

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY STAFF PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

Date: 10/2/2025
Department: COO/GAPD Tribal Affairs
Meeting Date: 10/9/2025

Presenter(s): Katie McDonald, she/her, tribal liaison; Stephanie Tabibian, she/her, tribal planner; Isabel LaCourse, she/they, Indigenous community liaison

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Length: 45 mins

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro created its Tribal Affairs Program in 2020. Since then, numerous projects and policies have been delivered, informed by consultation and engagement with multiple interested Tribes. Metro established its Indigenous Community Liaison Program officially in 2019, although Metro Parks and Nature engaged with the urban Native community for several years prior through other parks staff positions. Through the Indigenous Community Liaison program, numerous opportunities to connect and reconnect urban Indigenous community members with the lands and important resources Metro stewards have occurred.

This presentation is a collaboration between Metro's Tribal Affairs Program and Indigenous Community Liaison Program to share and discuss successes, lessons learned and agency progress in the last calendar year's implementation of both programs with Metro Council.

ACTION REQUESTED

No specific action is requested at this time.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Metro Council and staff will deepen their understanding of Metro's Tribal Affairs Program and Indigenous Community Liaison Program. This increased awareness will help Metro Council and staff identify opportunities where Metro's projects, programs and activities can further support addressing the distinct interests and priorities of Tribes in Metro's work and meet the needs of the urban Native community in Metro Parks and Nature's work.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The staff presentation today continues Metro's commitment to uplifting the important work of the respective Tribal Affairs and Indigenous Community Liaison programs at the agency. This presentation is also provided as part of Metro's continued recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day, occurring the second Monday of October annually. The presentation will cover successes and milestones that have been achieved in the calendar year since Indigenous Peoples Day 2024. Staff will highlight policy and practice improvements that have occurred across the agency in response to goals identified in

Metro's Tribal Affairs Agenda, priorities shared by numerous Tribes in the course of consulting and engaging on various areas of Metro's work, and values and goals shared by the urban Indigenous community with Parks and Nature.

Metro's Tribal Affairs Program consults and engages interested Tribes with historical and contemporary connections to what is now known as the greater Portland area. Listed alphabetically, these Tribes include: the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe and Nez Perce Tribe. Through tribal conservation partnership projects at the Oregon Zoo, Metro's Tribal Affairs Program reaches additional Tribes across the state of Oregon and northern California.

The Tribal Affairs Program also leads Metro's engagement with local and regional tribal-led organizations such as the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, as well as local, regional and national Native non-profit organizations such as the Native Youth and Family Association, Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, Future Generations Collaborative, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation and the National Native American Boarding School and Healing Coalition, among many others.

Metro's Indigenous Community Liaison Program engages with and serves the rich and diverse urban Native communities across the greater Portland area who descend from and represent over 380 distinct Tribal Nations in the course of Parks and Nature's work. The Indigenous Community Liaison partners with a wide variety of programs and institutions including educational institutions, Native community-based organizations, tribal programs such as tribal education programs serving youth, and meets the needs of urban Indigenous families and individuals.

Council's continued support for the Tribal Affairs and Indigenous Community Liaison programs will further Metro's commitments to the goals stated in the Tribal Affairs Agenda and in the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Through discussing progress and lessons learned in both programs, Council can continue to encourage moving beyond proclamations of Indigenous Peoples Day and into meaningful action through institutional transformation that ensures Tribal and Native voices and priorities are incorporated into Metro's work.