



News Release

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

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For immediate release: August 9, 2023

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CTUIR Opposes ODFW Agreement with Grande Ronde

Mission, OR – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) stands firm in its opposition to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission’s (ODFW) recent decision approving a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and corresponding administrative rules allowing tribal members from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (CTGR) to co-manage fish and wildlife resources and expand tribal member hunting throughout most of western Oregon, including areas that overlap with CTUIR’s usual and accustomed places as guaranteed in the CTUIR’s Treaty of 1855.

The August 4, 2023 vote passed 4-3, despite strong disapproval, and several requests for further consultation, by the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and the Nez Perce Tribe), as well as sports fishers who provided testimony urging the ODFW to take no action and to allow for further consultation with affected sovereigns and other affected parties.

“The State’s actions with respect to the Grand Ronde Tribe’s MOA departed sharply from the agreements it entered with four other tribes. For those agreements the state required concerns of other tribes to be addressed and resolved. The opposite approach was taken here. The Four Columbia River Treaty Tribes were simply asking ODFW to complete consultation to address our specific concern in the MOA regarding the broad geographical area proposed in the agreement. The encroachment and potential impacts to our Treaty reserved Usual and Accustomed fishing areas at Willamette Falls and the Lower Columbia were not considered by some ODFW Commissioners in last week’s decision. Indeed, it appeared that some of the Commissioners were not aware of the nature of our Treaty rights and the potential for conflicts” said Corinne Sams, Chair of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC). Sams is also a Member at Large of the CTUIR Board of Trustees.

“We also feel ODFW has not been fully transparent or engaged in consultation with Oregon’s recreational fishers. This agreement will have impacts specific to Oregon’s recreational fishery as the fish take will come out of the state’s allocation of the 50-50 share between treaty tribes and the State pursuant to the US v. Oregon court case, which Grande Ronde is not a party to. This means less fish for Oregon’s recreational fishers to harvest, a resource heavily relied on by many non-tribal fishers.” Sams said.

CTUIR, along with CRITFC tribes, will take a unified approach in continuing to educate the State of Oregon on Treaty reserved rights that have been ratified and the Treaty of 1855.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes, formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the treaty rights guaranteed under federal statute.

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