



Watchlist: ‘This is Indian Country 111: Oregon’

(Editor’s note: It is estimated that there are approximately 149 billion videos on YouTube, and the number continues to grow. Grand Ronde Tribal member and Social Media/Digital Journalist Kamiah Koch sifts through those videos twice a month to recommend a worthwhile Indigenous video to watch. Follow her bimonthly recommendations and enjoy!)

By Kamiah Koch
Social media/digital journalist

Ruth-Ann Thorn hosts a series on the Native-based channel, First Nations Experience (FNX) called, “This Is Indian Country.” It shares modern Native American culture and in her latest episode of the show, she visits Grand Ronde and other Oregon Tribes.

Her visit includes a segment with Grand Ronde Tribal member and carver Bobby Mercier.

Mercier, an artist and culture keeper, shares the restoration of Grand Ronde and his efforts at reclaiming culture through art.

“Carving, I didn’t get into until later in life, just because of the fact that for the longest time nobody would do it,” Mercier says. “At one time it was banned, it was shunned upon.”

Mercier gives a brief history lesson on the Grand Ronde treaties signed in the 1850s, which eventually led to those treaties being broken when the Grand Ronde Tribe was terminated in 1954.

“I always say that if my grandfathers knew that, they would have never signed (the treaties) if they knew they were going to do that to their grandchildren,” Mercier said.

Mercier speaks about the Tribe’s Restoration in 1983 and how his artwork and carvings are working to bring back the traditions lost during that time.

While standing over a wood carving Mercier is working on, Thorn discusses the similarities she sees between the “Land Back” movement and Mercier’s own “Art Back” movement.

“A lot of that culture, like you were saying, it was burned and lost,” Thorn said. “But the memory of it, the story telling, the DNA, skillset and ability to create something as beautiful as this never went away.”

The video shows several clips from inside the Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center where other Grand Ronde Tribal members’ artwork and Tribal artifacts are on display.

Thorn’s visit also includes Native flutist James Edmund Greeley, cradle board maker Maria Godines, basket weaver Kelli Palmer and rapper (stage name “Blue Flamez”) Scott Kalama and Sakari Farms farmer Spring Alaska Schreiner.

Smoke Signals has a full interview with Mercier in the June 1, 2025, edition.

You can watch the FNX interview with Mercier and other cultural figures from Oregon’s Indian Country at <https://fnx.lightcast.com/player/57453/731384>. ■

Tribe offering support to incarcerated members

Grand Ronde Tribal members who are incarcerated, have been recently released from prison or are involved in addiction treatment programs don’t have to face challenges alone.

The Tribe has a post-prison/post-treatment peer support specialist, Tribal member Joe Ulestad, who is also a certified recovery mentor.

“I want our members who are incarcerated or need help to know we haven’t forgotten about them and we’re here to help,” he said. “They can call me, email or text.”

Ulestad can be reached at joe.ulestad@grandronde.org, by text/call at 971-237-5262 or on his office line, 503-879-1389. ■

CTGR EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

2025

Honor and Recognition Event
Graduation Celebration

Are you a CTGR tribal member promoting from 8th grade, high school/GED graduate, or college graduate? We invite you and your family to celebrate with us on June 27th at 5:00pm at Spirit Mountain Casino for our Honor and Recognition event! Meal included.

JUNE 27, 2025 • 5:00 P.M.

8TH GRADE PROMOTERS &
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/zGhjz2yoZAYv84c69>

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highereducation@grandronde.org - 503-879-2275

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Culture Committee
Cultural Craft Classes

10-4pm

April 7th @ CTGR Public Health Building
May 18th @ CTGR Community Center
June 9th @ CTGR Community Center
July 6th @ CTGR Community Center
August 3rd @ CTGR Community Center
September 14th @ CTGR Community Center
October 12th @ CTGR Community Center
November 9th @ CTGR Community Center
December 14th @ CTGR Community Center

Come make new projects, work on old projects!
Tribal families welcomed!!
All ages!!

Questions? Please reach out to the Culture Committee:
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Stephanie Craig @ kalapuyaweaver@gmail.com
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