

Salinas introduces bill to fix Thompson strip mistake

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – New Oregon Congresswoman Andrea Salinas introduced her first piece of legislation on Wednesday, March 22, to fix a mistake written into the Grand Ronde Reservation Act in 1994.

The Bureau of Land Management discovered a survey error on the Grand Ronde Reservation that dated back to 1871. The error 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, leaving 84 acres unsurveyed. 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, BLM 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 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,” Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy said during congressional testimony in

2020. “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.”

Salinas’ bill is co-sponsored by Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, and Reps. Suzanne Bonamici, Earl Blumenauer, Val Hoyle and Lori Chavez-DeRemer.

“The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community were the original stewards of Oregon’s land and natural resources – and like so many other Indigenous peoples, they have faced tremendous injustices at the hands of the federal government,” Salinas said. “I’ve always believed that while we are not responsible for the ills of the past, we are responsible for remedying them today. My amendment to the Grand Ronde Reservation Act aligns with that important pursuit and I thank Sen. Merkley as well as the many partners and stakeholders who contributed to this process.”

“Hayu masi to Sen. Merkley and to Rep. Salinas, who made this legislation one of her first priorities,” Kennedy said. “Not only did the United States make errors surveying Grand Ronde lands, but it then took away Grand Ronde’s ability to be compensated for the errors. That’s not right. It’s great to know our representatives understand the problem and are ready to help correct the injustice.”

The bill, if signed into law, would allow the Grand Ronde Tribe to pursue future fixes if other errors are found.

In the House, the bill has been referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in the Senate, it was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

A similar bill introduced by Bonamici and Merkley in the previous Congress did not pass before the end of the congressional term. ■

smok signəlz offering fast e-mail subscription

Want to be one of the first Tribal members to receive *smok signəlz*?

Want to receive the Tribal publication on your computer instead of waiting for it to arrive in the mail?

Want to get up-to-date and in-the-know about the Grand Ronde Tribe before anyone else?

Well, here’s your opportunity.

In an effort to be more efficient and reduce printing and postage costs, *smok signəlz* electronic subscribers receive a PDF (portable document format) version sent to them instead of a newsprint version sent via the mail. All you need on your computer is Adobe Acrobat or another program that can read a PDF and you’re set.

Why would you want to do that? The PDF version is available before the newspaper is sent to our printing contractor in Salem. You can read the paper on your computer or print out a copy of individual pages yourself. And you will receive Tribal news much faster than the current standard mailing utilized by the Tribe.

If you would like to receive an e-mailed PDF version of *smok signəlz* and stop receiving a mailed newsprint version, send your e-mail to esubscription@grandronde.org. Stopping mailed delivery of the newspaper will not affect other Tribal mail. ■

Clothes Closet open

The Clothes Closet is open from 9 a.m. to noon Friday on the Tribal campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive.

The Clothes Closet accepts clothing, small appliances and pieces of furniture, electronics and household goods that are clean and in good condition. It does not accept books, large TVs or furniture, but there is a community board where people can post those items.

For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565. ■



2023-2024



NATIVE SCHOLARSHIPS


- AIEF UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**
 - Scholarship for Native American students attending a 2 or 4-year college/university full-time. The student or one parent must be an enrolled member to be eligible.
 - Deadline: April 4, 2023
 - <https://pwnaonline.thinkific.com/>
- AISES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**
 - Scholarships for enrolled and descendant Native American students who are interested in a career in the STEM industry (Nursing, Engineering, Computer Science, etc.)
 - Deadline: May 31, 2023
 - www.aises.org/students/scholarships
- AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND**
 - Applicants must be enrolled members, or the direct descendant of a federally recognized tribe. Students must have a minimum 2.00 GPA and be full-time.
 - Deadline: May 31, 2023
 - www.collegefund.org/students/scholarships/
- AMERICAN INDIAN SERVICES**
 - The AIS Scholarship program is to help undergraduate Native American students with financial expenses. Open to direct descendants.
 - Deadline: Varies
 - www.americanindianservices.org/scholarships

Higher Education is able to review and provide feedback on scholarship application materials.

Contact us:
 Email: highereducation@grandronde.org
 Phone: 503-879-2275



TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE 

Contact us at (503) 879-1484 or via e-mail at CTGRtribalVSO@GrandRonde.Org

Veterans!
You may not need it now, but you could in the future.

As a veteran who has served your country, you deserve to apply for these benefits and resources.

You may think another veteran needs it more than you or you are taking resources from another veteran, but you are not.

You may not want benefits, but having them can benefit your spouse and your family.

Contact the Tribal Veterans Service Office to ask questions, find out more information or file for a service-connected disability today!