

Proclamation

Board of Commissioners for Washington County

A PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS, Washington County is committed to creating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity and ensures all residents have equitable opportunities to lead healthy, peaceful, safe and sustainable lives; and

WHEREAS, in honoring the cultures, traditions and accomplishments of Native Americans that have shaped our country, we also acknowledge 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, settlers began arriving in what would become Washington County in the 1830s to take land from the Atfalati that was not ceded nor paid for until 1855 under the Willamette Valley treaty; and,

WHEREAS, the Atfalati signed an 1851 treaty with the United States which was never ratified, and in 1855 signed on to the Willamette Valley Treaty with many other tribes, which was ratified, ceding all of their lands to the United States in exchange for a permanent reservation, supplies and services; and

WHEREAS, the Atfalati owned Wapato Lake in Washington County previous to their removal and the lake was drained to make farm lands, destroying the vast wapato fields, which were principle resources of the Atfalati people for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, the Atfalati were removed to the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation in 1856, where they were treated badly by the United States government and Indian agents, being denied land, adequate food, medicines and services for nearly 20 years, causing many native people to live in poverty and to suffer untimely deaths; and

WHEREAS, the first off-reservation Indian boarding school in Oregon was established in Forest Grove and many native students from area reservations were removed from their families and sent there—forced to stop speaking their languages and to assimilate away from their native culture, causing generations of trauma and dissociation from their culture and community; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation was terminated by the United States Congress in 1954 in Public Law 588, causing the displacement and disenfranchisement of thousands of native peoples of Oregon, including the Atfalati peoples, 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 restored in 1983 under Public Law 98-165, with the Atfalati people as members, beginning the 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, having survived catastrophic diseases, loss of their ancestral lands, forced relocation to a reservation, long-term mismanagement at the reservation, family separations through the removal of children to boarding schools, and termination; and

WHEREAS, after overcoming numerous setbacks over the years 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 to serve the needs of their members and also generously support the advancement of underserved communities throughout northwest Oregon; 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;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on this third day of November 2020, the Washington County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim November 2020 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 acknowledge the important contributions that Native Americans have made to our community and our nation.

Kathryn Harrington, Chair

Recording Secretary

Minute Order