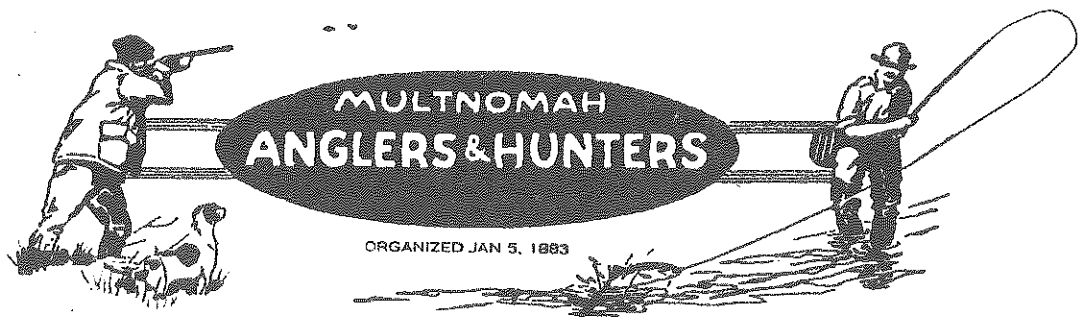


# Public Correspondence\*

**Stewardship of Tribal Lands and Ceremonial Harvest of Big Game Animals by the  
Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation**

Correspondence received as of April 3, 2008





January 30, 2008

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Commission  
3406 Cherry Avenue N.E.  
Salem, OR 97303

To the Commission:

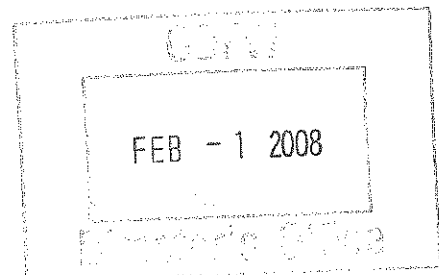
On behalf of the Multnomah Anglers & Hunters, Oregon's Oldest Sportsman's Organization, I urge you to approve a new category of hunting permits for ceremonial use by Grand Ronde tribal members. Many of our members hunt in the Trask Unit and don't feel that increasing the number of permits will be a detriment to the number of animals taken. There are probably more animals lost to poachers than the tribe will ever get for their ceremonial and cultural harvest.

Please authorize the ceremonial harvest of animals for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. Thank you.

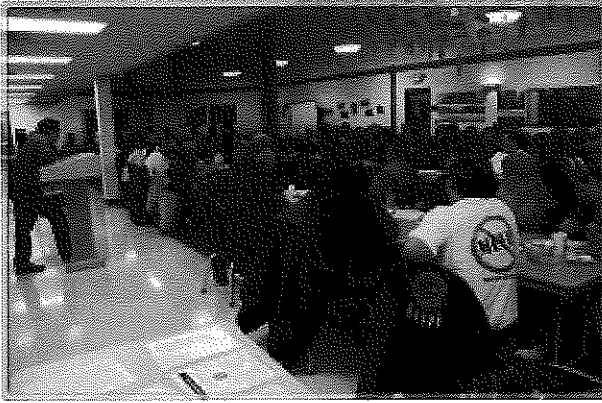
James Cassidy, President

Multnomah Anglers & Hunters  
PO Box 13771  
Portland, OR 97213-0771

Cc: Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde



## The return of the ceremonial hunt



By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Dozens of Tribal hunters convened at the Community Center on Jan. 30 to pave the way for the return of Tribal ceremonial hunts.

The Tribe is awaiting a mid-April decision by the state Fish and Wildlife Commission that is expected to return its

sovereign right to hunt for ceremonial game outside of state-sanctioned hunting seasons.

While the commission, of course, could turn down the Tribal proposal, it already has the support of Gov. Ted Kulongoski and a number of commissioners, including Chair Marla Rae, who toured the Tribe's timberlands in August 2007 and signed a proclamation in support of Tribal ceremonial hunts.

Never mentioned in previous treaties, the right to ceremonial hunts was lost to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde during Restoration in 1983.

The Tribe needed to secure state support for the Restoration effort before the federal government would approve it, and to obtain that support the state required the Tribe to sign a Consent Decree that excluded Tribal members from hunting, fishing or trapping outside of hunting seasons designated for the public.

That meant no hunting out of season for Tribal members, and that meant that any Tribal ceremonies occurring outside of hunting season would not have fresh traditional foods, as has long been Indian tradition.

"They had us between a rock and a hard place," said Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy at the Jan. 30 meeting.

The Tribe took what it could get in 1983, and has since proven itself competent stewards of rivers, estuaries and woodlands, and the animals living within.

As a result, the Tribe is on the edge of receiving ever more of the rights of a sovereign nation, an issue that has resonated with Indians since treaties with the federal government took away long used and traditional hunting, fishing and gathering places.

Last summer's proclamation supported the Tribe's efforts to secure the right to take a limited number of deer, elk and bear for ceremonial purposes.

The Tribe is pushing for a Fish & Wildlife administrative rule formalizing the proclamation in mid-April, Tribal Attorney Rob Greene told the group on Jan. 30.

If all goes as expected, ceremonial hunting tags will be available on written request by the Tribe. They will be valid in the Trask hunting area, generally for periods when no other big game hunting is allowed.

The Trask Game Unit includes a little more than 1,000 square miles of big game habitat. It runs east and west from the Cascades Range (with Mt. Hood) to the coast, and from McMinnville and Grand Ronde on the south to Forest Grove and Tillamook on the north.

It represents a very small part of the lands the Tribes of today's Grand Ronde confederation ceded to the federal government in the 1850s. Those lands extend from the Columbia River on the north to California on the south, and from the coast to the Cascade Range.

And though the Trask already is considered over-hunted by many in the Tribe, nobody is complaining at the moment.

In the Community Center meeting, Tribal Council leaders Kennedy and Reyn Leno joined Tribal lawyers, members of the Tribal Fishing and Wildlife Committee and, of course, Tribal hunters in discussing what needs to be done in anticipation of the new administrative rule.

To make this year's ceremonial hunts possible, the Tribe has set itself a number of tasks, including:

Tribal hunters and helpers are being notified about the opportunity.

The Tribal Fish and Wildlife Committee will review applications and select hunters based on experience and other factors, and pick helpers to harvest the ceremonial kills.

The Tribe intends to make a truck available to help hunters and helpers pack harvested animals out of the woods.

The Tribe is expanding the number of freezers available at the Natural Resources Department for storing harvested animals.

The Tribe also will undertake an education campaign to keep the public apprised of what Tribal hunters are doing, and where and when they are doing it, to prevent "out of season hunting" misunderstandings.

The first concrete results of the ongoing education campaign came at the end of January when the Multnomah Anglers & Hunters expressed written support of the effort to the state Fish & Wildlife Commission.

"There are probably more animals lost to poachers than the Tribe will ever get for their ceremonial and cultural harvest," the letter said.

Although the number of ceremonial hunting tags is far fewer than would be needed to feed those attending most Tribal ceremonies, the Tribe negotiated a minimum number of tags with the state — nine elk, 15 deer and three bear — as a start.

"We could have gone for everything and got nothing," said Tribal Council Vice Chair Leno at the Jan 30 meeting.

Bag limits for each hunter will be limited to one large game kill.

The number of tags remains negotiable, however, said Leno, which is why "it's critical this first year to fill every tag we can."

All animal parts will remain the property of the Tribe and no hunter will be allowed to retain any part of the harvested game for trophy-type purposes.

Once the administrative rule is approved, the Tribe will still have to serve some frozen food along with fresh ceremonial kills because a minimum of 60 deer would be needed to feed Tribal members at most ceremonial events, said Tribal Fish and Wildlife coordinator Kelly Dirksen.

Other comparisons also are helpful to show how small a request the first ceremonial licenses actually represent. In 2006, for example, the Tribal harvest in the Trask Unit included 42 deer, 129 elk and zero bear.

For all hunters that year, the harvest in the Trask Unit included 887 deer, 810 elk and 24 bear.

This new rule will be the culmination of many years of work, Kennedy said.

And today, Tribal hunters are thinking further ahead to father/son, father/daughter hunting teams. Education on skinning deer and elk is anticipated by some, and hides will be kept available for teaching tanning. Education also will include prayers and the process for preparing a ceremonial dinner.

"It's so important that we show good and proper stewardship for the program to grow and succeed," said Tribal member Kevin Schultz, who is also secretary of the Fish and Wildlife Committee.

"And the answer to the big question is," Leno said, "no spotlighting."