



The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon

Umpqua Molalla Rogue River Kalapuya Chasta

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March 17, 2022

Dear Willamette Falls Legacy Partners,

There is a one-of-a-kind opportunity at Willamette Falls: for environmental and cultural restoration, public access and thoughtful new development in Oregon City. It is also a unique opportunity for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to renew our role as caretakers of the Falls. The Willamette Falls site is part of our ancestral homelands and our ceded lands, and therefore it holds significant historical and cultural importance for our people.

As the owners of the 23-acre Blue Heron property at Willamette Falls, we have already made significant progress toward bringing new life and public access to the site. We have released our vision for the project, which centers around a commitment to public access, environmental and cultural restoration and thoughtful economic development. We have started demolition, embarked on environmental remediation, and brought millions of federal dollars to the project. And we have only just begun.

If it were not for our efforts, however, the opportunity at Willamette Falls would still be stuck in the realm of big ideas and bureaucratic process. For nearly 10 years, we have watched as little progress at Willamette Falls occurred while significant public resources have been spent. Months of talks about adding even more governments to the table are prolonging project gridlock and not yielding any benefits to the public.

As a result, and after careful consideration, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde will no longer participate in discussions around the Willamette Falls Legacy Project. This decision was not made lightly. It reflects our deep frustration with ineffective project management and poor communications, along with the lack of transparency and accountability of the Willamette Falls Trust. Collectively, all these actions have come to heavily burden the project and led us to this critical point. We attempted to raise awareness about the problematic nature of these conflicts and create opportunities for deeper understanding, but there was never a sincere commitment to healing and building the foundational relationships needed to move this project forward.

This stands in stark contrast to the progress we have made on our own in just the past two years. As owners and hosts of the site, access for the public remains a top priority, and we welcome and will actively seek input from all that have an interest in our Willamette Falls project.

Treaties

*Rogue River 1853 & 1854 ~ Umpqua-Cow Creek 1853 ~ Chasta 1854 ~ Umpqua & Kalapuya
1854 Willamette Valley 1855 ~ Molalla 1855*



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Our work in the coming months will focus on completing a master plan for the site, continuing environmental remediation, and launching a fundraising campaign for the project.

Renewing, restoring and revitalizing Willamette Falls is an opportunity not to be squandered – and we have no intention of letting that happen. As the owner and caretaker of the site, we will continue moving forward, guided by our vision of restoration, revitalization and increased public access for everyone.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Kennedy
Tribal Council Chairwoman
The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

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