Ronde Reservation Act.

The re-introduced legislation passed the Senate on May 26, 2021, and was referred to the House on Feb. 7, 2022.

Kennedy testified in support of a similar bill in February 2020, but it did not clear both houses of Congress and get signed by then-President Donald Trump before adjournment of the 116th Congress.

“We want to be proactive about ensuring the Tribe has the right to be compensated should another problem arise,” Kennedy said. “As we acquire lands, we sometimes find survey inconsistencies when title searches are concluded.”

Kennedy added that the legislation would not be used to facilitate Indian gaming or affect the treaty rights of any other Tribe in Oregon. ■

SSI recipients eligible for Internet service aid

Any household with an individual receiving Supplemental Security Income is eligible to receive discounted Internet service through the Affordable Connectivity Program recently launched by the Federal Communications Commission.

Social Security does not count Affordable Connectivity Program assistance as income or a resource for SSI purposes.

The program provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward Internet service for eligible households and \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

Eligible households also can receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 toward purchasing a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers.

To enroll in the Connectivity Program, go to www.fcc.gov/asp for more information. ■

FISH AND WILDLIFE ORDINANCE OPEN FOR COMMENT

Tribal Council is considering amendments to the Fish and Wildlife Ordinance. The proposed amendments were given a First Reading at the April 6, 2022, Tribal Council meeting.

The Fish and Wildlife Ordinance has not been updated since 2015. The proposed amendments reflect updates to the ceremonial hunting and fishing program, set limits on the number of transfer tags that are available to Tribal members in order to prevent abuse of the transfer system, provide for a mentored youth hunting program, impose civil penalties to be assessed in Tribal Court for violations of the ordinance, make other programmatic changes, and may include other minor and technical changes.

Tribal Council invites comments on the proposed amendments to the Fish and Wildlife Ordinance. For a copy of the proposed amendments, please contact the Tribal Attorney’s Office at 503-879-4664. Please send your comments to the Tribal Attorney’s Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR, 97347, or by e-mail to legal@grandronde.org.

Comments must be received by May 31, 2022. ■

2022 MARCELLUS NORWEST MEMORIAL VETERANS POWWOW



Uyxat Powwow Grounds
9600 Highway 22 (Hebo Road),
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Friday, July 8

- Royalty Pageant at 11 A.M.
- Coronation at 5 P.M.
- Grand Entry at 7 P.M.

Saturday, July 9

- Grand Entry at 1 P.M.
- Grand Entry at 7 P.M.

Sunday, July 10

- Grand Entry at Noon

Vendor Contact:

Molly Leno, 503-983-6790
Lenomolly1@gmail.com

Host Drum: Indian Hill

Emcee: Nick Sixkiller
Arena Director: Anthony Quenelle

- Special: Mens Traditional 18+
- 1st place: \$400 • 2nd place: \$300
 - 3rd place: \$200 • 4th place: \$100

Raffle Prizes:

- Pop Tents • Lawn Chairs • Wagons • Coolers

Thank you for respecting Grand Ronde’s Tribal community and our culture by not displaying gang affiliation or by bringing alcohol or weapons to this event.

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

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Applications available on YEP & YC, FB & IG

MUST BE IN GRADES 6-12

Grand Ronde Youth Empowerment & Prevention
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503.879.2034
 CTGRyouthcouncil