

Proclamation

Board of Commissioners for Washington County

A PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH 2023

WHEREAS, Washington County honors the cultures, traditions and accomplishments of Native Americans that have shaped our country, while also acknowledging our nation's history of colonialism that has inflicted discrimination, deprivation, violence and genocide upon Indigenous People; and

WHEREAS, the area currently known as Washington County, Oregon rests on land that was first inhabited by the Atfalati-Kalapuyans, also called the Tualatin people, who flourished here for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, with the arrival of White settlers in the 1830s, conflicts over their tribal lands and the eventual theft of their homeland along with forced removal to the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation in 1856—the Atfalati people faced the destruction of their culture, lifeways and their very existence; and,

WHEREAS, from 1880 through 1885, one of the first off-reservation Indian boarding schools in the nation was located in Forest Grove where many native children were sent to assimilate to white culture, causing them to become disconnected from their families, community, native culture and language. The tragic consequences of this disconnection still persist to this day through generational trauma and hardship; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation was terminated by the United States Congress in 1954, causing the displacement and disenfranchisement of thousands of native peoples of Oregon, including the Atfalati-Kalapuyans, who were then forced to leave the former reservation, causing further loss of native languages and culture; and

WHEREAS, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon was reestablished as a recognized Native Nation on November 22, 1983, with the Atfalati people as members, which began the healing process of restoring the tribe, community and cultures of the tribal nation; and

WHEREAS, the Atfalati people endure to this day as members of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, and after overcoming numerous setbacks over the years in the struggle to regain treaty-acquired land and federal recognition as a sovereign nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community have established a successful government, serving the needs of their members and also generously supporting the advancement of underserved communities throughout northwest Oregon; and

WHEREAS, we recognize and celebrate the fact that tribal culture is rich and thriving, successfully connecting the past with future generations through lifeways education, increasing knowledge and use of native language and renewed connections to ancestral homelands; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that local government support for sovereign tribal rights to land, water and subsistence living are vital to repairing the harm caused by colonization, racism and government failure; and

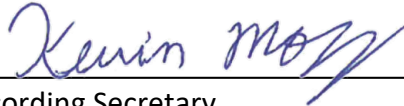
WHEREAS, we seek to repair the trauma of past oppression and broken trust—both locally and regionally—by lifting up Indigenous cultures and voices and striving together to build a future of shared hope and promise for all. We pledge to center the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples in decision-making and welcome open dialogue and courageous conversations to advance this work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on this 24th day of October 2023, the Board of County Commissioners do hereby proclaim November 2023 as Native American Heritage Month; a time to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures of Indigenous People, to raise awareness about our shared history and the continuing work of decolonization and acknowledge the important ongoing contributions that Native Americans make in our community and across our nation.





Jerry Willey, Chair Pro Tem



Recording Secretary

23-266

Minute Order