



The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon

Umpqua Molalla Rogue River Kalapuya Chasta

Phone (503) 879-2301

Fax (503) 879-5964

1-800-422-0232

9615 Grand Ronde Road

Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Chair Pamela Knowles and Board of Directors
Willamette Falls Trust
PO Box 2588
Oregon City, OR 97045

Formal Withdrawal from the Board of Directors of the Willamette Falls Trust

Dear Chair Knowles and the Willamette Falls Trust Board of Directors,

On behalf of the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, I am writing to express our deep concerns about the continued harmful practices of the Willamette Falls Trust and to notify you of our formal withdrawal from our position on the Board of Directors.

In our letter to you on July 13, 2020, we shared many concerns about the harms perpetuated during a public presentation by the Willamette Falls Trust and your contractor, MASS Design. We explained our deep historical and ancestral connection to Willamette Falls and requested that the Willamette Falls Trust honor our tribal sovereignty moving forward. We made two specific requests: 1) reexamination of the appropriate roles of the Willamette Falls Trust and reconsideration of your contractors; and 2) commitment to the principles of transparency, accountability, and partnership with a change in practices going forward. In response, your board issued a formal apology and indicated a firm commitment to do better. Unfortunately, that has not been our experience. The practices of the Willamette Falls Trust have not improved.

There have been many instances of continued undermining of our tribal sovereignty and subjection to microaggressions at both the staff and board levels. For example:

- In a communication to board members in February, the Tribe was presented with an ultimatum - sign our very broad confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement or you may not attend our next board meeting. These same agreements when initially sent to the Tribe were branded with the colonial name "Rediscover the Falls," the prior name of the Willamette Falls Trust. We expressed our concern about the nature of the agreement because we believe the Trust should be more transparent in its activities in relationship to a public project. Further, the decision to exclude board members never came before the board to determine exclusion protocols.
- On February 22, when a presentation was scheduled to present a project update and discuss the special partner's meeting, staff of the Willamette Falls Trust refused entry

Treaties

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



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to the Zoom meeting to our Council Secretary Jon George and Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez; even after they had requested to participate in the update.

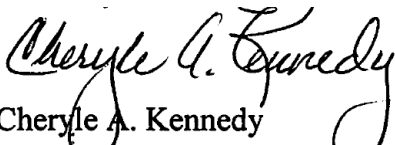
These insulting and harmful practices do not demonstrate in any way a commitment to transparency, accountability, or partnership.

Additionally, the Trust regularly sends out public communications mentioning the Tribe's work at Willamette Falls without prior notice, permission, or coordination. However, when the Tribe provides the Trust with important studies or information, that information is not given due consideration and is often ignored or dismissed. The Trust's repeated communication failures have become the norm and not the exception in our relationship.

Our Chief-of-Staff, Stacia Hernandez, will serve as the primary point of contact for the Trust. She may be reached via email at: Stacia.Martin@grandronde.org

The Tribe holds the vision of the future of Willamette Falls to be sacred with our ancestors and are committed to seeing that vision through. We will continue to proactively move forward by cleaning up the heavily polluted area to create an inspiring place where all can gather and enjoy the majesty of Willamette Falls.

Hayu Masi (Many thanks),


Cheryle A. Kennedy
Tribal Council Chairwoman

Cc: Tribal Council

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