



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

For Immediate Release
October 3, 2023

Contact: Neeka Somday
509-634-2213

Forestry Program Manager Joseph Holford Passes Away

(Nespelem, WA) — Forestry Program Manager Joseph Holford suddenly and unexpectedly passed away this weekend. He was only 48 years old.

A Colville tribal member perhaps better known by his nickname “Pugs,” Joseph Holford worked in forestry management in New Mexico and then Colville. Joseph had also previously served at times as Superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for Colville’s agency. Joseph earned an AS in Natural Resources Management from Haskell Indian Nations University in 1996 and a BS in Forest Resources Management from the University of Montana in 1999.

During 17 years of service, Joseph earned numerous Star Awards in his federal career. Star Awards are bestowed within the Department of Interior and its bureaus for achieving organizational results, providing quality customer service, displaying exemplary behavior or dedication or innovation, fostering partnerships, promoting diversity, and/or for ensuring safety in the workplace. Joseph participated on the Timber Sale Operating Group, which develops forestry policy.

The BIA Administration Office and the Forestry districts will be closed in Pugs’ honor, and they will resume normal operations on Tuesday, October 10th, 2023. A wake is scheduled for Thursday, October 5th, 2023 at 7 p.m. at the Inchelium School. The funeral is Friday, October 6th, 2023 at 10 a.m. at the Inchelium School. Colville tribal employees are permitted to attend the services.

Bryan Mercier, the Northwest Regional Director of the BIA, wished to express to the community how much Joseph meant to his colleagues at BIA. Chief Forester Pete Wakeland referred to Pugs as a “pillar” of tribal forestry.

The Chairman of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Jarred-Michael Erickson, said, “It was a shock to hear of Pugs’ sudden passing. Many of us had just seen him speak at a retirement lunch and noted how happy and healthy he seemed. It is a reminder to cherish every minute we get to spend with our loved ones. Our hearts and prayers go out to his family and the many friends and co-workers he leaves behind.”

###

About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,237 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: ščəlámxəx^w (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; sǰ^wyʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk^wəx^w (grass in the water) or Entiat; snǰáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mət^wx^wu (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx^w (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelam; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; sənǰ^wilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnpəšq^wáwsəx^w (people in between) or Wenatchi.