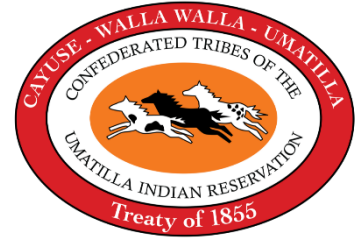


# Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

## PRESS RELEASE

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### CTUIR, ODOT and Umatilla County Open New Thornhollow Bridge

MISSION – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Umatilla County representatives held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 8 to open a new Thornhollow Bridge, six years after the old bridge was deemed unsafe for use.

Located about 13 miles east of Mission along Thornhollow Road on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the bridge was substantially damaged by flooding in February 2020 and removed in 2022.

The bridge, up until its demolition, was considered the closest river crossing for those residing north of the Umatilla River and in the Thornhollow area. With the bridge gone, residents had to detour either north or south of the bridge site.

“During the flooding we saw a number of disasters, but one of the major ones was the bridge loss here,” CTUIR Board of Trustees Chair N. Kathryn Brigham said. “We want to thank everybody here who helped with the construction of the bridge. It’s great to have this open again because a number of tribal people had to go to Cayuse, to Mission or Walla Walla, and that’s no longer needed because they have a choice that’s much closer and much safer.”

Although the ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on May 8, traffic had been crossing the bridge since April 21 when liability of it was transferred from ODOT to Umatilla County. Construction was finished on April 20 when striping for the project was completed.

“I just want to thank everyone in the community who wanted to see this open again. I wanted to thank you for your impatience,” Dani Schulte, CTUIR Planning Department senior planner, “I think this persistence is what really got this done. It was a long project, and it probably would have been even longer if we hadn’t had the people in the community demanding it.”

ODOT Region 5 Manager Ken Patterson said because Thornhollow Road is not a federal aid road there was no certainty of funding for the bridge after it was demolished. However, he said a provision in federal COVID relief money allowed for off-system bridges, and because Umatilla County had started the engineering on a new bridge, ODOT was able to fund it.

“This project to me is an example of persistence, resilience and creativity,” Patterson said. “If this is the third bridge, I want it to be the last bridge. Thanks for the patience, and I hope this serves the community for a long time.”

Overall, the project cost was budgeted at \$5.3 million through ODOT’s Local Bridge Program, which included design engineering, construction, right-of-way and construction engineering costs. The county provided a 10.27% match. HP Civil Inc. of Salem installed the bridge over the Umatilla River as well as roadway approaches to the bridge.

*Note: The CTUIR uses Thornhollow instead of Thorn Hollow, which is the official U.S. Geological Survey spelling.*

*The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla Tribes, and 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 reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.*

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Caption: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Board of Trustees (BOT) Chair N. Kathryn Brigham cuts the ribbon on May 8 opening the new Thornhollow Bridge, six years after it was damaged by flooding and deemed unsafe to use. From left are CTUIR Planning Department Senior Planner Dani Schulte, Oregon Department of Transportation Region 5 Liaison Michelle Owen, BOT Treasurer Raymond Huesties, Brigham, BOT Secretary Monica Paradise, BOT Vice Chairman Aaron Ashley and Umatilla County Commissioner Dan Dorran. CTUIR