HONORING HISTORY

Returning Ancestral Lands to Indigenous Peoples
Conservancy Transfers Two Properties to Oregon Tribes

In 2019, the opportunity to do something special arose—twice. The Nature Conservancy in Oregon transferred ancestral lands back to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde in the form of the Dunstan Homestead and Noble Oaks Preserves. Having cared for this land since time immemorial, both Tribes plan to restore and protect wildlife habitat and manage for conservation.

“TNC considers opportunities to transfer preserves to highly capable and motivated conservation partners where it benefits the long-term management of the preserve, the long-term goals of the partner and organizational goals,” said Derek Johnson, deputy director for operations and communications for The Nature Conservancy in Oregon. “We are excited that such an opportunity has developed with the Tribes for the future of these preserves, to support the goals of the Tribes and their deep connection to the land, and to advance the Conservancy’s vision of a world where nature and people thrive together.”

“The fact that TNC has returned these lands to their original stewards is beyond words. This generosity allows us to step into our role as caretakers and ensure the existence of this habitat, and this place, for generations to come.”

- Cheryle A. Kennedy,
  Chairwoman of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde

Did you know?
In Oregon, there are currently 9 federally-recognized Native American Tribes, which have over 24,000 members, as well as many federally unrecognized tribes.

Story originally appeared in The Nature Conservancy in Oregon’s 2019 annual report and was adapted for this reprint. The Nature Conservancy conserves the lands and waters on which all life depends: nature.org/oregon

Above photos: At left, Middle Fork of the John Day River, photo courtesy The Nature Conservancy in Oregon; at right, Cheryle A. Kennedy, photo courtesy Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde