



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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Colville Tribes Purchases Ancestral Homeland Property in Franklin County WA

NESPELEM, WA—The Colville Tribes has purchased approximately 184 acres near Pasco, Washington as part of a long-term strategy to buy back lands in its historic territories for cultural and economic development purposes, Rodney Cawston, Chairman of the Colville Business Council said today.

“The members of our Tribes have historic ties to lands throughout Eastern and Central Washington, and like many other Tribes across the country, we are endeavoring to acquire property where our ancestors lived,” Cawston said.

“The Tri-Cities area is the traditional homeland of the Palus, one of the 12 Tribes in the Colville Confederation, and it has been since time immemorial,” he said.

Cawston said the land purchased by the Tribes near Pasco also will be used to provide tribal governmental services to Tribal members who live in the Kennewick /Richland/Pasco area. Several hundred Colville members live in and around these cities.

“We will use this property for projects that support the general welfare of our Tribal members on and off our Reservation,” Cawston said. “The Tribes’ economic development efforts there are intended to provide employment opportunities for Colville members and members of other Tribes in the area, as well as for the surrounding communities in general.”

Cawston said he hopes to meet with Franklin County Commissioners and Pasco’s Mayor and City Council, among other local officials, in the near future.

“We can get better acquainted, learn more about our respective governments, and talk about how to cooperate on development of the property in ways that would benefit not just the Colville Tribes, but all area residents,” Cawston said.

“We intend to be good neighbors,” he said. “If we work together toward shared goals, it will truly be amazing what we can accomplish.”

Cawston said the Tribes is considering a number of economic development projects, including a gaming operation.

“We will consult regularly with Franklin County officials, mayors and city councils in the Tri-Cities of Richland, Pasco and Kennewick, and other community leaders, as we develop plans,” Cawston said. “We want any tribal economic development project to benefit the entire area, creating good paying new jobs, increasing tourism, and providing a catalyst for a number of new businesses. I look forward to mutually-beneficial partnerships with Franklin County, the City of Pasco and other governments in this area.”

In 1885 after the Nez Perce War, 150 Palus and Nez Perce members with Chief Joseph and Yellow Bull were moved onto the Colville Reservation. Within time other Palus members who were not part of the Nez Perce War were moved onto the Colville Reservation where they joined their relatives.

“Nez Perce and Palus members on the Colville Reservation always lamented the loss of their sacred homelands, which hold the bones of our ancestors” said Chairman Cawston. “Many of our tribal members carry the names of our Palus and Nez Perce ancestors. We also carry on our traditional religion, our ceremonies and the teachings of our ancestors.”

“The Colville Tribes has been re-establishing our presence in our traditional homelands for many years,” he said. “Our Confederation is comprised of 12 Tribes whose territories stretch from the eastern crest of the Cascades to the Continental Divide, encompassing lands in what is now Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, as well as British Columbia, Canada. It has always been our hope to regain some of these lands for the benefit of our people today and for future generations.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation works to maintain and protect viable populations of native and desired non-native species of fish and wildlife and their supporting habitats, while providing sufficient numbers to meet the cultural, subsistence, recreational and economic needs of the tribal membership.

Today, more than 9,365 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The twelve tribes which compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation include: ščəlám̓xəx^w (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; sǎ́w̓yʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk^wəx^w (grass in the water) or Entiat; snʔáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mət̓x^wu (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx^w (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelem; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; sənp̓ʔw̓ilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnp̓əšq^wáwsəx^w (people in between) or Wenatchi.