



THE K'WEN

May 2026

Newsletter of the Coquille Indian Tribe

Volume 33, Issue 5

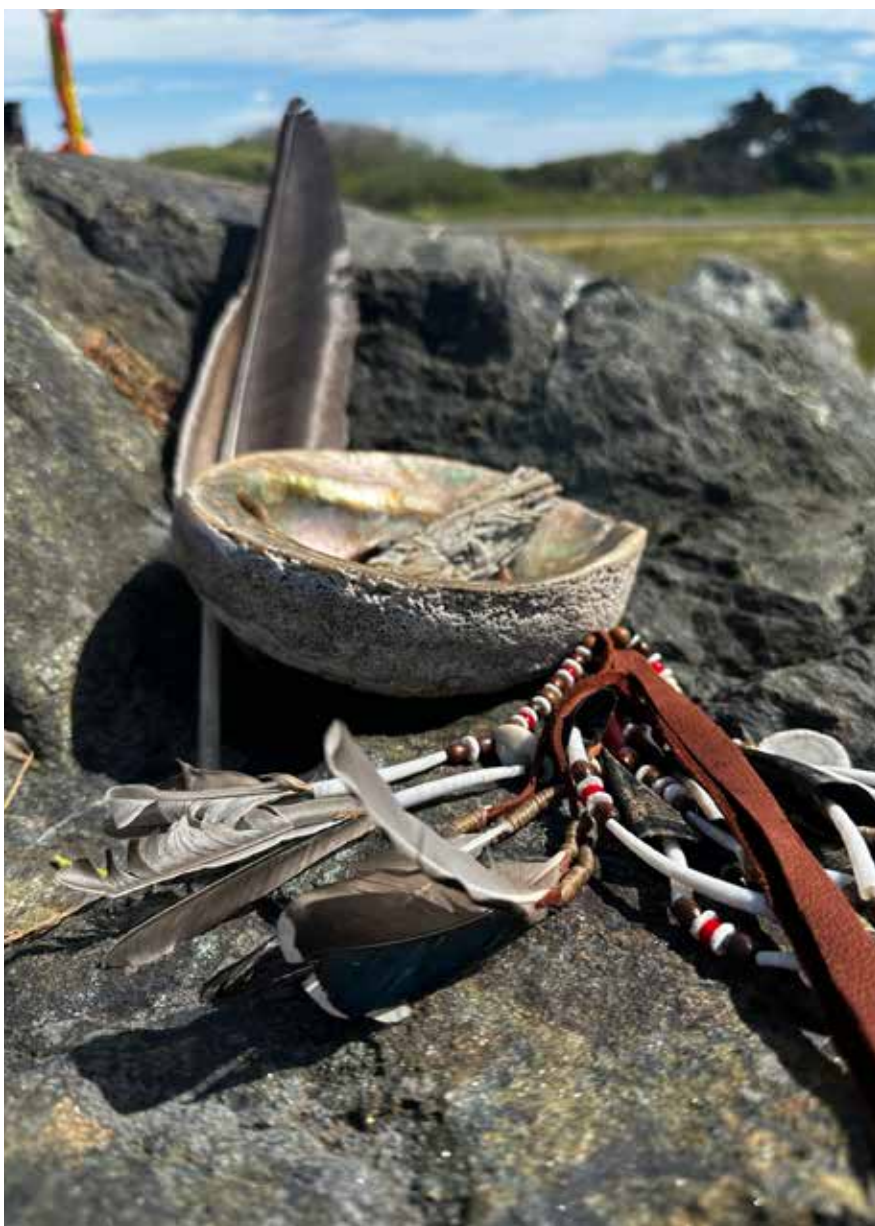


Photo by Anne Niblett

Repatriating Grandmother Rock

The Chief's smudge sits atop a boulder of blue schist that was repatriated from the old administration building in North Bend to its original location on the Tribe's property in Bandon near Heritage Place. See more photos on page 10.

Take time to slow down and gather your cultural resources

Dai s'la! (Greetings friends!)

I hope you and your family are doing well and enjoying the spring season. It has been a little rainy here, but I know that rain showers and sunny days are exactly what we need.

Cultural gathering time

April is always a very busy month for us, as it is time to begin gathering our traditional foods for the year. The spruce tips are ready to harvest for our spruce tip syrup and tea, fiddlehead ferns are also coming up, and soon we will need to gather our maple bark as we prepare our regalia for our NeedDash solstice ceremony in June.

I always appreciate this time of year because it reminds me to slow down a bit and think about what we will need for the coming year. Please be sure to check out our MyTribe for all the opportunities coming up to gather as Coquille People.

Planning for the future

Your Tribal Council has been busy this month attending workshops and Tribal Council meetings, focusing on preparing for our upcoming projects. One of the projects you may have already heard about is our work on the 2026–2039 Kilkich Area Plan.

Following the completion of our strategic plan, and as part of our broader planning process, we will soon be looking to you for your input as community engagement begins.

These plans are important in guiding future decisions about how and where



**FROM THE
CHAIR**
Brenda Meade

we will grow as a nation to better serve the needs of our Tribe. They will help define where we live, where our programs and services will be located, such as a much-needed new education facility, and where we gather, while ensuring our cultural values are reflected throughout. Your voice is essential to this process. A plan driven by our Tribal citizens will create a stronger path forward, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Curation facility certified

I also want to share an incredible accomplishment for our Tribe. After many years of intentional work, our Tribal Historic Preservation Office team has completed the process of having our "Me'-dn Mv-ne" curation facility officially certified. It is now recognized by the state and the Oregon State Museum of Anthropology as an approved alternative curation facility.

This means our facility is now ready to bring our cultural and historic items back home, where they belong. Items of ceremonial and cultural significance will no longer need to be stored in boxes at state or university facilities, untouched and uncared for, they will finally begin to return home.

Please see Chair, page 15



Chief's hat, a symbol of family & connection

By **Jamie Villa**
Content Curator

“Cool hat!”

That's the comment Chief Justin Futch hears more than anything else when he's out in the community.

If you've seen him, you've likely noticed it, the distinctive cedar hat he so often wears. But what many people don't realize is that there isn't just one hat. There are several, each with its own story, materials, and meaning.

“I like these hats because they're made out of red cedar, which is the tree of life,” said Chief Futch. “It's what our ancestors used for clothing. To me, this is my work hat.”

One of his cedar hats was a gift from Chief Doug Barrett of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians. The exchange itself carried meaning.

After carving canoe paddles, Chief Futch participated in a potlatch-style exchange, where both leaders shared items of value, continuing a long-standing tradition of honoring relationships through giving.

The hat is adorned with seal teeth and abalone shell, each piece connecting family and history. The seal teeth came from



Top left: Chief Justin Futch wears his hat on the boardwalk at the Ko-Kwel Casino Resort | Coos Bay.
Top right: Chief Futch's woven cedar hat features seal teeth from his Aleut family in Alaska.



Photos by Jamie Villa

a large necklace passed down through generations. That necklace was gifted by his great-grandfather, whose family ties reach to St. Paul Island in Alaska.

“My great-great-grandfather, Thomas Wasson, married an Aleut woman, and her family still lives in St. Paul,” Futch shared. “My grandfather's first cousin gave him a necklace covered in fur seal canines. I've taken some from that necklace and used them for things I can wear.”

Adornment like this is not new. Historically, Coquille headmen and leaders wore animal teeth or claws as part of

their regalia, symbols of identity, strength, and connection. For Chief Futch, this practice wasn't something he was formally taught growing up. It was something that came naturally.

“I've always found myself wearing some type of teeth or claws,” he said.

Before moving to Oregon, Chief Futch lived in Georgia, where he wore a different kind of hat, one decorated with alligator scutes.

At the time, the reason was practical. Spending long days canoeing in the Georgia heat, he needed protection from the

sun. Over time, that practical habit grew into something more meaningful.

“It's my belief that with natural items, when you have intention behind wearing them, you can be blessed by them,” he said. “I see it as a form of protection. It's something that just comes naturally to me.”

That sense of protection and purpose continues to guide him today.

“When I wear these items, I want to feel the power of our people,” Futch said. “I believe our people are with me. It gives me confidence and strength. It helps shield me and helps me do my job well. Different items, different materials, all carry different meaning.”

And while the hats often draw compliments, they also serve another purpose—opening the door to conversation.

What starts as a simple “Cool hat” often turns into something deeper: a chance to share knowledge about traditional materials, family history, and the cultural significance behind what he wears.

In that way, the hats are more than just something he puts on each day. They are a reflection of identity, a connection to generations past, and a way to carry those stories forward, one conversation at a time.

sacred experiences. It connects us with our traditional lands, showing our interconnectedness of tribal and environmental stewardship.

Remember, I am always here to support you in your time of need. If you have any questions, concerns, or want help making cultural items, please feel free to reach out any time. Call or send a text to 541-707-7618.

Many blessings,
Chief Justin Futch

During difficulty, remember your connection to the land

The Chief's heart
Justin Futch



As we navigate through spring this year, I'm reminded that the seasons are a cycle starting and ending; much like life itself. It's a cycle for us and our loved ones.

Feeling loss, I feel drawn to the land, seeking peace and strength in the connection to the earth. I believe we feel this instinctively, just as our ancestors did. Today we continue this timeless tradition

and recognize that the health of our people is inseparable from the health of our planet.

When times of sorrow arise, our community comes together to mourn and heal. Through tradition, we gather to honor the memory of our loved ones to find comfort in the company of others. By embracing our heritage, and connecting with our natural world, we navigate through grief and emerge stronger, united by our shared culture and humanity.

We are Ko-Kwel. We are powerful

together. We were never meant to stand alone.

Embracing my new role as the cultural and spiritual leader of our tribe, I often think and strategize how to better represent and serve our people while honoring our ancestors through tradition.

Our ceremonies are important to me. Ceremonies serve multiple purposes within our community. They strengthen cultural identity by passing traditions from generation to generation, building community relationships through shared,



Passionate citizens are working hard on our behalf

Hello all, and happy spring! It's been a busy year so far, full of events, activities, classes, gatherings, and so much more. It has been great seeing everyone and watching our kids playing, our elders laughing and everyone enjoying being together when we are able to. I thought I'd give an update on what I've been up to!

I have the privilege of being the Tribal Council representative on our Youth Advisory Council. This talented group of young people are all doing important work in our Tribal community as well as in the communities in which they live. From playing sports competitively to advocating for our flag to fly at school events, these youth show over and over again great leadership skills and make me excited to see what's to come. It has been a privilege to get to know these young people and hear their ideas.

I also serve on the Housing Authority as a commissioner and have really enjoyed getting to work with the staff that make those programs run so flawlessly and the

other commissioners who are so dedicated to the work they do. Seeing all the rules and regulations they must follow and how well they do it has been eye opening. Prior to my involvement, I was unaware of all that went into making the housing programs happen. Our housing authority staff are amazing, and it has been a pleasure getting to know everyone and learning more of the ins and outs of what the housing authority has to offer.

The Health Advisory Committee is one that I haven't been able to join much in person due to conflicts but listening to our KWC team and how passionately they do their work is truly awesome to see and hear about. The care and dedication they show for patients that enter into our healthcare facilities is like no other. I know from personal experience that my family feels so comfortable going to KWC Coos Bay, to the point where my kids feel like they can relax and know they'll be taken care of. I have enjoyed this group and can't wait to be more

involved.

Recently, I have been appointed to the Head Start Policy Council which I did serve on as a parent when my kids were younger, but it's been nice being involved again and hearing all of the great things we are doing to serve our future leaders. All the staff have such patience and kindness while working with these kids, which isn't always easy, but you wouldn't know by seeing them in action. It's fun to dream about the future of our youth programs and facilities and how we can make them even better moving forward.

Another group that I am involved with in the community is the SWOCC Foundation board. Although this isn't directly related to the Tribe, I was able to be accepted onto the board and have seen the amount of fundraising, new programs and the overall resources the college brings to our area. They give out scholarships annually, raise funds for new programs and buildings, do projects to help clean up the campus and have a di-

verse group of board members that help to make it happen. Along with the board, there are incredibly talented and dedicated staff that work extremely hard to ensure it all comes to fruition.

Along with these boards and committees, the daily work we all do is often difficult and we have some long days, but it's so worth it to see how much we have grown and all the great things the Tribe is able to offer its citizens.

The future of the Coquille Tribe looks bright with talented future leaders, new things happening all of the time, and programs and services that continue to be of such value to our citizens no matter where they live.

My hope is that everyone stays healthy and happy and I cannot wait to see everyone during our Restoration Celebration and other gatherings coming up!

Jackie Chambers
Secretary/Treasurer
541-435-7997

Volleyball is sweeter with tribal coaches and teammates

By **Hallie Chambers**
Youth Advisory Council

Playing volleyball has been such an important part of my life ever since I first started playing, but an even more important part of my life has always been the tribe and the amazing family I have gained from it. So, when I found out I was going to be able to combine both of these things, I was very excited.

My club volleyball team has three tribal youth on it: myself, Kendall Johnson, and Aiyana Mendoza. Along with that, our coaches are Judy Farm, the CEO of Tribal One, and Amanda Duey, Mark Johnston's daughter. Mark Johnston is the tribal government CEO. His granddaughter, Peyton Duey, is also on the team.

Going into a new travel team with girls you have never met before can be scary, but having these familiar faces from the tribe has made it so much easier.



Photo by Jackie Chambers

Members of the 16U South Coast Volleyball Team from the left: Coach Amanda Duey, #5 Peyton Duey, #11 Hallie Chambers, #1 Kendall Johnson, #13 Aiyana Mendoza, and Coach Judy Farm.

This May, we will be traveling to Anaheim, California, for our final tournament of the season. Our whole team has been working so hard since November to improve as a team and to become a family. We are all so excited for our Anaheim tournament, and we plan to work as hard as we can when we are there. We have been fundraising non-stop all year to help pay for this tournament, from raffles, to dinners, and silent auctions, we are doing everything we can to make this an amazing experience for all of the girls.

We may not have all known each other in the beginning, but I can safely say I now consider every one of the girls on this team, coaches included, to be like a second family to me. We appreciate all of the support we have received from the Tribal family as a whole, and cannot wait to see how our season plays out!



New Shishda Haws cafe serves up tasty brews

By Jamie Villa
Content Curator

Stepping into the new café, visitors are met with a fresh, welcoming space—bright green walls, warm wood shelves, and a layout designed for both comfort and connection.

Comfort and connection are exactly the intent behind the new café located inside Shishda Haws. Coastal Blends and Brews, a coffee and smoothie café, now offers fresh fruit smoothies, yogurt parfaits, light snacks, and a coffee bar, creating a new place to gather on Kilkich, Monday thru Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

During the grand opening, guests filtered in, some stopping for a quick drink while others lingered to visit. The space quickly filled with conversation, laughter, and curiosity, as community members explored the new addition.

“Social benefits and health benefits are related. Community and connection are also a very big, important component of health—just as much as fitness and healthy foods,” said Chief Operations Officer Kelle Little. “This will provide a place to gather, grab a quick sandwich, or a breakfast yogurt parfait or smoothie.”

The café is more than just a place to grab a drink, it’s part of a larger vision for wellness and accessibility. Located within Shishda Haws, it serves as a natural starting point for visitors to experience everything the facility has to offer.

Outside, a walking path winds through the area, with benches for resting and a nearby playground that invites families to spend time together. The setting encourages people to slow down, step outside, and enjoy the space.

Inside, Shishda Haws offers a wide range of health and wellness resources. Visitors can find a climbing wall, brand-new exercise equipment, and services such as physical and massage therapy. A variety of health-focused classes, including yoga, are also available, supporting both physical and mental well-being.

The café compliments these offerings



Top left: Aloya Trolli and Brittany Martinez work at the new cafe in Shishda Haws.

Top right: A caramel macchiato.

Far left: A microgreen salad in the grab-n-go cooler.

Left: A menu features fruit smoothie blends and espresso drinks.

Photos by Anne Niblett & Jamie Villa

by creating a comfortable space to recharge—whether that means sitting down with a smoothie after a workout or catching up with a friend over coffee. Tables and seating areas throughout the space invite people to stay awhile, reinforcing the café’s role as a gathering place.

“It’s important to us to have a place for Coquille Tribal citizens to come, as well as members of other federally recog-

nized tribes and those who live out here on Kilkich,” Little said. “There’s also a bit of a food desert for food service in this region, so for a quick bite for our employees, or for those who live out here to grab lunch or a snack, this will be a great option.”

That accessibility is key. For many, the café fills a gap, not just in food service, but in creating a welcoming, communi-

ty-centered environment. It offers a space that is both practical and meaningful, supporting everyday needs while strengthening connections among those who gather there.

Another great reason to stop in? Ko-Kwel Tribal staff enjoy a 15 percent discount on their order.



Tribal beader teaches first bugle collar class

By Anne Niblett
Newsletter Editor

Tribal beader Tiffany Coonfare remembers when beads became important to her.

“I spent years looking at the collars while dancing for solstice and decided to finally try since I couldn’t dance anymore. I figured, I’d give something back,” Tiffany said.

She looked up an artist featured on Pinterest named the Native Grandma who had shared a photo of beaded collar.

“She posted it and had the diagram of exactly where the string goes in the collar. So, I copied that and kept trying it and restarting it for a few weeks until I figured out the pattern and how to make it my own.”

From there, Tiffany practiced and practiced till, “I can do it without even thinking about it.”

Recently, Tiffany taught a class at Otter Haws for beginning beaders who wanted to make a bugle collar.

“For the beginners class I used bugles because it’s easier to follow a pattern and there aren’t as many beads. Bugles are about an inch long. You can make a whole chest length one with seven beads going down,” Tiffany said.

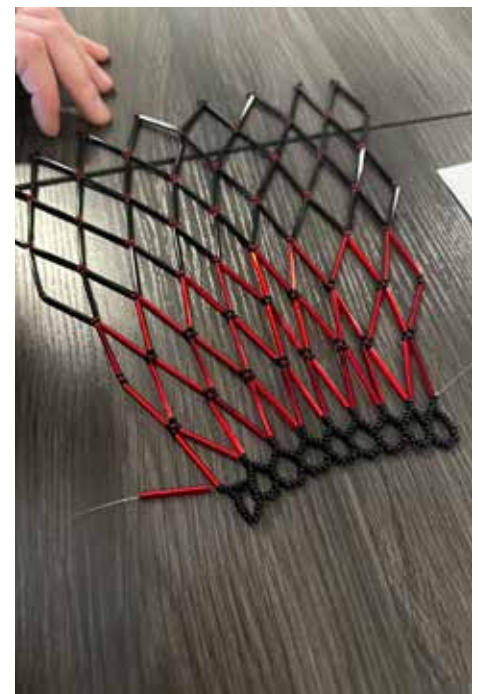
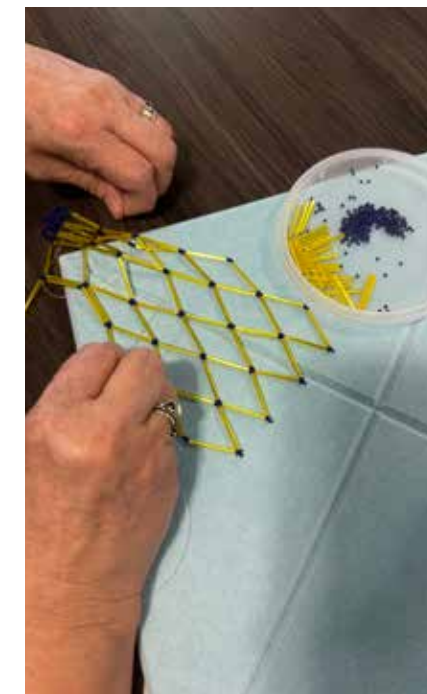
Tribal beaders were able to figure it out pretty quickly.

“It went great last night,” Tiffany said. “I wasn’t sure if the instructions were going to work. I tested the instructions on my 9 year-old step daughter and she got it pretty quickly.”

Tiffany plans to do more classes too.

“Everyone wants to feel some kind of connection back to the tribe and I think learning something as simple as a bugle collar will give them that connection they are looking for.”

Tribal beaders worked on finishing their collars so they could wear them at Restoration this year.



Far left: Tribal teacher Tiffany Coonfare holds up a beaded collar start.

Left: A bugle collar Tiffany made.

Bottom right: A collar made by Elijah Chisley.

Bottom middle: Sheri Meza works on a collar.

Bottom left: Cindy Elbert and Julie Eldridge bead in Otter Haws.

Left lower middle: Tiffany Coonfare gives Elijah Chisley some pointers on his work.

Photos by Anne Niblett

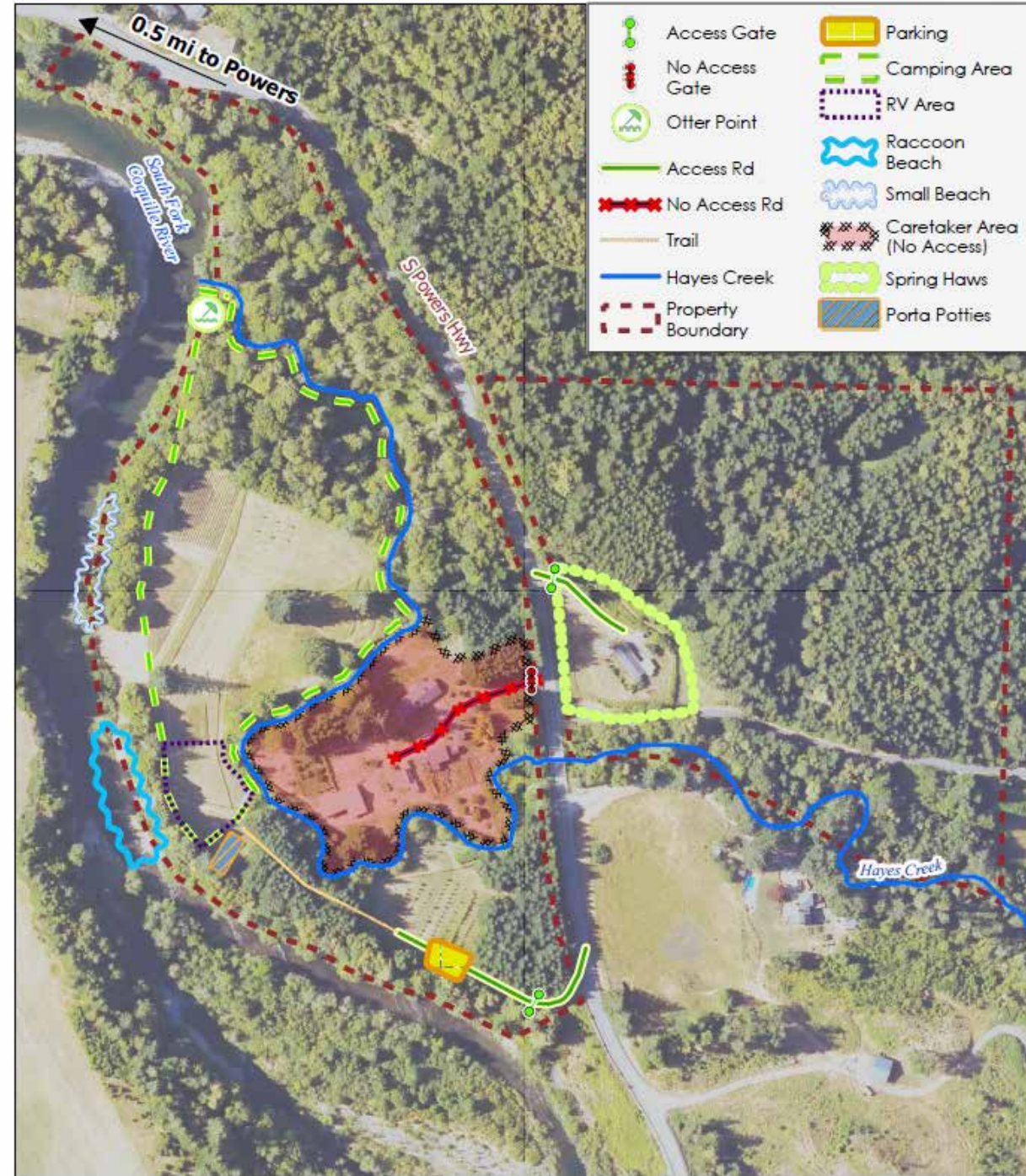


New property in ancestral territory on river in Powers, Ore. open to reserve for recreation

Coquille Indian Tribe
T31S R11W Sec. 19,
W.M., Coos County

POWERS PROPERTY

Link to MyTribe Reservation Form



Map produced April 2025 by Coquille Indian Tribe's GIS Program
This product is for information purposes and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for engineering or surveying purposes. Users of this information should review or consult the primary data information sources to ascertain the usability of the information.



The Tribe is excited to announce the opening of the Powers Property for tribal family recreation as early as Memorial Day this year, 2026! There has been much hard work by the teams with the Office of Programs and Services to prepare for this opportunity. The recreational opportunities for the the Powers Property will be very similar to the reservation system for the Middle Creek Property. Tribal Members will be able to access MyTribe: Tribal Properties to complete an application and identify reservation dates. There will be 4 reservation options available: 2 camp areas and 2 beaches. The property will be reservation only and anyone visiting the property must have a reservation.

The Powers Property Caretaker position, Lyman D. Meade, was filled in the fall of 2026 and he currently resides at the property with his family. The caretaker position is designed to care for the property, equipment, provide minor repairs, consult with the Tribal government on property needs, and support tribal member access and use of the property. The Caretaker position is not camp host position. While the caretaker is available for general questions and guidance, this role was not designed to host, greet, or clean up after users.

The Powers Property reservation system will go live on May 1 for membership to begin identifying dates they would like to reserve. The property will be open for reservations beginning the Thursday prior to Memorial Weekend, May 21. Reservations may not exceed 10 days. Please note that the property already has assigned blackout days, including dates for our July Camp Dv-ne.

To the left is a map and a link for the area and a description of the reservation types that can be accessed:

1. Link to Map
2. Spring Haws – The Spring Haws is a single wide trailer located on the East side of the Powers/Agness highway. This reservation includes the trailer and the property contained within the fenced area. There is one large apple tree and up to 4 parking areas. This property is good for using the house, or even for day use, or pulling in an RV or two for dry camping. This reservation does not automatically include a beach reservation.
3. Field/Grove Camping Area – The fields and groves on the west (river) side of the Powers/Agness Highway is packaged into one large reservation area for tent camping. There is a small portion of the area that can offer contained RV camping within this reservation area. There is a small point of land at the confluence of Hayes Creek and the river, Otter Point, that comes with this reservation.

4. Raccoon Beach – Raccoon Beach is the larger of the sandy beaches located on the river. This beach is a singular reservation and is for day use only.

5. Little Beach (to be named by youth council – Little Beach is located farther down river from Raccoon Beach but offers a nice shallow area of river to enjoy.

It is important to note that with the Spring Haws and Field/Grove Camping Area, that they do not automatically assume beach access. If you want to camp and beach access, you must reserve them BOTH.

When families reserve the property, an email will be sent out to share information relevant to your requested reservation (address, garbage, water, restrooms, hours of use, parking, etc.) Fire Safety will be an important component of reservations and notices, so please take care in reviewing your reservation information that includes seasonal fire safety information.

There are no restroom or kitchen facilities located by the field, grove, or river recreational areas. There will be three porta potties staged around the camping/rv area for use.

Our team is very dedicated to making this property as joyful for your families as we envisioned it could be, but we ask for forgiveness as we navigate this first year of having it open for reservations. We hope to receive feedback and suggestions throughout this first year so that we can update our operations and support for subsequent years.

At this time, all properties and facilities at the Powers Property are behind locked gates with codes. Please make sure you have a reservation to make use of the property, or if you would like to visit or have a tour, please contact Abigail Parrish at abigailparrish@coquilletribe.org.

More information will be provided through the Kwen Weekly and on Mytribe beginning May 1.

Best,
Bridgett Wheeler
Office of Programs and Services



- Clockwise from top left:**
- Lyman, Amanda, Lyman and Lyla Meade are the onsite caretakers.
 - A large open field for camping at the Powers property.
 - Beach area for reservation on the river.
 - Another beach area on the river to reserve.
 - Powers Spring Haws house is available to stay in.



Photos by Abigail Parrish and the Meade family



Photos by Anne Niblett

Cherished blue schist comes home to Bandon

Above left: A crane places a boulder of blue schist in place. **Above left:** Members of the Tribal family including, from left: Chief Justin Futch, Troy Anderson, Duke Summers, Bridgett Wheeler and Anne Niblett are on hand to welcome a large boulder that was repatriated from its resting place at the old administration building in North Bend, Ore. to its original home in Bandon where it used to be part of Grandmother Rock. **Above right:** The rock is below the Tribe's property where Heritage Place sits.

Youth education and enrichment program reimburses tribal families for sports, camps and other events

The Coquille Tribe wants to improve the lives of its members through increased education and activities that enrich the quality of life.

The Youth Education and Enrichment Program has several important goals: literacy and basic skills, developing unique talents, earning a general education degree, academic success, personal enrichment, after-school activities, tribal cultural activities, sports programs, camps, conferences, and more, regardless of where the Tribal youth is located.

Each Tribal member youth is eligible

for a total of \$1,400 in reimbursement for eligible activities and supplies. The amount reimbursed for supplies cannot exceed \$700.

Reimbursement is submitted on the multi-benefit form or through MyTribe. Receipts are required.

Questions, applications, and monthly forms should be directed to Funding Coordinator Annie Summers at funding-coordinator@coquilletribe.org or 541-435-7984.



Grad tables and chairs available

Do you have a graduation party coming up? Need to borrow extra tables and chairs? Reach out to events@coquilletribe.org. More information is available on MyTribe under Using Tribal Property.



Lanugage student Chisley remembers learning at camp

By Anne Niblett
Newsletter Editor

Culture camp is the first place Elijah Chisley remembers speaking the language. It was about 2006.

“Back when I was about 8 years old, I went out to camp and it was my first year out there. Camp really had an impact on my childhood. I didn’t get to venture outside much because I had strict parents,” Elijah says.

Siletz Tribal Elder Gilber Towner was the teacher. It was the first time Elijah heard Nuu-wee-yah.

“I was learning our mottos:

- Yaa-welh-ts’it - Know it
- Wal-dvt-ni - Teach it
- Nv-naa-ch’ii-’a - Speak it
- Ja sda dv-ne - Live it
- Chi ‘uu-k’e taa-xwii-dvn - Everyday
- Lhuu-k’e hii-mvlh naa-yilh-la - A salm-on never gives up

Now that he’s an adult, Elijah has a better appreciation for the significance of learning those phrases.

“Those mottos are very important. Back when I was a kid, I didn’t think anything of them, but now that I say them almost every week, sometimes every day, they always remind me of the work that needs to be done still for the language. If you just learn it, speak it, live it, then it will be alive,” Elijah says.

Elijah also remembers his grandmother teaching him words.

“The only other time I heard the language was when my grandma used to have this book that had specific names in them and she used to read them out to me. It’s where I got the inspiration to give my kids their middle names. They both have indigenous middle names,” Elijah says.

His sons names are Lincoln Dakota Chisley and Khalil Taima Chisley. Dakota means, “friend to everybody” and Taiyema means “thunder.”

Elijah feels like he’s honoring his grandmother by studying and teaching Nuu-wee-yah.

“I’ve always been interested in learning different languages. When my grandma passed, it felt important to continue doing it. In a sense I’m doing it for her,” Elijah says.

In addition to Gilbert Towner, Elijah thanks his current Nuu-wee-yah teacher, Jaeci Hall. He says that her relaxed approach makes learning the language enjoyable for everyone.

“The tribe started language classes for the community in 2022, and I just started showing up consistently, every week. It started with a burning passion to learn the language that was instilled in me as a kid and then the community, the people showing up, made it better. At class you saw the same faces every week and you got to have conversations plus it helps that people have kids and the space for kids is very open. It’s really relaxed. I’m sure if it was a different dynamic I wouldn’t be there and other people wouldn’t be there. Plus, there’s free food and everybody loves free food,” Elijah says.

Learning the language has made Elijah think about life differently.

“Learning the language has taught me that everything you do is culture. People always try to put a label on culture and say that it is only this way. Culture changes. It’s not the same. If you’re native and you’re living, what you do is culture. The language ebbs and flows. One word might have twenty different meanings,” he says.

One of Elijah’s favorite phrases?

“Shsii naa gvl se.’ It means, ‘My head, it feels dry.’ In the language, you talk about how you feel a lot, which is something we don’t do in America. But it means, ‘I’m thirsty.’”

Want to learn the language? Come to the Abalone Haws on Tuesday evenings at 5 p.m. for dinner and a class. Kids are welcome. Classes are also taught over Zoom at noon. Miluk classes are available too! Visit MyTribe or read The Weekly to see all the different times and places to learn.



Let’s dig camas!

When: 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Saturday, May 9
Where: Euphoria Ridge - We will meet at Otter Haws (495 Miluk Drive) at 10 a.m. Rides will be provided for those that need transportation. We will drive to Sturdivant Park in Coquille to meet up with people who live in the Myrtle Point/Coquille area. Lunch will be provided.

Please join us for a day of harvesting camas bulbs in our ancestral gardens at Euphoria Ridge. Transportation will be provided from Otter Haws to Euphoria Ridge. Tools will be provided. Remember to dress for hiking and wear good boots for the harvest.

We will pull and process camas at Euphoria Ridge and have lunch together. Email Ruth Jimenez with questions at ruthjimenez@coquilletribe.org.



Mielke recognized for TSWAN Environmental Excellence Award

The Tribal Solid Waste Advisory Network recently recognized tribes and individuals for their work in reducing waste in Indian Country. The Coquille Indian Tribe's Community Services Director Lisa Mielke, was one of the recipients to be honored.



Community Services Director Lisa Mielke has served the Tribe for 9 years.

TSWAN had this to say about Mielke's contribution: "We also acknowledge Lisa Mielke for the TSWAN Environmental Excellence Award. Lisa has made significant strides in reducing waste at her department's meetings and events by eliminating plastic water bottles and utilizing compostable plates and utensils. Thank you, Lisa, for prioritizing our planet's health."

the amount of plastic we're consuming and switch over to more natural products. We have water jugs now instead of plastic water bottles."

It's a simple change that Mielke hopes other departments will adopt as well.

After serving the community for nine years, Mielke will retire this spring.

"I've really enjoyed working with the tribal families and getting to connect with people," Mielke says. "There's people really going through hard times. Helping people get out of difficult situations and into a more sustainable place has been really rewarding work."

Mielke's department in Community Services does a lot of events and she saw using less plastic as a way to do her part to make a contribution to the health of the planet.

"When I saw leftover plastic cups and plastic forks... I said, Community Services will do everything in its power to reduce

ACCESS YOUR ADULT EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT FUND FOR REIMBURSEMENT

The Adult Education and Enrichment Program is for every Tribal member age 18+ to enrich the quality of life of its adult members through increased education and activities that support life-long learning and health & wellness. Examples of reimbursable activities include ABE/GED/college classes, gym & fitness memberships, certifications, cultural items/supplies, museum/aquarium/zoo memberships, and so much more.

Each Tribal member adult is eligible for up to \$1,400 in reimbursement for eligible activities, of which \$200 may be used for supplies. Monthly reimbursement is submitted on the multi-benefit form on MyTribe. Receipts are required.

All questions, applications, and monthly forms are to be directed to:

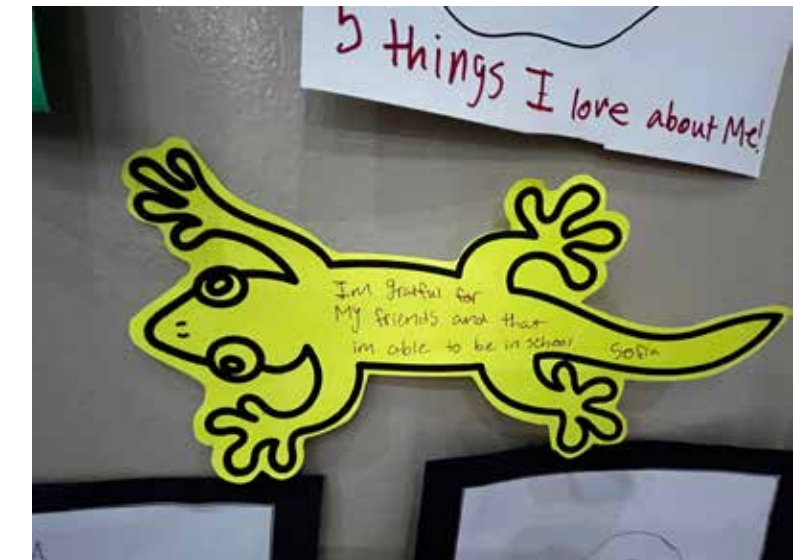
Funding Coordinator Annie Summers at fundingcoordinator@coquilletribe.org at Abalone Haws, 491 Miluk Drive, or 541-435-7984.



Tribal art & crafts show brings out talent



Cindy Elbert



Photos by Jamie Villa

- Left: A beading by tribal artist Cindy Elbert.
- Above: A gecko by "Sofia" is displayed at the annual Arts & Crafts Show.
- Bottom left: Faunabeth Larkin poses next to her artwork.
- Below left middle: Caleb Matson smiles at the art show.
- Below: A painting by Nora Lovell
- Below right: Sequoia Parrish looks at art on a craft table at the Learning Center.

Join us for
YOGA AT SHISHDA HAWS

Classes are held at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and 5:30 p.m. on Thursdays in the group education room at Shishda Haws. Classes are open to all users of Shishda Haws Fitness Center.

If you are not a user, sign up by contacting Kelsey Holling, Shishda Haws receptionist 541-888-9494 ext 1038.



Emergency Management Director Matheny offers praise for volunteers

Each year national volunteer week offers an opportunity to recognize the remarkable individuals and organizations whose commitment to service strengthens our communities. From April 19-25, Oregon celebrates the spirit of volunteers in support of Oregon's resilience—especially the work of Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters.

These volunteers are among the first to arrive in a disaster-stricken community and the last to leave. They provide compassion, capability, and community knowledge in an emergency, providing shelter, meals, support, and long-term recovery assistance. They also help to build community trust and resilience, reducing the overall impacts of a disaster.

Our Killich volunteers that have stepped up to support our tribe, our families, our friends, and neighbors, deserve recognition for their time, efforts, and willingness to serve our community. Jason and Glenna Mecum, Samuel Oelheim, Ariel Jones, Alexandria Jones, Jose Flores, Ryan Scott, Allie Simpson, and Lisa Mielke. These tribal members and spouses empower our tribe to thrive in times of crisis and disaster. Please recognize and support these individuals and thank them for their support of our community, they truly deserve the recognition and praise!





Yunker named Native Artistic Director Fellow

By Stephi Wild
Reprinted from broadwayworld.com

Native Performing Arts Network has chosen Kiana Yunker as its first Artistic Director Fellow. A descendant of Kitzn Jin jn Ghallahd-a-lu'ee (Miluk Coos) and Gishgiu (Upper Coquille), Yunker is a citizen of the Coquille Indian Tribe, one of 9 federally recognized Tribal Nations in the state of Oregon. In addition to studying and pursuing arts management, Yunker is a performer whose artistic practice includes dance and choreography.

“Something that remains true, no matter where I live, or what space I choose to occupy, is that I am the solitary Indigenous person in school or on staff,” said Yunker. “Seeing the post for this fellowship made me feel seen. It was the most exciting thing, because I knew that I would be surrounded by people who would get to know me, and be invested in my future. I have never had Indigenous mentors before. The thought that they might understand my art and my career goals is a feeling I have never felt. Feeling safe in NPAN’s workspace gives me the opportunity to express my opinion fully without people alienating me because of my identity.”

The one-year artistic director fellowship is part of NPAN’s commitment to leadership development. Yunker will work closely with Artistic Director



Jeanette Harrison and take on leadership roles throughout the season. For the National Day of Theater Readings for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives on May 5, she will serve as Lead Producer for a panel of MMIWR experts. The panel will be recorded and distributed to theaters nationwide to share with the community in conjunction with the presentations of readings of plays by Native playwrights that address the MMIWR crisis.

“I’m thrilled to be working closely with Kiana this year, and supporting her growth as an artistic leader,” says Harrison. “I’m looking forward to the ways her vision and aesthetics will help shape the programming at Native Performing Arts Network.”

Yunker will also serve as Line Producer for NPAN’s co-production of Antikoni by Beth Piatote, which runs June 4–June 21 at Bag&Baggage. Additionally, Yunker will work on visioning and other key responsibilities of being an artistic director. As part of next season’s programming, she will take the lead on planning an Indigiqueer theater festival for 2027.

“Something that really brings me joy in my career when I’m not dancing is planning events, festivals, and working with guests. Hosting people, putting on events where young, queer, BIPOC people like myself can have fun, and feel safe,” says Yunker, “that’s how I practice Potlatch. Planning a festival for queer,

indigenous artists seemed like the most obvious thing to do.”

Native Performing Arts Network’s leadership and mentorship program began in response to studies from Dr. Stephanie Fryberg, IllumiNative, and many more. For over two decades, researchers have proven that bad representation has a negative impact on Native youth. The Norman Lear Media Impact Project’s 2024 study measured the impact that stereotypical representations have on non-Native audience’s perceptions of issues that affect Native people.

“The cost of getting our stories wrong is just too high for Native people. We need Native creatives in leadership positions,” Harrison said. “And Native people who want to take on those leadership roles need support. This fellowship is designed to teach leadership skills, provide hands-on opportunities to practice those skills, and most importantly, to connect our emerging leaders with networks of Indigenous artists and community leaders so they never feel alone.”

“I am looking forward to reconnecting with my Indigenous and dance communities, and meeting more artists, in the Pacific Northwest and West Coast,” said Yunker, who returns to her homelands after seven years living in the Southeastern United States.

Graduating? We’d like to celebrate with you!

Are you graduating this year from high school, GED, college, a career technical education program, or military boot camp? Please notify the higher education department so that we can recognize you and celebrate your colossal accomplishment. Did you know that we have some beautiful cedar bark mortarboards that can be checked out for graduation ceremonies?

This is also the perfect time to discuss how we can support you in your future educational or employment goals. Submit your information on the MyTribe. If you have any questions, contact Clint Guevara at highereducation@coquilletribe.org or call 541-435-7979.

HAND DRUM & MAPLE BARK SKIRT WORKSHOP



From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Saturday and Sunday, May 16 & 17, the Culture Department will be hosting a workshop where participants can make either a square hand drum or a maple bark skirt. There are only ten spots available per class, so, RSVP quickly!

This free workshop will be held at Otter Haws, 495 Miluk Drive. All materials and a meal will be provided. You must be part of a Tribal household to participate.

Reserve your spot today by contacting Jared Schmidt at jaredschmidt@coquilletribe.org.



Chair Continued from page 1

For generations, we have longed to have the facilities and staff to take on this responsibility. Many Tribal citizens worked to make this happen, and while some have passed on without seeing it come to fruition, today we honor them through this achievement. I was proud to hear at our last repatriation team meeting that Coquille People will soon begin welcoming our ancestors’ items back and blessing them into our homelands.

This is a significant step toward strengthening our sovereignty as a nation and embracing the healing that comes with it. Today, we are upholding our Coquille values by protecting our ancestors. I am so proud of those who have contributed to this work, and of those who came before us that made it a priority. Masi!

Important elections

In addition to our regular Tribal Council meetings in April, I spent time getting to know some of the candidates in Coos County who are running for important positions. These include vacancies on the Coos County Commission (Rod Taylor is retiring) and for state representative of district nine, following Representative Boomer Wright’s retirement announcement.

There are several candidates stepping forward, and we know these roles are vital to our community. The county commissioner makes decisions on public safety, roads, and other essential services, while the state representative plays a key role in supporting legislation that benefits our community and in protecting our sovereignty.

I always try to take time to educate candidates about



Photo by Lyman B. Meade
Chair Meade (left) and Cindy Elbert process maple bark at Otter Haws for an upcoming maple bark skirt class.

the Tribe’s role in the region. I remind them that we are one of the largest employers in Coos County, we provide healthcare services to Tribal citizens and the broader community, we are excellent stewards of our lands, water, and resources, and we co-manage over ten million acres of fish and wildlife habitat with the Oregon

Department of Fish and Wildlife, just to name a few. We also seek opportunities to collaborate and strengthen our shared community.

I often ask candidates what ideas they have for partnering with the Tribes, how they would work with us, and whether they understand Tribal sovereignty. Their answers matter. I encourage you to stay engaged as well and meet your candidates wherever you live, because local government decisions directly impact our daily lives.

OTP seeks certification

April also included our support of the KoKwel Wellness Center’s OTP clinic as it underwent Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities accreditation. This process serves as an independent review to ensure our Opioid Treatment Programs meet high standards for safety, efficiency, and the holistic care we strive to provide.

We will soon learn whether there are areas for improvement which will be valuable for our team. Based on my interview with the surveyor, I believe our team is doing an excellent job. The Tribal Council will receive the official report from our Health and Wellness CEO and Executive Board soon.

In closing, I want to share my thoughts and prayers with those who are struggling with illness or who have recently lost a loved one.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to call me at 541-297-8803 or reach out to any of your Tribal Council representatives. You can also contact the administration office at 541-756-0904 or 800-344-8583.

For now, Shuenhahni! (Take care!) I look forward to seeing you soon.

Coquille Indian Tribe

Tribal Council

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Rep. Don Garrett
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Rep. Tony DiBenedetto

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Tribal Government CEO Mark Johnston
Office of Strategic Operations - Fauna Hill
Programs & Services - Bridgett Wheeler
Natural Resources - John Ogan
Human Resources - Sharon Mumford
Finance - Kyle ViksneHill
Administrative Services - Kay Collins
Information Tech - Russell Crochetiere
Communications - Tim Novotny

Tribal Court

Chief Judge Melissa Cribbins
Clerk Denise Hunter
541-756-0904, 800-622-5869

Culture Department

Director Lyman B. Meade 541-297-5582

Education & Language Services
Director Marsha Frost 541-982-3343

Tribal Police

Emergency: 911
Interim-Chief Scott LeFevre
2602 Mexeye Loop Coos Bay, OR. 97420
541-252-7135

Nasomah Health Group

Manager Brenda Borchman
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Ko-Kwel Wellness Center

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Learning Center

Ed. Programs Manager - Becky Cantrell
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Housing Authority

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541-888-6501, 800-988-6501

Mith-lh-kwuh (Tribal One)

Chief Executive Officer Judy Farm
3201 Tremont St. North Bend, OR. 97459
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CEDCO

CEO Margaret Simpson 800-953-4800

Gaming Commission

Chairman Larry Simpson
541-756-5664, 800-953-4800

Tribal Development Program

Kippy Robbins 541-756-8800 ext. 2207

Tribal family and staff enjoy new skin art



Clockwise from top left:

- KC and Brooke Chisley get matching tattoos on their ring fingers.
- Jennifer Trospen gets a hummingbird with her grandmother's fingerprint embedded in the design.
- Jean Flintsmith from communications partakes in ankle pain.
- Christina Braun from human resources gets an hourglass tattoo.
- Anna Cole gets a giant jellyfish on her arm.
- Nichole Howe gets a piercing at the tattoo festival.

Photos by Jamie Villa and Jennifer Trospen

