

Yooyoolah

ONE WHO CALLS



COWLITZ TRIBAL NEWS
SPRING 2026 | 8TH EDITION

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Cover photo taken by Kyle Folden. "The first thing I learned about my Native roots and culture as a child was the use of Camas for food amongst our Coast Salish people. When my parents moved us to Roy, WA in the fall of 1990 from Graham WA, I was in the second grade. The next spring, the acre and a quarter property filled with a purple hue. My grandmother Kay Reichel Hecox and my father Richard Folden were very excited to see this and explained to my sister and I what an important food it was to our ancestors. Our family has always allowed the Camas to bloom out to promote propagation of more bulbs. We live in east Roy up the hill from Muck Creek Prairie backing up to Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM), near the old Smith Family cemetery that I descend from. The prairies out here are loaded with Camas!"

SUBMIT YOUR NEWS TO YOYOOLAH COWLITZ TRIBAL NEWS

We invite you to submit your articles, artwork, business information, photographs, event details, and member updates for our upcoming edition. To ensure your submission is considered for publication, please follow the guidelines below:

ARTICLES

- Submit in a Word document or a similar format
- Word limit: 500 words or fewer
- Include a title for the article
- Provide author credits
- Include your email address and phone number

Note: If you submit an article over the 500-word count, you grant CIT staff the permission to cut your piece down to the required length. Articles may be edited at the discretion of the editorial staff and will become the property of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

PHOTOS / IMAGES

(IF APPLICABLE):

- Submit high-resolution image format (.jpg, .png, .psd), original images
- Do not embed images in the document
- Clearly identify people, places, and other subjects
- Number images in the order of preference
- Include photo credits and descriptions of people or places for caption
- Provide text descriptions for images to aid those with visual impairments

QUESTIONS? Email us at: yooyoolah@cowlitz.org

MEMBER UPDATES

Member updates are brief announcements celebrating important life events. Please adhere to the following length guidelines to ensure space for all submissions:

- Birth Announcements:
Up to 100 words
- Engagements & Marriages:
Up to 100 words
- Obituaries/Passings:
Up to 250 words
- Graduations:
Limited to the graduate's name and degree earned

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in this publication do not reflect those of the editorial staff. Submissions must not contain defamatory, malicious, or libelous statements, or personal attacks against individuals, staff, Tribal organizations, administration, or the Cowlitz Indian Tribe as a whole.

LETTER FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN



By:
William
(Bill) Iyall

When I reflect on the generations of Cowlitz leadership that have shaped our Tribe, I think first of my grandparents, Frank and Ida Iyall, and the example they set for our family and our people.

My grandfather served as our first elected treasurer and as a delegate in Washington, D.C., helping lay the foundation in our fight for recognition and shaping where we stand as a Tribe today. When he passed too soon, my grandmother made sure that responsibility did not end with him. She kept our family connected to the Tribe and always reminded us that being Cowlitz means showing up for your people.

That commitment has continued across generations of my family. My uncles served the Tribe. My brother gave five decades of service. My sister gave three decades. I have now served more than thirty years myself. Each of us has carried forward what was passed down to us.

That is what this edition's theme, "For Generations," means to me. It is not enough to merely remember where we came from. Honoring our past and our ancestors also requires us to continue that work.

Today, we are building on that foundation in ways that strengthen the future of the Tribe. This past year, we had the honor of

Washington State Governor Bob Ferguson, Chairman Iyall, and GOIA Director Tim Reynon at the Centennial Accord, hosted at ilani.



hosting the Centennial Accord on Cowlitz land at ilani, bringing together Tribal leaders from across the state, Washington State Governor Ferguson, and his full cabinet. It was a powerful moment, not just for what was discussed, but for what it represented: the strength of our Tribe and the role we continue to play in shaping the future of our region and our state.

We are also continuing to advocate for our priorities at both the state and federal levels. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to testify before the U.S. House Appropriations Committee in Washington, D.C., calling for stronger federal investment in healthcare, public safety, roads, and water infrastructure. These investments are essential for serving our members and continuing our growth, while also upholding the federal trust responsibility. In Olympia, we have also been working to ensure Tribal voices are included in decisions about our natural resources, including supporting efforts to add Tribal representation to the Board of Natural Resources.

These efforts are all part of the same responsibility: to ensure that the decisions being made today reflect the needs of our people today and for generations to come.

You will also read more in this edition about the successful transition of the NorthStar Clinic to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. This monumental accomplishment is already expanding the Tribe's ability to serve our members and support our most vulnerable neighbors. It is work that will ultimately save lives. I want to thank the Cowlitz Economic Authority (CEA), Health and Human Services (HHS), Tribal administration and executive leadership, and everyone else involved in this transition. I could not be prouder of what this represents for the Tribe and the culmination of efforts that led us to this point.

At the same time, we continue to invest in the long-term strength of our people—through economic development, through programs and services that support our members, and through the careful planning of our reservation and cultural spaces. These are the decisions that will shape what the next generation inherits.

And in the midst of that work, we are reminded to come together and celebrate. In February, we honored 26 years of federal recognition, marking the moment our Tribe was formally recognized as a sovereign government after countless years of advocacy. February also gave us another reason for celebration, as we watched the Seahawks bring home a dominant Super Bowl victory. While different in many ways, both gave us a chance to connect across generations, and I hope that the summer months ahead offer us more opportunities to come together—whether rooting on the Mariners or celebrating the hopeful return of the Seattle SuperSonics.

As I reflect on all we have accomplished since my last letter to you all, I am humbled by the reality that it has been built on the legacy of those who came before us. And as I look to the future, I hope that the next seven generations of Cowlitz may one day say the same thing about us.

I am grateful for the strength of our people, for those who serve the Tribe, and for the shared commitment that continues to guide us forward—for generations.

In unity,
General Council Chairman William (Bill) Iyall

Seated in the fourth chair back from the head of the table on the left side, Cowlitz Frank Iyall next to John Collier at the White House with President Calvin Coolidge, seated at the end of the table on the right side, with other Tribal delegations, June 2, 1924, for the signing of the Indian Citizenship Act, or Snyder Act. Frank Iyall wrote the wording for the Snyder Act. John Collier ran the American Indian Defense Association. In 1934, he was the primary author and the driving force behind the 1934-Wheeler-Howard Indian Reorganization Act. Photo provided by the Iyall family. Caption by Richard Iyall, edited by Rod Van Mechelen.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

We are honored to share the Spring 2026 edition of *Yooyoolah* with you and your families. Centered on the theme **For Generations**, this issue celebrates our shared pasts, where we stand today, and where we are going.

Within these pages, you will find content that tells a story about our resilience as a people. The gathered letters, updates, articles, artwork, and more – all reflect how the Cowlitz Indian Tribe has carried forward generational knowledge, culture, and community, and how we continue to do so. We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed their time, talent, and stories to this edition. As a lasting piece of Tribal history, *Yooyoolah* will be archived on the Cowlitz website and mailed to all Tribal members. The featured cover artwork will be honored as part of this archive, representing the heart of this season's theme.

We hope this edition offers a moment of reflection and the opportunity to celebrate what it means to be Cowlitz, across generations.

With appreciation,
The Yooyoolah Editorial Team

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LETTER FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL VICE CHAIR



By Greg Hitchcock

In December 2025, I had the opportunity to take part in a panel discussion at the Northwest Indian Gaming Summit with several respected Tribal leaders from around our region. The panel was moderated by Brie Coyle Jones of Miller Nash LLP and included Chairwoman Amber Caldera of the Port

Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, Treasurer Joshua Gabel of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, Vice Chairwoman Loni Greninger of the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, and I representing the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

It was a good reminder that Tribal gaming is about much more than casinos. For many Tribes, gaming helps make modern Tribal government possible. It supports services for Elders and youth, health and education programs, jobs for Tribal and non-Tribal employees, and investments in land, housing, and infrastructure. Most importantly, it helps Tribes build stronger futures on their own terms.

One of the themes that came through clearly in our discussion was that Tribal gaming is deeply tied to sovereignty. The revenues generated through gaming are not simply profits in the ordinary business sense. They help Tribes govern, provide for their citizens, and plan for future generations. That is one reason Tribal leaders take the protection of Indian gaming so seriously.

We also talked about how quickly the gaming world is changing. New technologies and new business models are constantly emerging, and not all of them fit neatly within the legal and regulatory systems that

Tribes have worked hard to build. One example is the rise of so-called “event wagering contracts,” sometimes called prediction markets. These products are being presented by some companies as federally regulated financial contracts rather than gambling. But many Tribal leaders and regulators are concerned that they could become a way to bypass Tribal gaming compacts and weaken the legal framework that supports Indian gaming.

For me, the summit reinforced something important: Tribal gaming remains one of the strongest economic foundations many Tribes have, but it cannot be taken for granted. Protecting it requires vigilance, cooperation, and thoughtful leadership. I was proud that Cowlitz had a voice in that conversation, and I believe these discussions matter because the stakes are not only economic. They are about sovereignty, self-determination, and the well-being of Tribal communities for generations to come.

General Council Vice Chair Greg Hitchcock



Panelists at the Northwest Gaming Law Summit in December 2025.

LETTER FROM THE TRIBAL MANAGER

By Michael Watkins

As I reflect on the idea of “For Generations,” I am reminded that the work of the Tribal government today is only a small part of the much larger history and impact of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. At the same time, it is an honor to know that the work being carried out each day supports the nearly 5,000 Tribal members currently enrolled, while also laying a strong foundation for future generations.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the Tribal government this past year has been the launch of the new GWE Portal and the transition to bringing the GWE process in-house. This effort required extensive collaboration across departments, with staff dedicating hundreds of hours to building the system, developing resources, assisting Tribal members, and processing benefits. We are already witnessing the results of that work. For the Winter 2026 Benefit, 99 percent of Tribal members who completed their attestation received payment within the first week, offering a clear example of what is possible when our teams come together in service of Tribal members.

This spirit of collaboration and steady progress is also reflected in other areas of the Tribe’s work, including our Health and Human Services Department (HHS). In February, the Tribe officially assumed ownership of the



The Longview Administration Building in Longview, Washington.

NorthStar Clinic from Columbia River Mental Health Services, further expanding access to services and providing critical care to the community. HHS’ work has also drawn the attention of federal and regional partners, and we recently welcomed leadership from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Indian Health Board to tour our facilities. These visits offered an opportunity to share more about the services being delivered and the Tribe’s continued investment in generational wellness, and we are grateful to see this work being recognized by partners at a broader level.

These updates represent only a small portion of what is happening across the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Every day, staff are working to maintain services, support programs, and serve Tribal members. In the pages that follow, you will see more specifically how over 400 employees from Tukwila to Vancouver are putting this work into action. I am deeply appreciative for the dedication and care our team brings each day. It is through their efforts that this work continues to move forward in a meaningful and lasting way.

Michael Watkins
Tribal Manager

National Indian Health Board staff and Cowlitz Health and Human Services (HHS) staff on a tour of the HHS Longview Facilities in March 2026.



NORTHSTAR CLINIC: A NEW CHAPTER IN CARE

On February 1, 2026, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe officially assumed ownership of the NorthStar Treatment Clinic in Vancouver, Washington State, marking a new chapter for a space that has long been a trusted source of care in the region. For more than fifteen years, NorthStar has supported individuals and families through recovery, and today, that work continues under Tribal ownership with the same commitment to patients and the community.

In the months since the transition, the focus of the clinic has remained steady: continuity of care, stability for patients and staff, and thoughtful integration into the Tribe's broader Health & Human Services system. Patients have experienced no disruption to services, and providers have continued their work without interruption, ensuring that the clinic remains a consistent and reliable presence for those who depend on it.

For the Tribe, this moment reflects both responsibility and opportunity. The decision to step forward came at a critical time, when the potential closure of Columbia River Mental Health Services created uncertainty for thousands of people in the region. Through the leadership of the Cowlitz Economic Authority and coordination across Tribal departments, the Tribe was able to act quickly, guiding a transition that balanced operational realities with the needs of the community.



Exterior signage for the NorthStar Clinic in Vancouver, Washington.

Today, that work continues behind the scenes. While day-to-day operations are managed by a contracted group, the clinic operates in alignment with the standards and care reflected across Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Health & Human Services. The result is a model that supports both stability and long-term



NorthStar Clinic lobby in Vancouver, Washington.

growth, allowing NorthStar to build on its foundation while remaining responsive to the needs of patients.

“Since transitioning the clinic to Cowlitz ownership, we have focused on preserving what people trust while creating space for growth,” said Brittaney Nelson, a Cowlitz Indian Tribal Member and the Assistant Clinic Director of NorthStar. “Staff have come together across teams, building strong relationships, and a shared approach to care. I am proud of the team we are building and the strong patient-centered focus we bring each day, creating a steady path forward for the clinic.”

Nelson emphasized the clinic's approach to care for the community, stating, “We are focused on whole-patient care, including expanding access to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) services alongside counseling, and peer support to ensure comprehensive, compassionate care.”

There is also a deeper connection that shapes this work. The name Cowlitz, meaning Seekers of the Medicine Spirit, reflects a long-standing responsibility to care for one another. That responsibility is visible not only in the decision to take on this transition, but in the way the clinic continues to show up each day for those it serves.

“We have also begun integrating Native-rooted culture into our services, including smudging with patients and offering traditional medicines,” said Nelson. “We are excited to continue expanding care grounded in Native values, supporting meaningful and lasting healing.”

Looking ahead, NorthStar is positioned to continue evolving while staying rooted in what has always made it essential to the community. The past few months have been about steady transition. The months and years ahead will be about growth, connection, and continued care.

In many ways, NorthStar represents something both immediate and long-term: a commitment to meeting people where they are today, while building systems of care that will serve future generations.

LETTER FROM COWLITZ ECONOMIC AUTHORITY CEO

By Jesse Downs



CEA Chief Executive Officer
Jesse Downs with her little one.

It has been a true honor to get to know the Cowlitz People. Since stepping into the role of Chief Executive Officer of the Cowlitz Economic Authority (CEA) in late October, my focus has been on listening, learning, and building relationships. I have had the privilege of participating in multiple community listening sessions centered on economic development, as well as meeting individually with members of the CEA Board, Tribal Council, and community.

These conversations have been essential in helping me better understand the priorities, concerns, and aspirations that guide the important work of strengthening the Cowlitz legacy.

What stands out most is the extraordinary talent, vision, and dedication within this community. From early investments in education, to thoughtful planning and development of the reservation, to the creation of systems grounded in service and accountability, these efforts reflect a deep commitment that long predates any economic revenue. This enduring perseverance is a powerful testament to the strength of the Cowlitz People.

Over these first months, we have focused on building a strong and responsible foundation for the work ahead. An updated annual plan has been completed and approved, and longer-term economic planning is underway to help guide decision making in the years to come. We have carefully reviewed short-term investment opportunities, prioritizing those that immediately leverage and protect

Tribal sovereignty. In addition, several strategic land acquisitions have been completed to support the expansion of the reservation and to strengthen and complement existing infrastructure investments and operating businesses.

Equally important, we have expanded staff capacity and put key systems and policies in place to support CEA's broader economic development goals. These efforts help ensure that growth is managed thoughtfully and transparently, and that the organization is well positioned to support both current initiatives and future opportunities in a way that aligns with Tribal values.

As I have listened to your stories and learned more about your history and traditions, it has become clear that business and economics are not new concepts for Cowlitz. Long before modern systems, the Cowlitz were an economic powerhouse – resourceful, strategic, and deeply connected to the land and to one another. These teachings continue to inform and inspire the work we do today.

It is both an honor and a privilege to support and advance your vision. I am genuinely excited about the future and the opportunities ahead for the Tribe. The strength of the Cowlitz People, combined with thoughtful planning and stewardship, creates a powerful foundation for long-term prosperity. I look forward to continuing this work together as we build a strong, sovereign, and sustainable future for generations to come.

Xusqa (Thank you) for your continued support, guidance, and trust.

Jesse Downs
Chief Executive Officer, Cowlitz Economic Authority

Email us at info@cowlitzea.com



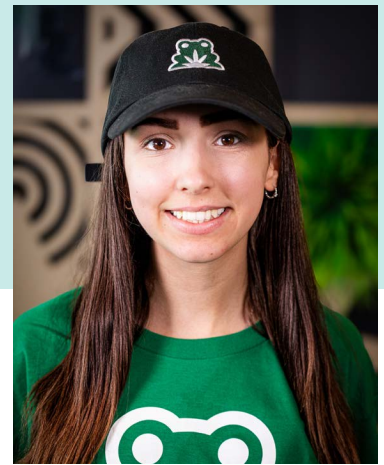
THE CEA IS HIRING an intern to support the Tribe's economic growth and long-term well-being. Scan the QR code with your mobile device to learn more and apply for the position!



The Cowlitz Economic Authority is building a business directory of Native-owned vendors, and we want you to be part of it! Scan the QR code with your mobile device to fill out the form.

Q'ANÁPSU EMPLOYEE Q&A

Q'anápsu employee and Cowlitz Tribal Member Jayde Muncey. Jayde was also voted Budtender of the Year by the Q'anápsu leadership team.



THIS Q&A FEATURES AN INTERVIEW WITH JAYDE MUNCEY, A Q'ANÁPSU TEAM MEMBER, COWLITZ TRIBAL MEMBER, AND BUDTENDER OF THE YEAR.

Share a little about yourself and your connection to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

I am 24 years old, born and raised in Washington state, and I am an enrolled member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

How do you approach customer service in a way that reflects your values?

I focus on creating a welcoming, judgment-free environment where customers feel safe asking questions. I lead with honesty, respect, and empathy. I believe every customer deserves to feel comfortable and heard, especially in industries where people may have questions or uncertainty. For me, good service isn't just about making a sale — it's about building trust and making sure the customer leaves confident in their decision.

How does it feel knowing that Q'anápsu's success contributes directly to the Cowlitz Tribe?

Knowing the store's success directly supports my Tribe adds a deeper layer of meaning to the role. It makes work feel more purposeful and meaningful.

What does representation mean to you as a Cowlitz Tribal member working in this space?

To me, Tribal representation — especially as a member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe — is deeply personal. Our history includes resilience, perseverance, and fighting to preserve our identity. Being able to work for the Cowlitz Tribe today feels like being part of that continued growth and strength. It represents our people in a way that honors where we come from and supports where we're going.

How can Tribally owned businesses honor tradition while operating in modern industries?

I believe tradition isn't just about the past — it's about who we are today: our values, kindness, and integrity. Tradition is our foundation. When Tribally owned businesses succeed, they show that our culture is not something left behind — it grows with us.

How has working at Q'anápsu helped you grow personally?

Working for Q'anápsu has helped me grow in ways that go beyond professional skills. It has helped me grow in confidence. Speaking with customers, educating them responsibly, and representing the Tribe and community has been such an honor. It's a reminder that our people are paving the way for future generations, and that's something I'm proud to contribute to.

What are you most proud of during your time here?

I'm most proud of the relationships I've built with customers. Working here has allowed me to create a welcoming space where people feel comfortable asking questions. Seeing returning customers who trust my recommendations makes me feel like I've truly made a positive impact.

What message would you like to share with other Tribal members about working for Tribally owned businesses?

Your work matters. The stronger our businesses are, the more we flourish and support our community — and we each play a role in shaping that future.

Q'ANÁPSU 420 EVENT:

What did you enjoy about this year's 420 event?

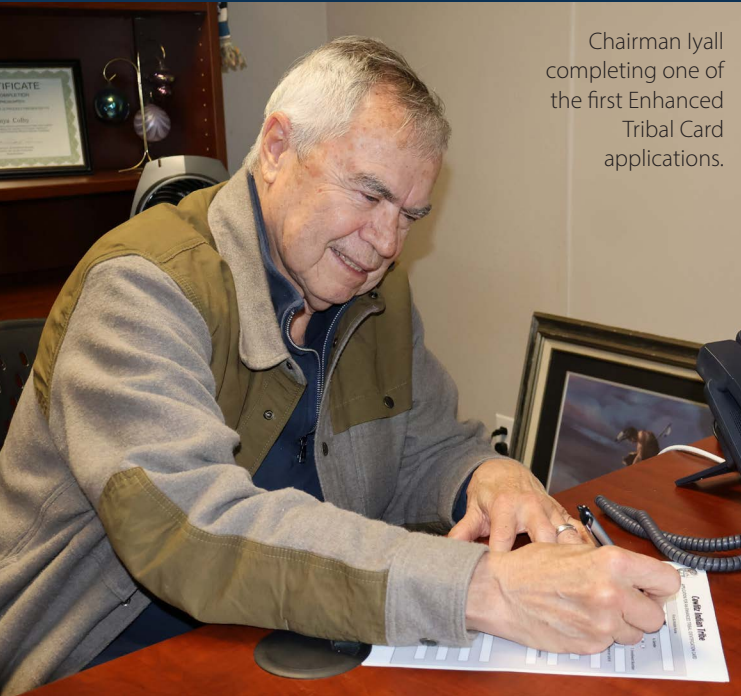
I enjoyed the energy, 420 brings a positive atmosphere. I liked being part of a team that makes the day smooth and memorable for customers.

What hopes do you have for the future of Q'anápsu and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe?

My hope is that the dispensary continues to grow sustainably and become a model for other Tribally owned enterprises.



ENROLLMENT DEPARTMENT



Chairman Iyall completing one of the first Enhanced Tribal Card applications.

into the RiteTrack system used by Enrollment staff daily, this online portal now allows members to attest for GWE applications with ease. The result? Faster, more efficient payment processing, and a consistently up-to-date Tribal enrollment database.

Building on that progress, the department proudly introduced the Enhanced Tribal Card (ETC) program on March 9, 2026. This new in-person service provides Tribal members with a powerful form of identification that supports land and sea travel to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, while also meeting Real ID requirements for domestic air travel within the United States. Tribal members interested in applying are encouraged to contact the Enrollment team to learn more about this new benefit.

In addition to these advancements, the department continues to provide essential services including issuing regular Tribal ID cards, processing new enrollments, assisting with funeral support, and issuing hunting and fishing licenses, Discover Passes, Northwest Forest Passes, and GWE-related support.

The Enrollment Department has had an exciting and productive year, marked by major advancements designed to better serve Cowlitz Tribal members. One of the most significant milestones was the launch of the GWE Portal in November 2025. Integrated directly

ENROLLMENT TEAM

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Pictured is the Enrollment team: Justin Kettman, Dianna Edison, and Tonya Colby.

CULTURAL RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Cultural Resources Department (CRD) has grown in 2025 and 2026 with the addition of a CRD Policy Analyst, Cultural Resources Stewardship Manager, Language Program Manager, an Archaeological Technician, and a Language Technician. The Department grew from a staff of six in 2024 to 12 in 2026. Five of those employees are enrolled Cowlitz, two are non-Tribal, three are from other Tribes, and one is a Cowlitz descendant enrolled in another Tribe.

The Department plans to grow again in 2026 with the expansion into archaeological service contracting. There are several contracts under development with state, federal, and private clients. Work is also underway to provide Cowlitz High School students with the option to take Cowlitz Salish classes to meet the minimum two-year foreign language requirement for college admission. That process will be spearheaded by our new Language Program Manager, Maiya Osife, who started in April.

In November 2025, the CRD sponsored a Culture Day at St. Mary's. This Culture Day was open to Cowlitz employees, who were taught how to make newborn baby moccasins by the CRD Director, Jon Shellenberger (Yakama/Cowlitz Descendant). Between 17 and 20 employees attended.

Based on tracking data collected since July 2025, the CRD receives an average of 300 consultation requests from state, federal, and local government agencies. This consultation includes plans for development, restoration, and land use activities. This workload is spread across four staff members who work diligently to protect Cowlitz Tribal cultural resources and support to long-term projects, including the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program, East Fork Lewis River Bridge, Abernathy Creek Bridge Replacement Project, and the Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Program, among others.



Jeremiah Wallace pushing a Ground Penetrating Radar for a project on Cowlitz homelands.

SUMMER 2026 CULTURE EVENTS

Memorial Day Camp Out

May 22-May 25
Cowlitz Landing – Toledo, WA

Camas Harvest and Bake

May 27
St. Mary's – Toledo, WA

First Salmon Ceremony

June 7
Cowlitz Landing – Toledo, WA

Huckleberry Forage

August 14
Chehalis, WA

Harvest Festival

September 19
St. Mary's – Toledo, WA

27th Powwow

September 26
Cowlitz County Event Center – Longview, WA



SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR
MOBILE DEVICE TO STAY UPDATED
ON UPCOMING EVENTS!

HUNTING, FISHING, AND GATHERING COMMITTEE

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe is partnering with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to provide Tribal members with WDFW licenses. Please complete the form on the website to request your license(s). Once submitted, allow up to three weeks for your license to arrive by mail. If you would like to pick it up instead, you may do so at the Longview Admin Office, but please call to set up an appointment first.

This program is for members who are Washington State residents only. If you live outside Washington, you may request reimbursement from the Cowlitz Tribal Accounting Department for certain licenses issued by your resident state. The licenses eligible for reimbursement can be found on the website. To request reimbursement, email proof of your license to accounting@cowlitz.org.

This year, Washington state is launching digital licenses. When filling out your form, please indicate whether you would like a paper license or a digital license.

LICENSES AND TAGS COVERED INCLUDE

FISHING

Annual Combination Fishing/Shellfish License with Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement

OR

Three-day Combination Fishing License with Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement

OR

Annual Razor Clam License

HUNTING

Deer + Elk + Bear + Cougar License with discounted Small Game License

If you want a hunting license, you must have a WILD ID and proof of completing a hunter education course. We will try to host a hunter education class this summer for youth and adults; please watch weekly updates for more information.

When filling out the form or emailing Enrollment, please state whether you are a senior, youth, or a person with a disability.

SUMMER HORSE CAMPS

The committee is working with the Nisqually Tribe to finalize a weekend for this year's Horse Camp. The date will be announced as soon as it is confirmed.

For Horse Camp, all you need is basic camping gear (such as a tent, sleeping bags or blankets, and chairs). Nisqually is also asking that all riders wear jeans and boots.

If you would like more information about hunting and fishing licenses or Horse Camp, please contact Vanessa Robertson at Vrobertson@tc.cowlitz.org or HFG-Rights@cowlitz.org.



Ethan riding Wi-awachi at the Nisqually Ranch.



Dancers enjoying an intertribal song at the 26th Annual Powwow.
Photo Credit: Shana Lombard

POWWOW COMMITTEE

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe Powwow Committee cordially invites you to the 27th Annual Powwow! The Powwow will take place from noon to 10 p.m. on September 26, 2026, at the Cowlitz County Event Center. This year's theme is "A Day to Celebrate Culture in Dance." Attendees can expect to see a variety of dances, vendors to shop from, and the committee's staple Salmon dinner featuring fish from Tribal waters.

Each year, the Powwow Committee strives to make the event better than the last. Last year's Powwow had a record number of vendors, dancers, and drums in attendance, and this year the committee is looking to provide more for the community. The committee plans to have an honor song sung for the families of murdered and missing Indigenous people to highlight the epidemic that Indigenous people face nationwide. The Committee also plans to introduce new specialty contests to showcase dance styles specific to the Pacific Northwest region.

The Committee would be honored by your presence as it hosts the Tribe's largest cultural event! Find us on Facebook under "Cowlitz Indian Tribe Powwow." Vendor opportunities are now open, and Cowlitz Tribal Members receive a special rate for vending at the Powwow. The committee is also seeking volunteers to assist. This work would not be possible without them!

Any questions can be sent to powwow@cowlitz.org

LANGUAGE PROGRAM

During the winter, the Language Program within the Culture Resources Department furthered its commitment to strengthening preservation of the Cowlitz Coast Salish language by continuing quarterly cumulative classes, creating a Cowlitz Word of The Month social media campaign, working with The Language Conservancy to develop new books for Tribal members, and hosting introductory classes online.

Cowlitz tutoring sessions are available to Tribal members on Thursdays at 5 p.m. Pacific time. The team also gained access to the language@cowlitz.org email address to increase accessibility for Tribal members.

The Tribal Linguist continued work on the Cowlitz Coast Salish Dictionary, resulting in a large update featuring transcripts from Tribal Elders Lucy Northover James and Emma Northover Mesplie, a phrase builder and a number of new entries. These resources can be found under the 'Learn' tab on the Cowlitz Coast Salish Dictionary website.

The Language Program will continue its commitment to Tribal members by hosting weekly online tutoring sessions, offering monthly introductory classes and attending department events to teach relevant words.



Scan this QR code with your mobile device to take you to the online Cowlitz Coast Salish Dictionary.



The Cowlitz River captured on the day of the Smelt Ceremony on February 28, 2026. Photo by Laura Bowman

SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Since Time Immemorial Curriculum Committee is doing remarkable work to strengthen relationships, expand cultural understanding, and ensure that the story of the Cowlitz people is shared with accuracy, respect, and pride. After hosting two successful luncheons for educators and administrators working on our traditional lands, the committee is now focused on its next major initiative: creating a beautiful, user-friendly website that brings our culture, history, and teachings to life.

This website will serve as a central resource for educators, Tribal members, and community partners. To make sure the information is both accurate and accessible, the committee is collaborating closely with multiple Tribal departments. The Tribe's IT Department and Culture Board play essential roles in vetting the work and ensuring clarity.

The committee's partnership with Washington State University Vancouver adds another powerful layer to this effort. The university participates in our biweekly meetings and works side-by-side with Tribal departments, helping us build a resource that reflects both cultural integrity, and educational best practices. This collaboration—between Tribal departments, the university, and the broader community—is not only inspiring but essential.

This work is ongoing and deeply meaningful. By strengthening relationships between the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and local school districts, the committee is helping educators better support all students. Sharing the history of the land and the vibrant culture that continues to be revitalized benefits entire communities. It ensures that future generations grow up with a deeper understanding of the Cowlitz people, our past, our present, and our enduring presence on these lands.

WEAVERS COMMITTEE

Weaving has long been an important part of our culture, connecting us to the land, our ancestors, and the traditions that have been passed down through generations. The Cowlitz Weavers Committee continues to honor these traditions by creating opportunities for Cowlitz people to learn traditional weaving techniques, including cedar bark processing, and basket weaving.

The year began with interviews to fill open committee seats, followed by elections, and preparation days as the committee readies for a busy year of cultural learning and community gatherings. Through classes, events, and hands-on experiences, the committee remains dedicated to helping Cowlitz people reconnect with traditional knowledge and skills.

In February, the Hazel Pete Weavers Event was held at the Chehalis Community Center, bringing together weavers to celebrate and continue the legacy of traditional basketry.

March featured the Cowlitz Teaching Cowlitz weavers' class, offering participants several creative weaving projects.

In April, the committee will host a special class focused on creating traditional cedar-woven graduation caps,

helping graduates incorporate culture and tradition into their celebrations.

May will be a busy month with several events, including the Hazel Pete Weavers Event at the Great Wolf Lodge, Employee Culture Day at DuPont, and a possible cedar harvest, allowing participants to learn the important process of gathering materials used in traditional weaving.

Looking ahead, October will bring the Northwest Native American Basketweavers Association (NNABA) Weavers Conference, which will be hosted by the Snoqualmie Tribe. This conference will provide a wonderful opportunity for weavers across the region to gather, share knowledge, and celebrate their craft.

Keep an eye on the weekly newsletters for registration details!

Committee members: Christine Hawkins (Chair), Kyle Folden (Vice Chair), Ariel Rayfield (Secretary), Nikki Meyers (Treasurer), Cheryl Wilcox, Kris Dillehay, Shelly Perrin, Sahra Orozco, and Tosha Kristensen.

For questions, please contact the Committee Chair Christine Hawkins at weaverscommittee@cowlitz.org.

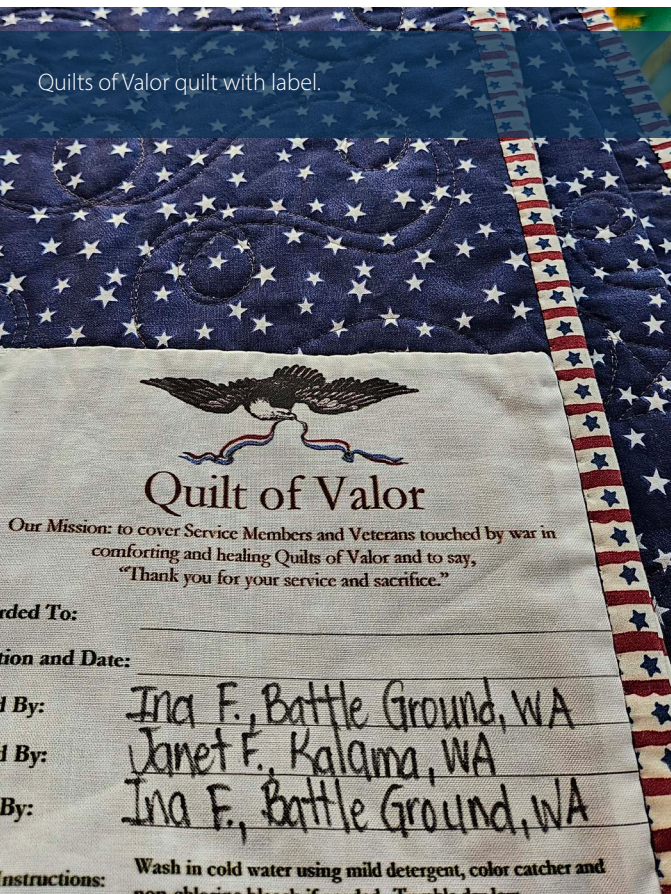
Image, left: Left to right, Nikoly Orozco and Kris Dillehay (committee member) at a Cowlitz Teaching Cowlitz weaving event.

Image, right: Left to right, Leslie Neudeck, Shelly Perrin (committee member), and Emery Neudeck at a Cowlitz Teaching Cowlitz weaving event.



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health and Human Services (HHS) remains deeply committed to providing comprehensive support and high-quality care to our Veterans. In 2025, a total of **33 Veterans received behavioral health services**, representing **565 visits** throughout the year. Additionally, **45 Veterans received medical care through** our clinic. HHS continues to honor and support our Veterans through ongoing services, dedicated events, and year-round expressions of gratitude and appreciation.



Quilts of Valor quilt with label.

ELDERS INTERTRIBAL LUNCHEON

On October 7, 2025, Elders Program hosted the annual Intertribal Elder's Luncheon at ilani. The event saw exceptional attendance, with **41 Tribes** represented and a total of **367 participants**. Throughout the year, Elders Program staff collaborated closely with ilani to plan the gathering. To support Elders traveling long distances, hotel rooms were made available for those who needed accommodations. A custom event T-shirt was also created to commemorate the occasion. The luncheon featured a rodeo theme and a catered barbecue meal. Entertainment was provided by Native comedian Kasey Nicholson, and attendees enjoyed raffle prizes, including gift baskets donated by Cowlitz Indian Tribe (CIT) departments and handmade shawls created by residents of St. Mary's.

Tribal Member Services partnered with Quilts of Valor to honor and wrap 16 of our CIT Veterans with handmade quilts. One month later, during the November 2025 General Council meeting, an additional 2 Cowlitz Veterans were wrapped. These ceremonies were deeply moving, with each quilt offered as a gesture of heartfelt gratitude and respect for their service and dedication.



Veterans wrapped with their Quilts of Valor quilts.



Program Manager, Amanda Workman, giving opening remarks at the For All Generations Event.

FOR ALL GENERATIONS EVENT

Pathways hosted the **15th Annual For All Generations Event** on October 18, 2025, at the DuPont office. Participants received program updates, listened to a guest speaker, gathered around a ceremonial fire to honor those affected by violence, and enjoyed a catered meal from Olive Garden.

The event honored Debbie Hassler, founder of the Pathways to Healing (PTH) program, in celebration of 20 years of service. PTH is grateful for the support from Tribal Council and the continued involvement from our community, honoring those who have been harmed by violence and victimization. Planning is already underway for next year's event, scheduled for **October 17, 2026**.

Cowlitz Indian Tribe Pathways to Healing

sk'w'ninwasmitstawt † tit snxmántnk†

(we are thinking about our relatives)

With the guidance of our Elders and Ancestors and when we have the opportunity to say their names and honor their lives in a good way without interrupting their spiritual journey, it is Pathways' commitment to do so. Their names are:

Bryn Hartman (48, murdered August 2019)

Misty Copsey (14, missing September 1992)

Tina Phillips (18, murdered 2007)

Ryan Mayer (33, missing 2013, remains identified 2021)

Gina Purdey (42, murdered 2007)

Clarence "Gene" Koch (18, murdered 1974)

Zackary G. Brown (19, murdered February 2009)



HARVEST FESTIVAL

This year's Harvest Festival exceeded expectations, and Health Services is grateful for the continued partnership with the Elders Program. The event featured more vendors than ever before, strengthening connections between Indigenous artisans and Cowlitz Tribal Members. Attendees enjoyed songs from the Cowlitz Drum Group and Daniel Three Eagles. Participants were served fresh cider pressed from apples grown on site, and a meal that featured pumpkin dishes from the Garden. The Elders Program served lunch to **117 participants**. The festival provided a meaningful day of cultural celebration and community connection.



Spiritual Leader Tanna Engdahl planting Camas.
Photo credit: Shalese Jorgenson.

CAMAS PLANTING INITIATIVE

For the past five years, the HHS Community Garden and the Natural Resources Department have collaborated on the annual Camas Planting event. The restoration site, known as the Gospodor property, was sectioned into **six one-acre parcels** to support a phased restoration approach. Each year, volunteers plant Camas bulbs in the next designated parcel, contributing to the long-term goal of restoring the land to a traditional Camas prairie.

This December marked the **fifth annual planting**, during which staff and **33 dedicated volunteers** successfully planted **4,000 Camas bulbs** on one acre of Tribal land.

YOUTH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

The Youth Program's Christmas event on December 13, 2025, was a resounding success, welcoming more than **250 attendees**. The celebration demonstrated the strength of cross-program collaboration within HHS, as staff combined resources and expertise to serve the community.

Youth and Elders joined together in drumming and singing led by the Cowlitz Drum Group, using cedar clackers hand-crafted by Lead Skipper and Drum Coordinator Jeramiah Wallace. Families enjoyed a day of crafts, traditional foods, and quality time with relatives while engaging in contemporary Cowlitz cultural activities.

Organizing gifts for the Youth Christmas party.



Senior Advisor to the Secretary of U.S. HHS, Mark Cruz with Chaiman Iyall and HHS Executive Director Kay Culbertson

VISIT FROM HHS SENIOR ADVISOR MARK CRUZ

On February 2, Senior Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Mark Cruz, visited the Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Longview campus. He was welcomed by the Chairman, Tribal Manager, CITHHS Directors, and CIT and HHS Communications.

Brick honoring Cowlitz Veterans.



Feelings Chart in Youth Therapy Room.



Pain scale shown in a clinic exam room.

VETERANS DAY

A Toledo community member, remaining anonymous, purchased a brick honoring Cowlitz Veterans, which was placed during a ceremony on November 11, 2025, at the Toledo Veterans Wall. Tribal Council Member Patty Kinswa Gaiser provided the opening prayer. Member services hosted a luncheon at St. Mary's honoring both Cowlitz Veterans and the Toledo community.

Our Cowlitz Color Guard continues to represent the Tribe with honor and cultural dignity. They posted and retired the Colors at the following events:

- Oct. 7, 2025 – Cowlitz Elders' Luncheon
- Oct. 22–23, 2025 – 36th Annual Centennial Accord
- Nov. 1, 2025 – Cowlitz General Council Meeting
- Feb. 2 & 5, 2026 – ATNI Winter Conference, Portland, OR
- Feb. 14, 2026 – Cowlitz Recognition Dinner

The visit provided a valuable opportunity to discuss departmental progress, highlight improvements in client care, and outline future goals for expanding service access. HHS was honored to host Mr. Cruz and share the impactful work being carried out by staff, as well as the strong support received from Tribal leadership. We look forward to welcoming him again in the future.

LANGUAGE CONSERVANCY PARTNERSHIP

HHS has continued its partnership with The Language Conservancy to create culturally relevant materials for use across all HHS facilities. One major project was the development of a culturally grounded pain scale featuring a Cowlitz logo watermark, Cowlitz language descriptors for each pain level, and phonetic guidance where available. Another significant achievement is a feelings chart that illustrates **23 different emotions** with corresponding faces and Cowlitz language labels. These charts are now displayed in our facilities that offer behavioral health services.

Additionally, HHS and the Culture Department created a youth-focused activity book that includes age-appropriate crafts and recipes, brain teasers, and activity and coloring pages. Each page incorporates Cowlitz language and culturally meaningful imagery. The activity book is family-friendly, freely accessible, and available for download on the Cowlitz website.

COWLITZ TRIBAL HOUSING DEPARTMENT MEMBER TESTIMONY



Lola Gillespie and her partner in front of their new, first home.

“For years, Trevor and I have had a mutual goal of becoming homeowners, but we feared that in this economy that would not be possible.

As intimidating as it was, we put those fears aside and gave it our best shot. With the generosity that was provided by the Tribe and the dedication we had towards our goal. We were able to find and close the deal on our perfect home. I feel blessed because of this program. It gave us an opportunity to accomplish something I never imagined possible.”

Thank you,
Lola Gillespie

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY: 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



COWLITZ
TRIBAL FOUNDATION

The Cowlitz Tribal Foundation exists to put the Tribe’s values into action. Established through the Tribal-State Gaming Compact and the Clark County

Ordinance, the Foundation channels a portion of gaming revenues back into the communities that surround us — because the Cowlitz Indian Tribe has always believed that prosperity is most meaningful when it is shared. Through two dedicated funds, the Foundation works to ensure that Tribal giving reaches those who need it most, from basic needs organizations to arts, education, and public health.

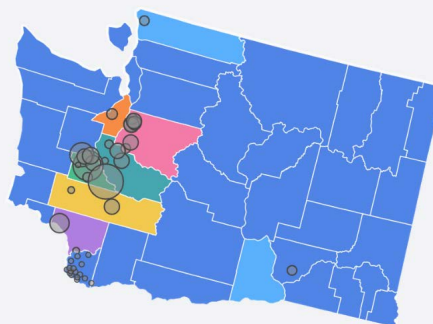
In 2025, the Cowlitz Tribal Foundation distributed approximately \$5.8 million to 87 nonprofit organizations across Washington State, continuing the Tribe’s commitment to building strong, lasting relationships in the communities where our members live and work.

Through the Statewide Fund, \$1.4 million reached 38 organizations serving communities from King County to Cowlitz and Lewis Counties. More than a third of that funding went to social service organizations meeting basic needs, including food access, shelter, and essential support services. Fourteen of those organizations received Foundation funding for the very first time in 2025.

Through the Clark County Fund, \$4.4 million supported 49 organizations in the communities surrounding the region. Vancouver, as the region’s largest service area, received the greatest share of funding, with reach extending into smaller rural communities. Nine first-time awardees were added to the Clark County portfolio. Beyond grant dollars, the Foundation coordinated in-kind food distribution and distributed emergency supplies including shelf-stable food, diapers, and hygiene items to organizations responding to federal funding cuts.

The Foundation remains dedicated to responsible stewardship of Tribal resources and to the communities that reflect our shared values.

\$5.8M INVESTED IN 2025



87 Organizations Supported

\$1.4M
Statewide Fund

\$4.4M
Clark County Fund

Regional impact of the Cowlitz Tribal Foundation is highlighted by color-filled Counties, with number of organizations served in each county documented by circle size.

NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT



This dam was built at one of the Wildlife Program's beaver relocation sites, less than one year after beavers were initially released. This dam slows and stores clean, cool water that benefits the surrounding riparian vegetation and wildlife that rely on this water during hot, dry periods of the year.



A large beaver cautiously enters a cattail pond after leaving its relocation kennel.



Jesse Burgher, Wildlife Program Manager (right), and Dan Kolenberg, Wildlife Technician (left), watch as the third of three beavers cautiously walks toward a stream from its relocation kennel.

WILDLIFE PROGRAM UPDATE

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Natural Resources Department (NRD)'s Wildlife Program operates a beaver relocation project focused on restoring beavers and their ecosystem engineering benefits to the landscape. Beavers increase habitat complexity, improve water storage, support climate resiliency, and more. They enhance and maintain high-quality freshwater ecosystems for salmon, wetland plants, deer, elk, and other culturally relevant species.

Through a partnership with U.S. Department of Agriculture - Wildlife Services, we divert beavers from lethal management and relocate them to restore wetlands and waterways that support fish and wildlife. Annually, we relocate ≥ 70 beavers to high-quality but vacant habitats, making this one of the most robust beaver relocation programs in the western United States. Most beavers find new homes in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

During 2025 and early 2026, we successfully completed two projects funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service focused on assessing beaver habitat suitability and presence at over 300 sites across southwest Washington. Collecting these data provides a strong baseline to strategically continue our work and build a deeper understanding of beaver relocations and populations in the region. Additionally, in late 2025, NRD secured more grant funding to continue beaver relocation and enhance collection of monitoring data needed to assess beaver relocation success in a meaningful and scientifically robust way.

Through beaver relocation, the Wildlife Program is developing a leadership role in wildlife conservation in southwest Washington and highlighting the stewardship activities of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe to the broader restoration and science community.



The Public Safety team partnered with the Health and Human Services (HHS) Department to offer several initiatives for Human Trafficking and Stalking Awareness Month.

A Public Safety officer holding a sticker stating **mítta ʔ'a stáxʷiwistmkt** — “we won’t be sold,” and an anti-trafficking pin featuring the Pathways to Healing ribbon.

COWLITZ INDIAN TRIBAL PUBLIC SAFETY

The Cowlitz Indian Tribal Public Safety Department welcomed Glen Melville as its new Director in February. Glen, an enrolled member of the Makah Tribe of Washington, brings decades of experience in both Tribal and federal law enforcement. He joins the Cowlitz Indian Tribe with a strong commitment to supporting the continued growth of one of the newest Tribal police departments in Indian Country and in Washington State. Glen looks forward to working alongside Tribal leadership, staff, and the community to help develop the department in a way that reflects Cowlitz values, strengthens public safety services, and supports the Tribe’s ongoing exercise of sovereignty. The department would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to Chris Olsen for his service as Interim Director of Public Safety during this transition.

In efforts to enhance communication, strengthen interdepartmental relationships, and encourage

A Public Safety officer applying a vehicle sticker onto a police vehicle featuring the Pathways to Healing ribbon.



collaborative innovation, Cowlitz Tribal Public Safety has been actively partnering with the Health and Human Services (HHS) Department to offer several meaningful initiatives.

During the month of October, our focus was Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence Awareness. Public Safety officers wore pink-lettered uniform patches, and patrol vehicles were outfitted with:

- A window decal highlighting the Pathways to Healing Program—a critical resource for individuals experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, or Elder abuse
- A window cling displaying the Cowlitz message: **mítta ʔ'a stáxʷiwistmkt ʷon't be sold** — “**abuse won’t be our legacy**”
- In January, Cowlitz Tribal Public Safety continued this partnership with HHS in support of Human Trafficking and Stalking Awareness Month. Throughout the month, all Public Safety vehicles displayed anti-trafficking decals reading: **mítta ʔ'a stáxʷiwistmkt** — “**we won’t be sold,**” and officers wore anti-trafficking pins featuring the Pathways to Healing ribbon.

The Cowlitz Tribal Public Safety team extends our sincere appreciation to Health and Human Services for their engagement, solidarity, and dedication to promoting a safer and more informed community.

As this department continues to grow and improve, these partnerships and initiatives remain central to our mission. Cowlitz Tribal Public Safety is committed to strengthening community relationships, supporting prevention and awareness efforts, and working collaboratively across the community to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and future of the Cowlitz community.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES TOGETHER

The Emergency Management department is excited to introduce our new AmeriCorps member through mid-August: Jamani Ashé, Community Preparedness & Disaster Management Specialist. Jamani has over five years of frontline experience building disaster resilience in climate-vulnerable communities and is a certified Wildland Firefighter Type 2 and Wilderness First Responder. Jamani has experience developing land-based disaster readiness curriculum integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern emergency response protocols, including cultural survival practices such as traditional weaving and Indigenous sweat lodge ceremonies. Jamani's skills are a great addition to our plans to expand our program's outreach and education opportunities this summer.

In March, the program hosted their first Preparedness Fair at St. Mary's for our Elders and community neighbors, with support from the local fire department, county emergency management, and state agencies. In May, the program plans to teach Youth Council about fire safety and emergency preparedness at home. The program hopes to bring more hands-on teachings to summer camps, in partnership with the Youth program, and other programs.

If you're interested in hosting a preparedness training, workshop, or event for your group or program, please reach out to the Emergency Management Department. Emergency Management also ensures emergency supplies inventory is current and ready to support the community.

Preparedness is not just about knowledge and supplies – it's also about the relationships and trust we build with one another. Remember to check on your neighbors and loved ones and to take care of each other!

A photo of an intergenerational group of Native and Black participants gathering in front of a natural shelter they collectively built during an emergency preparedness and land-based ancestral skills training. Photo Credit: Sankofa Roots (sankofaroots.org)



**SCAN THIS QR CODE
WITH YOUR MOBILE
DEVICE TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT THE
COWLITZ INDIAN
TRIBE'S EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM.**



A photo of the designed Youth Council logo on a t-shirt.

YOUTH COUNCIL

The Youth Council has continued to meet regularly to plan meaningful and engaging activities for youth, including game nights, and the planning and execution of both the Halloween and Christmas parties last year. Through these efforts, youth are actively building leadership skills while supporting and uplifting their peers.

The Youth Council organized a Cleaning Month for April, inviting youth from around the world to participate in a month-long community clean-up effort. Cleaning supplies were sent to each youth who signed up and collected photos throughout to showcase this initiative as a worldwide clean-up celebration.

In addition to event planning, Youth Council members are participating in monthly trainings focused on leadership development and age-appropriate life skills. These trainings are designed to empower youth with tools they can use both now and in the future.

Many Youth Council members also participated in the Youth Program's Healing of the Canoe Retreat, further supporting personal growth, cultural connection, and community wellness.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Pothole repair at DuPont campus featuring Alejandro Pedroza & Braeden McCauley.



Over the past year the Public Works Department has been busy, and not always in ways that are visible, but always in ways that matter. Every repaired facility, maintained roadway, serviced vehicle, and cleaned building represents our commitment to taking care of this community. The Public Works team shows up daily with pride knowing that the work they do supports Tribal members, staff, Elders, and future generations.

This year, Public Works also completed several major construction projects that directly impact life on the Reservation. From resurfacing key roadways to upgrading drainage systems and completing essential building renovations, these projects have improved safety, accessibility, and functionality across the community. Public Works also made significant progress on long-term infrastructure projects including roadway widening and improvements along NW 31st, ensuring our roads are safer for all.

Behind the scenes, Public Works has strengthened their operations and improved how they manage projects and contracts. Public Works has worked closely with other departments in moving forward critical funding efforts, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) financing and coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At the same time, Public Works has aggressively pursued grant opportunities to support clean energy projects and essential safety improvements on the Reservation.

In addition, Dean Reynolds was recently appointed by Governor Bob Ferguson to the Washington State Public Works Board. An organization that provides low-interest loans, grants, and technical assistance to support the



Dean Reynolds,
Public Works
Director.

construction, repair, and improvement of critical infrastructure across Washington.

As a Cowlitz Tribal member, his appointment ensures that Tribal perspectives are represented in statewide infrastructure decisions that strengthen public works systems—including water, wastewater, roads, and broadband—and support public health, environmental protection, and economic development. He is also advancing legislation to provide Washington State's 29 federally recognized Tribes with equitable access to the Board's grant and low-interest loan programs, strengthening Tribal infrastructure, and our role within state government. Congratulations, Dean!



Longview Campus Lighting upgrades.



Longview Clinic Solar generator install.



Longview Clinic Solar panel install.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Tuition Assistance Program continues to expand and provide Tribal members who have graduated high school or obtained a GED, assistance to help fulfill their dreams of obtaining a vocational/professional certificate and or college/university degrees. This journey has members coming full circle through education and employment and increasing employment with their Tribe.

During the 2025-26 academic year (May 1, 2025 to April 2026) we have awarded 284 Tribal members from 32 states across the country. The program has 23 Graduates as of June 2026.

The program students are studying in the fields of accounting, aeronautical science, agriculture, anthropology, architecture, art and digital media, aviation, biology, business administration, chemistry, chiropractic medicine, commercial truck driving, computer science, cosmetology, criminal justice, cyber security, dental assisting, divinity, education, emergency medical technology, engineering, environmental science, fashion design, fire science, forestry management, handgun specialist, kinesiology, law, mathematics, mechanical engineering, mental health counseling, native American studies, nursing, organizational leadership, psychology, public health, social work, software development, sports management, Tribal governance and veterinary services.

Students must be enrolled in a course of study leading to a certificate or degree from an accredited/licensed vocational school or an accredited college or university. Tuition payments are made directly to the school. GWE Educational Costs benefits are made directly to the student.

Student funding is year-to-year and is dependent on Tribal Council's approval of the budget and Policies and Procedures. The Tuition Assistance staff and Education Committee work tirelessly to steward this amazing Tribal benefit.

PROGRAM OFFERINGS FOR THE 2026-27 AWARD PERIOD (MAY 1, 2026 TO APRIL 30, 2027) INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Vocational Certificate Funding up to \$13,000

Associate Degree Funding up to \$7,000

Bachelor Degree Funding up to \$14,000

Graduate degree Funding up to \$21,000

Vocational and College /University students GWE \$2,500

High School/College Dual Enrollment and Dual Credit students GWE \$500

GED General Education Diploma students GWE \$400 testing costs.

Continuing Education Credentials GWE Up to \$3000

In the 2025-26 academic period, the program launched the new offering of "Continuing Education Credentials." This is beneficial to those wishing to obtain professional licenses, endorsements, and specific certifications issued by industry groups or related organizations to enhance their career.

For more information on these offerings, please check our website or email the Tuition Assistance Office at tuitionassistance@cowlitz.org or call Carol Burnison at 360-353-9588, Melanie Mariano at 360-353-9497, or Amanda Fitzpatrick at 360-575-6224.

The Tuition Assistance Program team is here for you.



Scan this QR code with your mobile device to learn more about the Tuition Assistance Program and open applications.

COWLITZ TUITION ASSISTANCE AWARD GRADUATES - DECEMBER 2025 TO JUNE 2026

ASSOCIATE DEGREES

Shawnee Buckner Pre-Nursing

Macey Fluetsch Business

Nova Ladue Cybersecurity

Kassandra Lloyd Pre-nursing

Curtis Powell Gunsmithing

BACHELOR DEGREES

Eden Iyall Communications

Stacey Bridges

Urban & Public Affairs

Alec Erickson Pre-med

Christeen Harris

Business Administration

John W Michael

Finance, Risk and Insurance Management

Ella Sherin Wetsit

American Studies with a concentration on Native Studies

Garret Sutherland

Mechanical Engineering

DOCTORATE DEGREES

Orion Jones

Educational Leadership

Randle Kinswa Juris Doctorate

MASTER DEGREES

Sophia Brousseau

Book Publishing

Rosalie Fish Social Work

Melissa Halvorsen

Organizational Leadership

Raine Iyall-Fawcett Psychology

VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATES

AJ Bouchard EMT

Jessica Clift

Coast Salish Wool Weaving

Emma Johnson

Indigenous Food Systems

Dave Meridian CDL

Ashton Thompson

Autobody Repair & Refinishing

MARRIAGE OF CHIEF DICK (1869)

RESEARCHED BY CLAY KOCH. RETYPED BY TANNA ENGDahl, WITH ORIGINAL SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, AND GRAMMAR PRESERVED. ORIGINAL REPORTER UNKNOWN.

MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE

The Weekly Pacific Tribune (Olympia, WA), September 18, 1869, p. 2

The broad level plateau known as the Nisqually Reservation (not the New Jerusalem, however) was the scene of a grand ceremonial on Wednesday last. We have received from an eye-witness the following graphic account:

A lovely sky looked down upon the "tented field" where the clans had assembled, for was not the son and heir of the Chief of the Cowlitz to espouse the lovely prairie flower that had blossomed in the Nisqually bottom? And so the Indians brave and klootchmen fair gathered from far and near to do honor to the nuptials. Chief Dick of the Nisqually was Major Domo, and most nobly sustained his part in the grand espousals. Among the distinguished guests we noted Nelson, the high priest and Chief of the Muckleshoots, Henry Marten, the interpreter on the staff of Col Ross, the military Superintendent of this Territory, Hon. Mr. Tenny of Massachusetts, City Marshal Wallace of Olympia, Indian Tom, a bearhug¹ of the Puyallups, and old Euchre, the venerable representative of the Steilacooms. The scene was picturesque in the extreme. In the foreground the several tribes glistened in the sunlight, while numerous progeny of the Immortal Lo, arrayed in the gorgeous costume obtained at many a potlatch, dotted the green sward with groups of moving rainbows. On one side, the Cowlitz tribe, squatted on immense mats, awaited with stoic patience the opening of the festivities; on the other side was bustle and excitement. Young warriors mounted on high spirited ponies, dashed back and forth across the prairie, driving before them the herds of their several tribes; squaws flitted here and there, with gravity in their looks and consequential bearing. Chief Dick raced about in high fashion, exhorting, commanding and ridiculing, as the occasion seemed to demand.



Dick Scanewa & Daughter. Photograph by J.F. Ford (American, active 1900s), courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Authentication of the correct Scanewa descendant is still in progress.

The bride, within a large enclosure, was passing through the hands of her dressing maids, to the great tantalization of numerous curious young ladies, who were repeatedly driven away by the older squaws from the crevices of the building through which they were incontinently peeking.

WASHINGTON, August 11, 1899.
A PROPOSAL TO REPEAL THE TERRITORY ACT...

A PROPOSAL TO REPEAL THE TERRITORY ACT...
The bill is introduced by Mr. Tamm...

WASHINGTON, August 11, 1899.
The bill is introduced by Mr. Tamm...

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Clipping from The Weekly Pacific Tribune, Volume 9, Number 27, 18 September 1869, featuring the article "Marriage in High Life," which has been reprinted and retyped by Spiritual Leader Tanna Engahl.

These were followed by an equal number of women in the same array, only that everyone held aloft a bright new gallon milk pan, which sparkled like a mirror in the sunlight.

These dancing attendants were marshaled into two ranks by Chief Dick, and then by his orders the song and dance were resumed, while he entered the bridal mansion alone.

In a few minutes his white chapeau and blue blouse were seen in the doorway, and excitement and all the Indians stood on tiptoe. He came forth and following him were the father and mother of the bride.

The former was arrayed in a sky blue overcoat of the regulation cut, and the latter displayed the graceful drapery of a scarlet blanket upon her seemly shoulders.

Behind the parents came the lovely bride, attended by three ancient and honorable matrons-on either side she sustained her drooping form, while from behind the third propelled her forward.

The bride - but we are not versed in all the mysteries of the toilet and so refrain from too minute a description.

Over her head four bright-hued coverlets were placed and hung in heavy folds down to her waist. Skirt upon skirt, like O-siau on Pelion's piled, enveloped her shapely form and gave it voluminous fullness.

Guided, in fact, hoisted by her attendants, she was placed in the middle of the throng, and stood there a pile of showy dry goods, till the long drawn song was sung.

Then followed speeches on the part of sundry chiefs, delivered in the most classic Chinook, and received with enthusiastic "Ughs!" by all the gathered tribes.

Finally, Chief Dick started for the bridegroom, leading by their halters three "milk white palfreys," such as those we read of in the old Chaucer legends.

Following him were the three attendants of the bride, bearing heavy loads of bridal gifts. The "palfreys" were tied to stakes near the Cowlitz Band, the gifts were deposited at their front, and the Chief and the Women returned to the Nisquallys.

When the last verse was sung, the bridegroom, attended by his venerable partners, was first to leave his tent and take his place for the ceremony.

He was arrayed in a pair of full gray pantaloons of the latest Chatham street cut, a masculine shirt, very white; a face anointed with oil and ruddy red with pigment.

At last, the excitement, among the Nisqually's subsided, and most of that tribe with their guests from other nations, seated themselves upon the ground over against the Cowlitzers.

From the bridal building wailing was heard, a slow, solemn, monotonous measure, guarded by the beats of fists upon the boards.

This changed rapidly to a lively air, sung with great harmony and three distinct notes. It proved to be the bride's song and chorus--it contained exactly two hundred and nineteen verses, all just alike, and consumed two hours and ten minutes by the watch.

When the last verse was near its conclusion, a party of young braves came dancing from the tent in single file, close order, with both arms stretched high in the air with cotton handkerchiefs streaming from their hands.

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Then came the father of the bridegroom forth, attended by his wife. They removed the coverlets, then the necklace of beads, then the dresses, until seven new calico dresses had been slipped over her gentle head, when, much shrunken in outward appearance, she sat down on her allotted place on the left of the bridegroom and leaned her lovely head (it was arranged in a brilliant tonsure of yellow silk) upon his waiting shoulders. Then four grave and reverend seigneurs of the Nisqually band stepped to a point midway between the tribes and had long and solemn consultation. When it was over, they proclaimed that the name of the young and happy bride would henceforth be Ill-le-he-ba-kish. This was received with great applause by the Cowlitzers. One of their number then advanced and renamed the groom Hu-be-lallicul-pab-si.³ The Nisquallys responded with enthusiastic ughs!

The ceremony was now over, and congratulations were now in order. These consisted of an exchange of presents from individuals of one tribe to those of the other. Here the scene became intensely funny. The Cowlitz remained on their mats as before, and from their great stores of goods gave freely to the Nisquallys and Muckleshoots in return for the things handed them by the latter. Soon all the gifts prepared by either side were exhausted. Not so, however, their dispositions of generosity. Men and women stripped off shoes, hats, outer and then under garments and handed them over to the other side, until at great numbers of them stood or sat, as the case might be, arrayed in scarcely



enough decency, but laden down with all manner of things, the gifts of these very dear friends.

We have not room to tell of the repast that followed, but only any the happy pair that we hope they may be as happy and prosperous as the celebrated John Brown, who, according to the poet, had “eight little, nine little, ten little Indian boys.”

¹ Probably refers to Thomas Lane, who was known by this moniker.

² Undecipherable. Likely refers to “Ossa on Pelion,” from Greek mythology, meaning to add an extra burden to something already difficult.

³ Difficult to decipher.

TANNA ENGDahl, LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN THE HUMANITIES

(Southwest Washington)

In October 2025, revered Cowlitz Indian Tribe Elder and Spiritual Leader Tanna Engdahl was nominated for the Humanities Washington Award in recognition of her lifelong work preserving Indigenous culture, spirituality, and land stewardship. A former journalist and federal advocate, Engdahl now leads cultural revitalization through ceremony, teaching, storytelling, and environmental leadership. Her public speaking and writing continue to share the resilience and history of the Cowlitz people. Engdahl embodies the humanities through cultural stewardship, healing, and the transmission of intergenerational knowledge. The recipients were honored in an online ceremony in December 2025.



Image courtesy of **Humanities Washington**, from the *Honoring 50 for Our 50th* project.

MEMBER UPDATES

BIRTHS



Jasmine was born in December 2025 to Tribal member **Terina Beattie, Chase Beattie,** and her big sister **Grace Beattie.**



Ava was born in December 2025 to Tribal member **Brittney Bernardy.** After 3 losses, Ava is their rainbow baby. She is the granddaughter of **Corinne Bernardy** and descends from the **Ladue/Cloquet** family line.

Oliver was born in November 2025 to Tribal member **Kayci Guzman** and **Omar Guzman.** He is the Grandson of **Shane Miles.**



BIRTHS



Elliana was born in October 2025 to Tribal member **Teona Kinswa**.



Tribal member **Emily St. Martin** and her partner **Brandon Matsie** welcomed their son, **Ronan** in February 2026.



Bud was born early at 34 weeks and is doing great and growing strong! He is the son of Tribal member **Bud** and **Courtnie LeGarde** and the grandson of **Pete** and **Debbie LeGarde**.

MARRIAGES AND ENGAGEMENTS

On October 6, 2025, Cowlitz Tribal member **Camden Wheatley** was engaged to **Haleigh Swofford**. They are planning a July 2026 wedding!



PASSINGS

Gregory Dennis Aalvik passed away at his home in Vancouver, WA, on November 1, 2025, with his wife, Veronika (Vera), by his side. He was 66 years old.

Born in White Salmon, WA, on October 5, 1959, Greg was the son of Ronald "Sonny" Aalvik and Nancy (Merese) Aalvik and grew up in Carson, WA. He attended Carson Elementary, Wind River Middle School, and graduated from Stevenson High School in 1977.



After high school, Greg studied hair design at Beau Monde College of Hair Design, where he obtained his Oregon license. In 1991, he began working at the Shoe Mill, eventually rising to the role of Store Manager. He also studied Biomechanics and Shoe Modification at the Robert M. Palmer MD Institute of Biomechanics. Starting in 2005, he furthered his education in Anatomy and Pathologies of the lower extremities and Foot Orthosis, including casting, fabrication, and application, eventually becoming a Board-Certified Pedorthist. From 2007 to 2008, he, along with his brothers, Jeff and Erik, opened their own store, The Aalvik Brothers Stomping Grounds. Greg later returned to the Shoe Mill, where he worked until 2020. He worked for NW Auto Accessories and Meyer Logistics until 2024.

Greg was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife, Vera, whom he married in Fiji on August 8, 2015; his siblings, Jeffery (LuAnn), Yvette (Jim McCartney), and Erik (Danielle), his children, Krista Aalvik, Isha Aalvik, Aaryn Reiff, Zakory Aalvik, and his two beloved stepchildren Savannah Blair and Daven Solis. He leaves behind two grandchildren, Sarah and Sawyer, with another on the way. He was a devoted husband and family man.

Greg had a beautiful soul and a remarkable gift to connect with strangers, whether it was the waiter at a restaurant, a drive-thru attendant, his doctors, or anyone he encountered. He had a unique ability for making everyone feel heard and seen, often with a childlike excitement and contagious laughter.

Multitalented, Greg showcased his skills in singing, dancing, drawing, and acting from a young age. He was a natural born entertainer. Whatever he did, he did it well. He delighted in bringing joy, especially if it meant making a room erupt in laughter. He was a published author of two books, *The Parable: Rescuing the Bible from the Clutches of the Church*, and *The Masquerade: The Mystery Of Yahweh The Angel Of Light*.

Proud of his Native American heritage, Greg had deep roots in the Columbia River Gorge. He was enrolled with the Cowlitz Tribe and was a direct descendant of Chief Tumluth through his daughter, Indian Mary.

Rest in peace, dear Greg! You will be deeply missed!

GRADUATIONS

MASTER'S DEGREES



Sophia Brousseau
Book Publishing



Michelle Drummer
EMC in Floral Design



Rosalie Fish
Social Work



Melissa Halvorsen
Organizational Leadership

HIGH SCHOOL



Cheyenne Blake

DOCTORATE



Orion Jones
Educational Leadership



Randle Kinswa
Juris Doctorate

CERTIFICATES



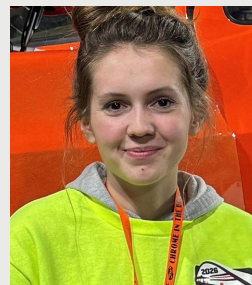
Jessica Clift
Coast Salish Wool Weaving



Emma Johnson
Indigenous Food Systems



Dave Meridian
CDL



Ashton Thompson
Autobody Repair & Refinishing

Not pictured:
AJ Bouchard
EMT

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Our current total enrolled population is 5,027

ENROLLMENT CRITERIA

1. Applicant must be a direct lineal descendant of a Cowlitz Indian
2. Applicant must have a parent (mother/father) living or deceased on the Cowlitz Tribal Roll
3. Applicants must be between the age of 0-18 years old (must apply before your 19th birthday)

All Cowlitz Indian Enrollment Applicants must meet all the criteria above to request an enrollment application. You can request an enrollment application by calling 360-577-8140 option 3, or email your request with full name, date of birth, Tribal parent name, and address to enrollment@cowlitz.org.

WE REMEMBER OUR TRIBAL MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED (FROM OCTOBER 1-FEBRUARY 28):

Gregory Dennis Aalvik
Debra Jeanne Anderson
Gerald Patrick Baker
Sharon Anne Barakat
Donna Lea Barker
Lowell Ervin Bridges
Ryan Scanewa Harris
Lenore Bernice Jarvis
Debra Marie Schrader
Dolores Elizabeth Stock
Rita Ann Sublett
Gary Howard Underwood

BACHELOR'S DEGREES



Stacey Bridges
Urban & Public Affairs



Christeen Harris
Business Administration



Eden Iyall
Communications



John W Michael
Finance, Risk and Insurance Management



Garret Sutherland
Mechanical Engineering



Ella Sherin Wetsit
American Studies with Native Studies concentration

Not pictured: Alec Erickson *Pre-Med*

ASSOCIATE DEGREES



Shawnee Buckner
Pre-Nursing



Kassandra Lloyd
Pre-Nursing



Curtis Powell
Gunsmithing

Not pictured: Macey Fluetsch *Business*; Nova Ladue *Cybersecurity*

WE NEED YOUR HELP LOCATING COWLITZ TRIBAL MEMBERS CONTACT INFORMATION! IF YOU KNOW THESE MEMBERS, PLEASE HAVE THEM CONTACT THE ENROLLMENT DEPARTMENT BY EMAILING ENROLLMENT@COWLITZ.ORG:



Scan this QR code with your mobile device to view the list of Tribal members that need to update their information with the Enrollment Department.

ARTIST SHOWCASE

KERRI ADAMS, DANCING RABBIT ARTS

Legacy of Knowledge, acrylic on a handmade deerskin hand drum



DEBORA IYALL

Healthy Family Healthy Forest,
pencil and watercolor on paper



JEREMY TRULUCK

LEGO Art: Cowlitz Indian Tribe Logo

The art piece is currently mounted on the back wall of my office in the Public Works building (929 Fir St, Longview, WA). I began the project in late 2020 when I was first hired as the Tribe's Project Engineer for our newly formed Department of Public Works. The inspiration behind it comes from both a professional and personal perspective.

When our department was first established, the building lacked Tribal artwork and decor, which made sense given how new everything was. At the same time, LEGO had begun releasing more sets designed for adults, including themes like plants, art, architecture, vehicles, and pop culture. I quickly became interested in these sets, especially Botanical, NASA, and Japanese-themed designs, and started building them regularly. LEGO became a great way to de-stress and stay creative. Over time, this interest spread throughout our office. Coworkers began bringing in their own sets or adopt in displaying some of mine, and our receptionist often shares the collection with visitors, who enjoy seeing the displays.

This growth in LEGO building parallels the growth of our department. LEGO's mission, "to inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow," resonates strongly with our work in Public Works, where we help bring the Tribe's visions to life. Like LEGO pieces, each team member brings unique strengths—whether personal, cultural, or professional—and together those strengths create something meaningful and lasting.

On a personal level, returning to LEGO at age 34 reconnected me with a favorite childhood activity. I had not built since I was a teenager, but I always loved both following instructions and creating custom builds from

random pieces. I still have those original pieces and plan to pass them down to my kids.

As I began decorating the office with LEGO, I wanted to create something custom and meaningful. Since the building initially lacked Tribal artwork, I decided to design a LEGO portrait of the Tribal logo. I started the design in 2020, using an existing LEGO Art set as a guide for the frame, which is also entirely made of LEGO.

During the design process, the Tribe updated its logo, requiring me to redesign the piece before purchasing most of the parts. Once finalized, I began ordering pieces gradually, budgeting purchases over time. The portrait uses 1x1 tiles mounted on 1x1 plates to create a slightly raised effect.

The project took five years to complete, finishing in 2025, with many lunch breaks dedicated to its construction. In total, the piece includes 29,640 LEGO elements. Alongside this project, I built many other sets, and over time the office became fully furnished with Tribal artwork and decor.

Surrounding the piece are LEGO picture frames of my family, adding a personal touch. The project reflects not only my own journey but also the future of my children and all children of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe—the true builders of tomorrow. Now that the piece is complete, I plan to someday donate it to the Tribe. I also plan to create an instruction manual so that others can build this set if anyone chooses to. I further plan to also make another or two of this set in the future.

HONORING THE STORY, BUILDING THE PRESS



A Cowlitz Tribal member, graduate student, and emerging publishing professional, Sophia Brousseau is on a mission to ensure Indigenous stories reach the world on their own terms.

Sophia Brousseau did not always know she wanted to work in publishing. But looking back, the signs were always there. Her original interest in preserving the Salish language grew into a quiet, persistent desire to see her people's stories honored and shared. Today, as she prepares to earn her master's degree in Book Publishing from Portland State University this June, Sophia stands at the threshold of a career she was, in many ways, born to pursue.

GUIDED BY COMMUNITY

For Sophia, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe has been a constant, nurturing presence. From painting drums at Tribal offices as a little girl, to Camp Singing Wind, to participating in a Seattle-based girls' group, the Tribe created spaces where culture and curiosity could grow together.

"As long as I can remember, Cowlitz has always created these opportunities for me to be part of my culture and pursue whatever interests me," Sophia reflects. As a student, the Tribe's Tuition Assistance Program and student rental assistance have been transformative. "I'm so grateful," she says. "I've used it the past two years."

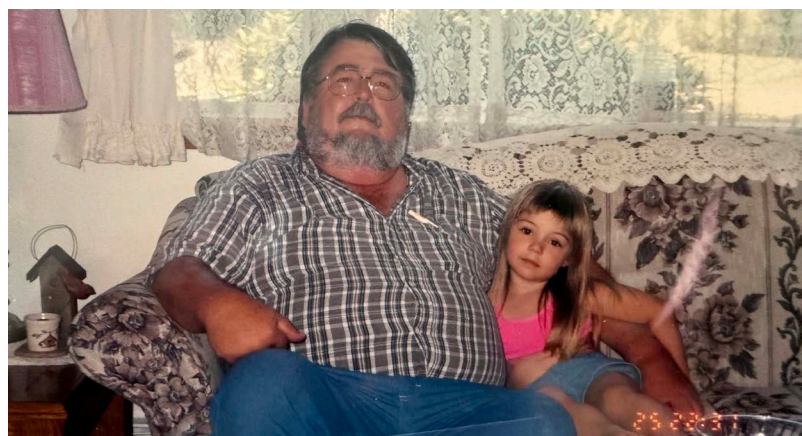
That gratitude runs deep and is inseparable from the legacy of her family. Her grandfather, Lenny Bridges, and her great-uncle, Sonny Bridges, were both devoted to building a better future for Tribal members. "Everything they did was with the people in mind," Sophia says. "They wanted to build opportunities for future generations. That's where I get a lot of my inspiration."

A PATH THAT FOUND HER

Sophia's journey into publishing began, as many great things do, somewhat by accident. In the summer of 2024, she enrolled in a publishing course to round out her undergrad credits. "I went, 'Oh my god, this is everything to me,'" she recalls. That course ignited a fire.

She originally started her bachelor's degree in 2017 in linguistics, with a goal of helping preserve the Cowlitz Coast Salish language. Though that specific path shifted—she's quick to note that "far more capable people got on that"—her drive to preserve and uplift remained. When publishing entered the picture, everything clicked. "I thought, I want to try to preserve Cowlitz history and actually talk to people and get the stories out there."

After completing her bachelor's degree, Sophia was accepted into Portland State University's master's program in book publishing, and with it, gained access to Ooligan



Sophia (right) age 4 with her grandfather Lenny Bridges (left) in Lenny's family home.

Leah Altman's *Cekpa: A Memoir in Beaded Essays* Book Launch at Literary Arts in Portland, Oregon, crowd interaction during introduction. Photo Credit: Chloe Strickland.



Press, a nationally recognized student-run press where graduate students work on real books from acquisitions all the way through launch. She dove in early, joining project teams as an undergraduate before even starting the master's program.

Her dedication was noticed. The press's publisher approached her and encouraged her to apply for a project manager role. She got the position to work with Leah Altman, an Indigenous author whose memoir, *Cekpa: A Memoir in Beaded Essays*, would become Sophia's first major publishing project. "I was so nervous," Sophia admits. She prepared a full meeting timeline, introduced herself as a Cowlitz Tribal member, and came armed with ideas for the book launch, including plans to uplift Native-owned businesses. An hour into their conversation, Leah Altman asked: "Do you want a job?"

A DREAM ALIGNED: CONFLUENCE PROJECT

Leah Altman, it turned out, was the executive director of Confluence Project, a Native nonprofit dedicated to elevating Indigenous voices across creative disciplines. And she had long harbored a dream of her own: to one day create a Native publishing press.

"That's crazy," Sophia told her. "It's exactly what I want to do."

What began as a summer internship has grown into a part-time position researching and laying the groundwork for an Indigenous publishing press through Confluence. Sophia is also working with other Indigenous authors, including copy editing a forthcoming book by Pacific Northwest storyteller Ed Edmo. Fittingly, Edmo's project initially explored becoming a graphic novel, a format Sophia knows well, having earned a comic studies certificate and harboring dreams of one day creating her own graphic novel drawing on Salish stories.

"I definitely got really lucky," she says humbly. But those who know Sophia's work ethic would argue differently.

THE BARRIERS INDIGENOUS WRITERS FACE

Ask Sophia about the challenges facing Indigenous writers, and she does not hesitate. "Resources ultimately encapsulates it all," she says. How many writers know how to craft a query letter or put together a proposal package? How do you find a literary agent, or decide whether that's even the right path? If you self-publish, what do you know about metadata, SEO, and marketing? If you sign a traditional contract, can you read the legal language?

"There's a lot of things that I think are not necessarily gatekept, because they are out there," she explains, "but they're not always accessible." Accessibility is the word she keeps returning to.

There are also deeper, structural concerns. Traditional publishing often hands an author's manuscript to a team they've never met; editors, cover designers, marketers, who shape the final product largely without the author's involvement. Sophia believes that model is fundamentally misaligned with Indigenous culture. "How can you possibly translate oral storytelling traditions to the written word," she asks, "if the people doing it don't understand those traditions?" She cites the Indigenous Editors Association and the book *Elements of Indigenous Style* by Greg Younging as valuable resources, while acknowledging that systemic gaps remain.

THE POWER OF SHOWING UP

One of the things Sophia feels most passionately about is the value of community events, book launches, readings, writer gatherings, and panels. "In



To follow the progress of the Indigenous publishing initiative Sophia is helping build, sign up for the Confluence Project newsletter on their website by scanning the QR code with your mobile device.



Leah Altman's *Cekpa: A Memoir in Beaded Essays* Book Launch at Literary Arts in Portland, Oregon, Sophia (left) leading the author Q&A with author, Leah Altman (right). Photo Credit: Cameron Grow.

the publishing industry, we joke about networking for introverts," she says with a laugh. But she is serious about what showing up can mean.

"Just showing up and adding to a headcount can do a lot more for the community than we realize." Storytelling, she reminds us, is one of humanity's oldest traditions, and is central to Indigenous cultures. "Listening to someone's history and stories and experiences should always be treasured within that community."

Part of the publishing press she is helping to build will also include workshops, not only for aspiring writers, but for those who want to understand the publishing industry. "Whether it's writers wanting to learn more about the process, or they want to get into publishing themselves, I want to create something in the Pacific Northwest that can aid in all these resource issues and make sure whatever path people want to go down is accessible."

RESHAPING THE INDUSTRY FROM THE INSIDE

Sophia's ambitions extend well beyond launching a single press. She was recently awarded a fellowship with the Society of Scholarly Publishing, and in May she will present research at its annual conference on Indigenous cultural metadata and how it affects the dissemination of work in scholarly publishing. The project grew from her recognition that metadata, the behind-the-scenes language that determines how books are categorized, searched, and found, is never a neutral system.

Further down the road, she envisions developing an Indigenous editorial style manual for editors working with Tribal communities within traditional publishing contexts, as well as new frameworks for Indigenous-centered metadata and marketing. "I want to not only create the

press and these opportunities," she says, "but try to help reshape the publishing industry as it is today."

Through Confluence, she is already doing that. The organization's annual literary journal, *Voices of the River*, has featured Cowlitz writers, and Sophia is helping expand its reach. The publishing initiative she is building will also include a robust audiobook and podcasting component, honoring oral traditions at the heart of Indigenous storytelling.

HONORING A LEGACY, BUILDING A FUTURE

When asked what it would mean to one day see a Cowlitz title, or a writer's workshop she helped create, Sophia's voice softens. She thinks of her grandfather and her great uncle. "They both cared so deeply for the Tribe," she says. "For me, the creation of a publishing press, workshops, connecting people with a network of professionals who want the talent, I know I'm creating the same opportunities for the Tribe and honoring my family's legacy in that way."

Asked what she hopes people remember from her story, Sophia doesn't hesitate: "I'm only where I am and who I am because of the opportunities that found me, and they only found me because I put myself out there."

To other Native students dreaming of working in publishing or media, Sophia offers this: put yourself out there. "Spirit rewards the brave," she says. "Give all of yourself to the thing you love, and doors will open for you. And if they don't, message me. I'm good at finding doors."

She means it literally. After graduation this June, Sophia plans to be available for Tribal members with questions about publishing, storytelling, and finding their path in the industry. "I want them to feel like they can reach out," she says, "and that I'll get back to them."

LETTER FROM A VETERAN AND COWLITZ WARRIOR MCPO HOMER G. MASON, RET.

SIXTY-SIX YEARS AGO, I TOOK AN OATH TO SERVE AND PROTECT OUR COUNTRY. I SERVED PROUDLY IN THE U.S. NAVY.

My first deployment was USS Higbee (DD-806), homeported in Yokosuka, Japan.

In 1965, the Tonkin Gulf incident happened. Our task force was deployed to the gulf immediately and so began the 10-year war that caused so much pain and lasting effects for our young men and women. The protests were a nightmare, and returning home we were never given a proper welcome. Only now are we starting to see acknowledgment of our service. Young people now come up to say “thank you” and shake our hands. Meeting other veterans, all saying “Welcome Home, brother.”

I deployed six times to the Hell Hole. Lost some good friends that still bother me to this day. You had to be there to really understand what we carry with us each day. Because of this, so many Veterans can’t — or won’t — discuss it.

My 30 years in the Navy had its good times too. The friends I made and am still contact with. To this day, I try to focus on the good times with my shipmates— the beautiful countries I otherwise would never have seen, and climbing to the top of Mount Fuji.

God Bless those who gave some and God Bless those who gave it all.

That blank check I signed many decades ago still stands.

I retired as a proud Master Chief Petty Officer.

Many thanks to my wife who was there the whole time. Spouses too are the unknown heroes.

MCPO Homer G. Mason, Ret.



Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO) Homer G. Mason, Retired (Ret.) in his uniform.

MCPO Homer G. Mason, Ret.'s Military Challenge Coins from his career.



GWE & PER CAPITA: WELFARE OR DIVIDENDS?

By Rod Van Mechelen

Are GWE and Per Capita payments welfare, or more like dividends? Some feel these are welfare programs. While some Tribes experience the same moral hazards that are associated with welfare programs, or even winning a lottery, there are significant differences, and ways to avoid the pitfalls.

Welfare is a transfer of wealth and is funded by citizens. Dividends are distributions of income to owners. Some of our programs are funded by the federal government and are welfare programs. Per capita and GWE come from our enterprise revenues and are like dividends.

President Reagan had a hard time understanding the relationship of the federal government to Indian Tribes until someone told him that he could think of Tribes as being “like states.” In the same way, while per capita and GWE distributions are not dividends, they can be thought of as “like dividends.”

GWE is a nontaxable reimbursement program that is usually funded by enterprise revenues and finds its counterpart in how wealthy families around the world conduct their affairs.

The National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC), which was established pursuant to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, requires that gaming revenues be used primarily to pay for programs.

These criteria were set at a time when Congress expected Tribal members to live on impoverished reservations. But like old money families, such as the Windsors and Rothschilds, and more recent wealthy families like the Rockefellers, Kennedys and Waltons, Tribal members live around the world.

The members of those families have both a heritage – a family culture – and claim an inheritance. As do we. Those families do not require their members to live in a specific geographic area, nor should we, and the federal government is gradually adapting to that reality.

Per capita, which is counted by the IRS as taxable income, is frowned upon by the NIGC, and some Tribes have had members succumb to the moral hazard posed by that “free money,” much the same as most lottery winners. It’s the same for old money families, so they evolved an approach that cultivates the best in their members.

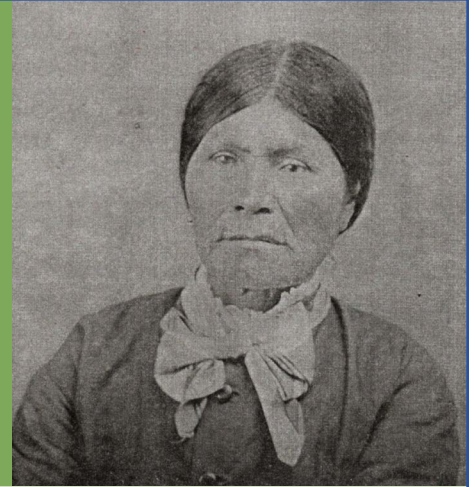
Father and son Bill and Will Bonner wanted to learn how old money families do that, and recorded what they learned in the book, *Family Fortunes*.

Old money families help with expenses like housing, health insurance, tuition, and more, much like GWE. Some pay modest dividends, and most provide employment opportunities in the family businesses. In other words, they act like Tribes.

They even have co-chairs: one male, one female. Their responsibilities are divided along traditional roles, with the matriarch cultivating family culture and handling charitable giving and domestic matters while the patriarch focuses primarily on commercial and political activities.

We can learn from and emulate those families, but we will ultimately evolve our own way. As we do, we should never lose sight of the fact that GWE and per capita are not welfare, but like dividends.

Photo of Lucy Skloutwout.
Photo Credits: Emily Reed.



PLEASE JOIN SKLOUTWOUT FAMILY MEMBERS FOR OUR 2026 ANNUAL REUNION!

**We welcome ALL descendants of Lucy Skloutwout
(also known as Lucy Gerand/Weiser)
to gather together for this annual extended family reunion.**

Bring your genealogy knowledge, family pictures, written family histories, and memories to share, plus a potluck dish and beverages to contribute to the meal, and a chair if you are not comfortable with the picnic table benches provided by the park.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 30TH, 2026
11 a.m. until mid-afternoon**

**LEWIS AND CLARK STATE PARK
Kitchen Shelter 1, 4583 Jackson Hwy, Winlock, WA 98596**

Please note that a Washington State Discover Pass is required (or a day pass costing \$10) per vehicle. Cowlitz Tribal members may obtain a lifetime Discover Pass (plus Northwest Forest Pass) more than two weeks in advance by contacting the Cowlitz Tribal Enrollment Department for the form used to apply for this.

Because parking is somewhat limited, carpooling is encouraged.

Please share the reunion information with all Skloutwout relatives, of whom there are many. (Our email list is limited and has been enlarged primarily by the attendance of extended family members over the years.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Linda Foley

206-276-6010 (cell)
email: foley.LS@gmail.com

Marsha Williams

253-857-8832 (home) or 253-355-0368 (cell)
email: marshajwms@outlook.com

ILANI DISCOUNTS FOR COWLITZ TRIBAL MEMBERS

As of April 2026

Bella Vista: 25% off
(Tribal Member + up to 3 guests)

Chef Jet: 20% off

Cowlitz Trading Post: 15% off

i.talia Pizzeria: 20% off

Line & Lure: 25% off
(Tribal Member + up to 3 guests)

Lobby Cafe: 25% off
(Tribal Member + up to 3 guests)

Longhouse: 25% off food
(Tribal Member + up to 3 guests)

Marshall Rousso: Elders 15% off,
All other Tribal Members 10% off

Rock and Brews: 25% off
(Tribal Member + up to 3 guests)

Smashburger: 20% off

Starbucks: 20% off

Taco Cantina: 20% off

Tom's Watch Bar: 15% off
(Tribal Member + up to 3 guests)

Parking: Complimentary valet parking

Hotel: Weekday - \$79; Weekend - \$99

KidsQuest/CyberQuest:
20% off on arcade side

OTHER DISCOUNTS:

Cowlitz Crossing Store:
15% off
Fuel: \$1.00 off/gallon

Q'anápsu Full Price Products:
30% off for Tribal Members who are
enrolled in the loyalty program

Cowlitz Tobacco Outlet: 30% off
cigarettes and chewing tobacco

Save the Date

Pathways to Healing For All Generations Event

October 17 2026

Gathering to honoring those whose
lives have been impacted by violence

Cowlitz Indian Tribe

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THURSDAY, JUNE 18



SATURDAY, JUNE 27



THURSDAY, AUGUST 13



THURSDAY, AUGUST 27



SUNDAY, AUGUST 30