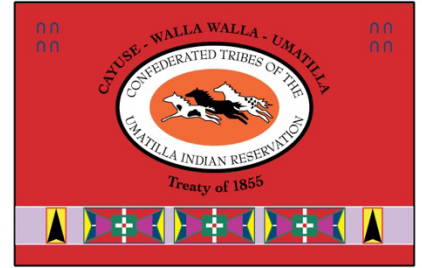


Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation



PRESS RELEASE

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March 22, 2024

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CTUIR Awarded \$3M for Wastewater Treatment Plant

MISSION, Ore. – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation (CTUIR) learned March 11 that it will receive \$3 million in federal funding to build a wastewater treatment plant to recycle water for non-potable uses such as irrigation.

The funding stems from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as part of federal investments to, in part, secure important programs for tribes and support critical projects for Oregon communities.

CTUIR officials applauded the appropriation as it will help the tribe treat up to 1.5 million gallons of wastewater per day when the facility is built.

“The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation are tremendously grateful to Sens. Merkley and Wyden for their efforts in securing this crucial funding for our much-needed wastewater treatment plant,” CTUIR Chairman Gary I. Burke said. “Once constructed, this facility will allow the CTUIR to produce water for irrigation needs while reducing groundwater usage from local aquifers. This project will also facilitate economic and community development as well as housing opportunities on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, while limiting the impact to our crucial groundwater resources.”

Justin Northern, CTUIR Public Works director, said he was unsure when the tribe would receive the funds, but it will supplement \$15 million the CTUIR has designated for the \$42 million project. Public Works has also coordinated with local and state officials and agencies for additional grant funding opportunities.

Public Works will operate the facility on tribal property along Mission Road, including 60 acres of engineered wetlands. After the community’s wastewater is recycled, the facility will pump it to the wetlands near the Tamástsiikt Cultural Institute and Wildhorse Resort & Casino Golf Course.

“The goal is to build a wastewater treatment and reclamation system to provide resiliency for the community in the most ecologically responsible manner,” Northern said. “We have put together an innovative system to treat the wastewater using natural processes via biological extended aeration and non-chemical disinfection. The treatment and reclamation process will produce a valuable resource for reuse as Class A-recycled water suitable for watering lawns and gardens, including fruit and vegetable

plants. Treating the wastewater resource to a Class A-recycled water will provide a variety of options for its reuse as the community grows.”

The project will also conserve aquifer water by maintaining the current level of demand while serving the needs of the growing community.

“Currently the golf course consumes approximately 300 acre-feet of water annually, which is about 25% of CTUIR’s consumptive use allowance,” Northern said. “This project will allow CTUIR to convert the irrigation of the resort’s golf course from potable water to recycled water. This project will allow for reuse on the golf course and other landscaping areas, thus significantly increasing CTUIR’s potable water capacity for the priority goals of the CTUIR such as housing and economic development.”

Construction on the facility is expected to start in late 2025 with a completion goal in late 2027.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, who wrote a bill encompassing the EPA funding, said he’s heard firsthand Oregonians demand modernizing water infrastructure to ensure clean drinking water and sanitary systems along with protecting public lands and waters.

“The (Department of) Interior bill I wrote and pushed to pass delivers on these priorities by funding environmental programs, community-initiated projects and programs supporting tribal communities that will benefit Oregonians in every corner of the state for years to come,” he said.

Sen. Ron Wyden said the statewide federal investments help secure resources that protect water quality and preserve natural treasures.

“I’m gratified for the teamwork with Oregon and tribal communities and Sen. Merkley has produced such direct and robust support for wildfire, water and climate projects in every nook and cranny of our state,” he said.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla 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: Shown is an engineered wetland. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation will receive \$3 million in federal funding to build a wastewater treatment plant to recycle water for non-potable uses such. The project will include building an engineered wetland near the Tamástsiikt Cultural Institute and Wildhorse Resort & Casino Golf Course. Courtesy Photo