



Annual Water
Safety Event
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AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE · SMOKE SIGNALS.ORG

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Commission accepts petition to amend or repeal MOA

Decision comes nearly two years after ODFW approved historic agreement with Grand Ronde

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

THE DALLES — After a nearly five-hour long meeting, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission voted 4-2 to accept a petition filed by four Tribes requesting to amend or repeal the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's memorandum of agreement with the state to hunt, fish and gather in expanded areas beyond its reservation.

"This was a painful set back," Grand Ronde Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said. "Opening the door to rulemaking threatens not just our rights, but our dignity. The agreement was never about competition with other Tribes; it was about our identity, legacy and the continuity of our culture. But we will not be silent. We are being singled out because we would not compromise on who we are as a people. We remain committed to fighting for our Tribe and defending our legacy and sovereignty."

In May 2024, Warm Springs filed a petition with the ODFW Commission, requesting that the agency repeal or amend the historic memorandum of agreement. Three other Tribes – Nez Perce, Umatilla and Yakama – then followed suit.

The commission met at The Dalles Civic Au-



Photo by Danielle Harrison

Tribal Cultural Policy Analyst Greg Archuleta, middle, testifies during the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting at The Dalles Civic Auditorium in The Dalles, Friday, July 11. On the left is Tribal Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen, who also testified, and on the right, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez.

ditorium Friday, July 11, and first heard from Warm Springs attorney Josh Newton and Yakama Nation Senior Attorney Marcus Shirzad, as well as Warm Springs Tribal Council member Jonathan W. Smith Sr. and Yakama Nation Tribal Council Assistant Secretary Jeremy Takala. Other Tribes who filed petitions to amend the agreement are the Umatilla and Nez Perce.

"The matters center on fundamental issues such as Tribal sovereignty, self-determination and maintaining positive government-to-gov-

ernment relationships with the state of Oregon," Newton said. "The geographic scope of the agreement interferes with the petitioner Tribes' treaty-protected rights. There's obviously a inter-Tribal disagreement between the petitioner Tribes and the Grand Ronde Tribe about the scope of this agreement...The Grand Ronde Tribe is attempting to use this agreement to advance its incorrect petition, that the petitioner Tribes have no such rights."

Smith said there were "serious problems" with the agreement between Grand Ronde and the state.

"The problems with the MOA, which intrudes upon our sovereignty, were created by the state and they must be fixed by the state," Smith said. "Treaties are the supreme law of the land by the supremacy clause in the United States Constitution."

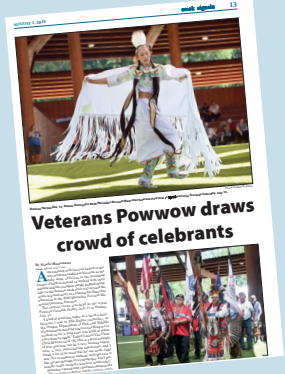
Grand Ronde's presentation included testimony from Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy (remote), Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Secretary Jon. A. George, Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen, Natural Resource-

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Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Safia Ben El Aali, 9, right, plays with seven-month-old Ivory Squetimkin at the edge of the dance arena during the 2025 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Saturday, July 12.



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2025 Veterans Powwow edition
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Contest powwow set for Aug. 15-17

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

The 2025 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow will begin Friday, Aug. 15 and run through Sunday, Aug. 17, at uyxat Powwow Grounds.

Camping is available for \$5 with parking. Attendance is free.

Midnite Express will be the host drum. Invited drums are Southern Cree, Hay Creek Singers, Fort Peck Sioux, Iron Swing and Wankinyan Luta.

Howie Thompson (Assiniboine) and Marty Thurman (Sac and Fox Nation/Cochise Nation/Absentee-Shawnee Tribe and Delaware Nation) will share emcee duties. The arena director will be Anthony Quenelle (Grand Ronde).

Opie Day (Anishinaabe), will be head drum judge; head dance judge



Smoke Signals file photo

Tribal member Tasina Bluehorse participates in grand entry during the 2024 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds last year. The 2025 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow is Friday to Sunday, Aug. 15-17.

will be Tavian Lasley (Meskwaki/Ojibway)

Prizes range from \$1,000 for first place to \$300 for fourth place

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