

Tribe harvests 15 salmon limit in one day

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

OREGON CITY – Tribal members went to the site of the removable Tribal fishing platform at Willamette Falls on Tuesday, May 16, but were unable to erect the platform because water flows were too high and dangerous.

However, Tribal fishermen fished from the rocks instead and caught the Tribe’s full allotment of 15 salmon.

“Our fishing season ended in less than two hours,” Tribal Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen said.

The Grand Ronde Tribe is allowed to catch 15 hatchery grown Chinook salmon or summer steelhead for ceremonial purposes per Oregon Department of State Lands rules. The removable platform has been erected since October 2018 and was not used in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fishers and construction crew included Andrew Freeman, Bobby Mercier, Daniel Mooney and Nick Kimsey while Leo Ayala, Kyle Rowe, Kyle McLaughlin and Brandon Weems provided staff and safety support.

Shore help was provided by Kim



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Cultural Education Specialist Chris Rempel, left, and Cultural Policy Analyst Greg Archuleta separate the flesh of a salmon during the First Fish Ceremony held Monday, May 22, near the fish weir on Agency Creek. About 50 Tribal members and employees attended the event and partook of the salmon that were caught the week before at Willamette Falls. The ceremony continues Tribal peoples’ promise to the salmon to remember and honor them, and thank them for providing sustenance in the past, present and into the future.

D’Aquila, Lindsay McClary and Matt Zimbrick, and Terry Kowing, Nick LaBonte, Sara Thompson, Jade Unger, Lisa Archuleta, Jordan Mercier, Brian Krehbiel, Colby

Drake and Brad Leno maintained their swift water rescue certifications.

“All of them continually show selfless dedication to the cause. I

am sincerely humbled and grateful for the chance to be around this amazing group of folks,” Dirksen said in an e-mail sent to Tribal Council.

On Monday, May 22, Tribal members held a First Fish Ceremony near the fish weir on Agency Creek.

Led by Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier and other Cultural Resources Department staff, three of the salmon were cooked on stakes next to a wood fire. A drum including Greg Archuleta, Nick Atanacio, Bobby Mercier, Tribal Council member Jon A. George, David Harrelson, Jordan Mercier, Nakoa Mercier and Brian Krehbiel opened the ceremony.

Bobby Mercier said the ceremony continues the pact Tribal ancestors made with the salmon, who offered themselves up for sustenance of Tribal members if they vowed to remember and honor the salmon annually with stories, songs and ceremonies.

About 50 people attended the event, sampling the salmon after drinking a cup of water. At the end of the ceremony, Nakoa Mercier returned the salmon carcasses, bones and uneaten flesh to Agency Creek. ■

Gas discount at Grand Ronde Station

Grand Ronde Tribal members, as well as Tribal and Spirit Mountain Casino employees, can receive a 30-cent per gallon discount on gasoline at the Tribally owned Grand Ronde Station convenience store.

There are, however, a few rules. Tribal members and employees must go inside and show either their enrollment card or employee identification card to receive the discount. ■

Tribal Council nominations will be held on June 25

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“Serving on Tribal Council has been a privilege and honor,” Langley said in an e-mail to *Smoke Signals*. “I made the decision to run for office over seven years ago and it has been a rewarding while very challenging job. While every candidate has their own ideas and passions, I promised to be objective in my decision making, transparent in my decisions and available to the members. My body of work demonstrates that I have.

“The last six years I have always showed up for the most difficult conversations and decisions. Often, the easiest course is to sidestep these things. After all, each decision we make has the potential to make folks unhappy. Sometimes a single decision leads to folks deciding they want to strike back at you, despite a much larger body of work they support. The national political climate stokes these emotions.”

Langley cited continued work on the General Welfare Exclusion Act and a comprehensive nine Tribes of Oregon plan for economic development as some issues he would like to address in a third term.

“These issues, as well as many others such as mental health, hous-



Lisa Leno



Michael Langley

ing, education and, of course, the most challenging of them all, our enrollment files, are not resolved,” he said. “I hope to still have a seat at the table, where one may not always agree with me, but sees that I at least gave everything the attention it deserves. That is why I am running for re-election. There’s still work to be done and the path forward is through respect, cooperation and a willingness to compromise if the end goal can still be achieved.”

Leno, 54, responded to a *Smoke Signals* inquiry that she also will be seeking a third consecutive term on Tribal Council. She holds the record for the most votes ever received in a Tribal Council election with 1,047 in 2020.

Tribal Council nominations will be held on Sunday, June 25, in Tribal Council Chambers. This year’s election will be held on Saturday, Sept. 9, with new council members being sworn into office on Wednesday, Sept. 13. ■

Tribal nonemergency text line

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department has a nonemergency text line at 541-921-2927.

“If you have a nonemergency situation or question, feel free to contact my officer via text through this line,” said Grand Ronde Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight. “When one of my officers receives the text, they will call you back when they have time.”

McKnight said that emergency situations still require calling 911.

For more information, contact McKnight at 503-879-1474. ■

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CAR SEAT CLINIC

Please bring your child and get help finding the right car seat for their height, weight and age. Get help installing your car seat from a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician. Each car seat installation and inspection will take about 30 minutes.

This event is brought to you by Early Childhood Education, working in partnership with several local Child Passenger Safety programs. Parents who participate in car seat education may qualify for a new car seat, ranging from free to a \$30 co-pay, depending on grant qualifications.

Please be patient with our community volunteers.



Friday, June 23, 2023
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
CTGR Day Use Park

Please RSVP using the link or QR code provided.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/623CarSeat>

Use car seats and booster seats on every ride.