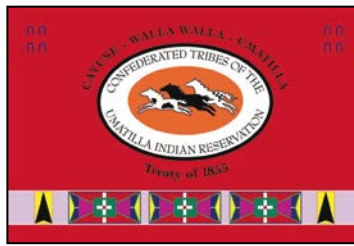


Confederated Tribes *of the*
Umatilla Indian Reservation

Department of Natural Resources



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September 11, 2020

Eric Mendenhall
Community Development Manager
City of West Richland
3100 Belmont Blvd.
West Richland, Washington 99353

Submitted Electronically to: emendenhall@westrichland.org

Dear Mr. Mendenhall:

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Cultural Resources Protection Program (CRPP) provides the following comments on the West Richland Shoreline Master Program Periodic Review 2020. The CTUIR would like the Shoreline Master Plan to specifically reference and include more information about tribal First Foods and the habitats those foods rely upon. The CTUIR would like the wapato (*sagittaria latifolia*) and dogbane hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*) site I showed you on September 9, 2020 be included as a preservation area in the Plan. The CTUIR would also like to ensure shoreline areas are accessible for tribal fishing. Finally, the CTUIR would like to have access of CTUIR tribal members acknowledged for the exercise of reserved treaty rights to gather First Food resources and raw materials such as the dogbane hemp.

The CTUIR is a federally-recognized Indian tribe, with a reservation in Northeast Oregon and ceded, aboriginal, and usual and accustomed areas in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and other Northwest states. In 1855, predecessors to the CTUIR—ancestors with the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes—negotiated and signed the Treaty of 1855 with the United States. The Treaty is a contract between sovereigns and is “the supreme Law of the Land” under the United States Constitution. In the Treaty the CTUIR ceded millions of acres of land to the federal government, and in exchange received assurances that various pre-existing tribal rights would be protected, and our interests would be respected, in perpetuity. A paramount objective in the Treaty was protecting and maintaining our tribal First Foods—water, fish, big game, roots, berries, and other plants—and the habitats and environmental conditions that support and sustain them, then, now, and forever. This remains a paramount objective of the CTUIR as we have a reciprocal responsibility to respectfully care for, harvest, share, and consume traditional foods, or the foods may be lost.

As noted, our Treaty of 1855 specifically reserves of our pre-existing right to access the First Foods, in Article 1, which states:

Provided, also, That the exclusive right of taking fish in the streams running through and bordering said reservation is hereby secured to said Indians, and at all other usual and accustomed stations in common with citizens of the United States, and of erecting suitable buildings for curing the same; the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries and pasturing their stock on unclaimed lands in common with citizens, is also secured to them.

The CTUIR DNR recognizes the importance of the protection and perpetuation of our First Foods as our mission statement asserts:

To protect, restore, and enhance the First Foods - water, salmon, deer, cous, and huckleberry - for the perpetual cultural, economic, and sovereign benefit of the CTUIR. We will accomplish this utilizing traditional ecological and cultural knowledge and science to inform: 1) population and habitat management goals and actions; and 2) natural resource policies and regulatory mechanisms.

The protection of our First Foods acknowledges the connection between our ancestral homelands and our ancestors, and helps to ensure the perpetuation of practices which have occurred since time immemorial and continue to this day. These First Foods represent a physical and spiritual connection to our past just as archaeological sites are the physical connection we have to the lands our ancestors used. Many habitats where the First Foods are found are associated with archaeological sites for the very logical reason that tribal members needed these resources thousands of years ago just as they do today.

Lastly, the CTUIR-CRPP encourages the City of West Richland to send notifications to the CTUIR when comments are open for such plans in the future. The City of West Richland is within the CTUIR's ceded lands and we want to work with the City of West Richland on future preservation and management actions of our cultural and natural resources. The CRPP appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Plan. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Respectfully,



Teara Farrow Ferman, Program Manager
Cultural Resources Protection Program