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Bighorn rams line up on Mount Everts. While lions and wolves will prey on adult sheep, lambs are most susceptible to predators, including large birds of prey like eagles. NPS / Jacob W. Frank

How one tribe's 'flower house' is re-seeding Oregon with native plants

By [Jamie Hale | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)



Joseph Ham, assistant at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's native plant nursery, examines a bunch of camas lilies blooming in the spring. Jamie Hale/The Oregonian

The tiny, fuzzy white-and-purple flowers tilted toward the sun, flecked with raindrops in the gray morning light. Sara Thompson, spokesperson for the [Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde](#), gasped and suddenly broke away from the interview she had organized to kneel beside a small wooden planter.

These little flowers — called Tolmie's cat's ear, Tolmie's mariposa lily or *calochortus tolmiei* — had transported Thompson through time.

As the rest of the group — the two people in charge of the tribe's native plant nursery and this reporter — gathered around Thompson, she told the story: Every Memorial Day growing up, her aunt would take her to tend to the graves of her ancestors. In doing so, they would find and pick cat's ear flowers to make tea, she said. It was one of her most cherished memories.

"It just took me back," Thompson said, apologizing for the interruption. "Cat's ear, I haven't seen it in forever!"

The little fuzzy flowers are just one of dozens of native plants grown on a 35-acre parcel of land in the foothills of the Coast Range, a property that once operated as a Christmas tree farm but now houses the Grand Ronde tribe's Natural Resources office as well as a 14-acre restoration site and the small native plant nursery. The nursery is officially known as the "[native plant materials program](#)," but the tribe also calls it tatis haws, which means "flower house" in the Chinuk wawa language.

Jeremy Ojua, supervisor of the nursery, said the project started in 2014 and has slowly grown since then. As the tribe has acquired more of its ceded lands, he said, it has also worked to restore those areas into more naturalistic landscapes. At the nursery, native plants are cultivated for transplant not only to tribal lands but also public lands, through partnerships with agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

“It’s a beautiful symbiotic relationship,” said Dan Klug, cultural resource specialist for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. “If the nursery can grow these plants and propagate them, and we collect the seed, we can redistribute that in restoration areas in state parks.”

Klug, who oversees cultural resources for state parks in the Willamette Valley, said the parks department has worked with the Grand Ronde tribe on restoration projects at Tryon Creek, Milo McIver, Wapato Access Greenway, Champoeg, Silver Falls and Willamette Mission state parks. At Champoeg State Park, which the department sees as an early success story, the tribe helped burn and restore a stretch of prairie near a group campground.

Originally a Kalapuya village site, the state park land also served as a camp for fur traders and was the site of Oregon’s first provisional government. Later, it was transformed into one of the first farms in the Willamette Valley, Klug said. The state parks department is now interested in restoring the land to its pre-colonial state, and park officials are actively seeking tribal partnerships.

“State parks is an oasis within developed areas. The idea is we’re in a new era of restoration and that’s restoring these landscapes,” Klug said. “When you heal the land, you heal the people.”

Plants from tatis haws have also been transported to restoration areas in the Siuslaw National Forest, a stretch of federal forest land along the central Oregon coast. Sarah Kaufman, a wildlife biologist for the forest, said the primary goal in these areas is improving habitat for pollinators, like birds, bats and insects. Native plants can act as “stepping stones” that aid those creatures as they move across the forest landscape.

“It’s the little things here that make the difference,” Kaufman said. “Each plant holds a different skill and a different attribute that they contribute to the system of resiliency of a forest.”

Many of the native plants grown at the Grand Ronde nursery are not cultivated anywhere else, she said, and including those plants in the forest’s restoration areas adds diversity that goes a long way toward helping rebuild the natural landscape following fire, logging or other disturbances. Increasing the diversity of voices on the land is another important part of the partnership.

“I really enjoy working collaboratively with the tribes and allowing the voices that were here first have a say in the management decisions that should be happening across the land,” Kaufman said.

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Jeremy Ojua, native plant nursery supervisor for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, gives a tour of the tribe’s nursery. Jamie Hale/The Oregonian

In the past few years, the Grand Ronde nursery has been feeling out its mission, Ojua said, increasing its capacity to serve both the land and the tribal community, buoyed by grants and partnerships with organizations such as the [Institute for Applied Ecology](#) and [Greenbelt Land Trust](#). In addition to plants for landscaping or restoration work, the nursery's beds contain several first foods including camas and wapato, and ceremonial plants such as tobacco, which are harvested or given out to community members to plant in their own yards.

"Everything in these beds are all traditional foods," Ojua said, pointing to a group of planters containing camas lily, fernleaf biscuitroot, wild carrot and slenderleaf onion. "They all still grow around here, but they also like to grow in an open meadow, for the most part, and most of that's been sucked up for farmland and hazelnut orchards."

Having a source of traditional foods, even if ceremonial or educational, has been an important point of connection for the Grand Ronde community.

Joseph Ham, who works as Ojua's assistant, said he remembers growing up learning the names of plants in Chinuk wawa, a ancestral trade language that the tribe has [made an effort to retain](#). As a child, he said he would go out to pick wild strawberries with his grandmother, who spoke the language and taught him a few words. Today, children can learn those Chinuk wawa words as they tour the nursery, where they also get a hands-on education about the plants.

"There's so many seeds planted of kids having those personal relationships from an early age," Ham said. "I see now the preschool kids that come, they have a lifetime relationship with the camas especially."

It wasn't that long ago that this kind of cultural knowledge was endangered, he said. From the tribe's inception at the end of the [Rogue River Trail of Tears](#) to the forced re-education in [government-run boarding schools](#) and the [29-year termination](#) of the tribe's federal status, generations of tribal members have grown up without the resources to learn about their culture, or the freedom to do so.

Now, things are different, Ham said. Kids not only learn about important plants like camas, they get to see, feel and experience the life cycle of the flower throughout the seasons.

"I'm seeing that it's like they have ownership of it, and they care a lot from an early age," Ham said. "Kids are going to grow up and they're always going to know that that's their truth."

Camas flowers were once so prolific in the Willamette Valley that the green hills became seas of purple in the spring. Now, the flower is found in sparse patches, many of them cultivated by hand. When the Grand Ronde nursery started, it only had a few small beds of the flowers, but now its planters are bursting. Ojua said the program has distributed somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 camas bulbs over the past decade, slowly re-seeding the landscape.

The camas revival is a fitting metaphor for tatis haws. The nursery, which started as little more than an idea, has become a go-to source for the acquisition and cultivation of Northwest native plants.

“We’ve had a really fruitful relationship with the tribe,” said Clay Courtwright, Columbia district manager for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. “They’re great partners. They understand the environment both from the western science perspective but also from the traditional tribal perspective as well.”

<https://www.oregonlive.com/native-american-news/2025/08/how-one-tribes-flower-house-is-re-seeding-oregon-with-native-plants.html> (more pics)

Solar development continues despite new federal barriers

Solar power is projected to account for half of new electricity added to the U.S. grid in 2025, with developers planning to install a record [33 gigawatts of solar capacity](#). If these projections are fulfilled, the United States Energy Information Administration says that large-scale solar power additions to the grid would reach [a single-year record](#).

However, the Trump administration has taken a series of steps that aim to inhibit broader adoption of solar power. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ended a \$7 billion grant program for solar development in low-income communities, of which Nevada stands to lose [\\$156 million in funding](#). Meanwhile, Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum is required to personally approve solar and wind projects on public lands, which could be a significant barrier to solar development in Nevada, where 80% of its land is federally managed.

Learn more with Jennifer Solis’ latest reporting with the Nevada Current.

[Read more on nevadacurrent.com >>](#)

This First Nation Just Barred Non-Native Hunters from Its Territory for ‘Overhunting’

With just three weeks until Manitoba’s general moose opener, a First Nation in the province says it is barring non-Native hunters from hunting in its territory. The Bloodvein First Nation erected the first no-trespassing signs on Saturday, setting the stage for a legal conflict with other hunters and the provincial government.

During [a press conference](#) over the weekend, the First Nation said the blockade would apply to non-indigenous hunters anywhere on the Bloodvein’s traditional lands, which lie along the eastern shore of Lake Winnipeg. The no-trespassing signs also include fishing and trapping in the bans. Its leaders have also called on the Manitoba government to stop issuing hunting licenses within the territory.

Chief of the Bloodvein First Nation Lisa Young said this has become necessary due to years of over-harvesting and wasteful hunting practices by outsiders.

"We sustain ourselves with our hunting and fishing, and we've had some unsuccessful hunts over the years because of the overhunting in our area," Young [told CBC News](#). She added that the community only had one successful moose hunt last year. "We'd like to stop people from driving onto our First Nation and taking over this area and hunting off our river."

Young said she'd already turned away two non-Native hunters on Saturday who were trying to scout for moose. She and other Bloodvein members have claimed they are acting within the bounds of the law and standing by their rights as a sovereign nation. Several other First Nations' leaders, including [the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs](#), have publicly supported the move.

Non-Native hunters have taken issue with the Bloodvein's stance, however. Chris Heald, senior policy advisor for the [Manitoba Wildlife Federation](#), called the blockade "uncalled for" and illegal [in an interview with the CBC](#) Sunday.

Heald said the First Nation's claims that there aren't enough moose to go around are misguided, and that the government's population data says otherwise. He said that even if moose numbers were down, fish and wildlife on the Bloodvein's traditional lands are still shared resources managed by the provincial government, and not the First Nation alone.

"I don't think the First Nation can assert sovereignty over traditional areas and say that licensed hunting can't go on," Heald said. "These hunters have already purchased their license based on [the government's] science and data. And how is a certain group to say the other group can't go? It's just not legal."

Heald said that with moose season [set to open on Sept. 15](#) in most of the province (a few areas opened Aug. 25), he expects there to be additional conflict between First Nation members and non-Native hunters in the coming weeks. He's now asking the provincial government to take a leadership role and broker a solution.

"I hope cooler heads prevail ... And I hope the province steps in and removes this roadblock on

'Disrespectful Violations' Prompt Ute Tribe to Close 4 Million Acres to Nontribal Hunters, Anglers, Campers

From the Reno News & Review

A celebration of peace



The 37th annual **Numaga Indian Days Powwow** is a three-day celebration featuring Indigenous champion dancers from all over North America, and famous powwow singers and drummers, who will compete for titles and cash prizes. Named in honor of Chief Numaga, a Paiute leader and peacemaker who advocated on behalf of all Native people, the gathering also features hand game competitions and more than 50 vendors selling traditional food, handcrafted silverwork, beadwork, baskets and other Native American art. The powwow kicks off at **7 p.m., Friday, Aug. 29**, with the grand entry, when all the dancers enter the amphitheater. Competition dancing starts at 8 p.m. The grand entry times are at **1 and 7 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 30**, and **noon on Sunday, Aug. 31**, with competition dancing and spotlight events occurring shortly afterward. The powwow will be held in Hungry Valley at the **Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Powwow Grounds**, 501 Many Nations Road, in Sparks, 18 miles north of Reno. Admission is free. Bleacher space is limited, so it's recommended that you bring your own chairs and shade canopies. Visit www.rsic.org/269/Numaga-Indian-Days-Powwow-Handgames or www.facebook.com/RSICPowwow.

26th Annual Pahrump Social Powwow

Where: Petrack Park, 150 NV-160, Pahrump

When: Nov. 21-23

Cost: Free

Geared for both Native Americans and non-natives, the [Pahrump Social Powwow](#) features three days of dancing and drumming by the [Western Shoshone and Paiute tribes](#). Once called

Pahrump's largest cultural event, it brings Native American tribes together to preserve their cultural heritage. In addition to drummers and dancers in elaborate Native American regalia, the event will feature musicians and craftspeople from tribes throughout the West. Visitors to the powwow experience colorful tribal dances as well as an intertribal dance. You'll even get to try Native American food.

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**HISTORY OF LOVELOCK NEVADA**  
( & Pershing County )  
 Admin Donna Cossette commented on this photo. · Cathie Bryant · Nov 19, 2022 · 

Charlie and Annie Bill (Paiute) and family standing in front of their home in Lovelock Colony, Nevada. 1935



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**Susan Jamerson**  
What a blessing to have a photo of them.  
2y Like Reply 1 

**Donna Cossette** Susan Jamerson we hav...

[Donna Cossette](#)

Cathie Bryant How I would love to share more about our rich Paiute history with locals. I will have to kindly decline, because of the way the county of Pershing, the City of Lovelock and the Marzen House museum disregards my family's request to remove those degrading skeletons from the front lawn of the museum. If I was a resident I would find it insulting and detrimental to your economy in Lovelock by promoting such a poor advertisement. If I'm not mistaken Lovelock has already dedicated thousands of public resources in coining the logo "Lock your Love in Lovelock?" In one fail swoop by erecting those skeletons and promoting creepy vibes

for the town of Lovelock. Who in their right mind wants to patronize such a thing. Good luck with that. I will share this fact, the Si-Ticutta are not Koop-Ticutta nore are they Toi-Ticutta. I am a descendant from the Si-Ticutta on my grandfather's side of the family. We are still here, we know our history. Let me know when those skeletons are removed and we can together celebrate our history. But until then I'll start by promoting the true history of the Si-Ticutta from Fallon, we could use the tourism dollars in our community too, being its located in Churchill County. Good day!

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## **SWAIA - Santa Fe Indian Market**

Thank you to journalist Chad Scott and @forbes for spotlighting the 103rd Santa Fe Indian Market!

From first-time SWAIA artist and Best of Show winner @reginafreehandstudio (Chickasaw), innovative longstanding artists such as @noconab\_art\_studio\_ (Comanche), and bold new works by @\_kat\_wall\_ (Jemez Pueblo)—this year’s Market proved why it continues to be the World’s most dynamic gathering of Native art. Read the full feature via @forbes

[#SFIM25](#) [#SantaFeIndianMarket](#) [#NativeArt](#)  
— in [Santa Fe, NM](#).



**Another opinion: The Colorado River is in trouble. Some groups want the government to step up** By [DORANY PINEDA](#) Updated 6:03 AM PDT, August 27, 2025

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Earlier this year, several environmental groups [sent a petition](#) to the federal government with a seemingly simple message: Ensure that water from the imperiled Colorado River is not wasted and only being delivered for “reasonable” and “beneficial” uses.

The organizations urged the Bureau of Reclamation to use its authority to curb water waste in the [Lower Basin states](#): California, Arizona and Nevada. They argued it was necessary to help address the river’s water shortages.

The concept of reasonable and beneficial use is not new, but it’s being discussed at a crucial moment. Chronic overuse, drought and rising temperatures linked to climate change have shrunk

water flows. States reliant on the river are approaching a [2026 deadline](#) to decide on new rules for sharing its supplies, and they have until mid-November to reach a preliminary agreement or risk federal intervention.

The petitioning groups argue reducing water waste could help ensure the river has a sustainable future. But others worry cuts could bring hardship to farmers and consumers.



*People walk by a formerly sunken boat standing upright along the shoreline of Lake Mead at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Jan. 27, 2023, near Boulder City, Nev. (AP Photo/John Locher, File)*

The river supports 40 million people across seven U.S. states, two states in Mexico and Native American tribes.

“We don’t have a management future for the Colorado River right now and it’s getting pretty scary,” said Mark Gold, adjunct professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, and former director of water scarcity solutions with the Natural Resources Defense Council, [a petition group](#). “We should be dealing with this as a water scarcity emergency, and one of the things that you really want to do in an emergency is, let’s deal with water waste first.”

The bureau has not responded to the petition. In a statement to The Associated Press, the agency said it continues to operate with the agreements and rules in place and has other strategies to “reduce the risk of reaching critical elevations” at the river’s reservoirs, Lakes Powell and Mead.

### **Defining ‘beneficial’ and ‘reasonable’ is not easy**

A [bureau code](#) says “deliveries of Colorado River water to each Contractor will not exceed those reasonably required for beneficial use.”

But Cara Horowitz, director of UCLA’s Frank G. Wells Environmental Law Clinic, wasn’t sure what that meant or how it’s applied. So she and her students sought to find out with government records.

“As best as we could tell, it’s never defined the phrase and it does not use the phrase in any meaningful way as it’s making water delivery decisions,” said Horowitz, who is representing the groups. They believe the bureau needs a reformed process to determine whether states are



avoiding wasteful and unreasonable use. In the petition, the groups urged the bureau to address those issues and perform periodic reviews of water use.

Experts say that defining reasonable and beneficial use could be challenging, but some argue it's worth a try. Others worry that allowing an authority to determine what's wasteful could have negative impacts.

*Augustin Rodriguez gets hoses ready on the back of his water truck as he delivers at a home across the street from a large sign that reads "conserve water," in Spanish, May 9, 2023, in Tijuana, Mexico. (AP Photo/Gregory Bull, File)*

"It's potentially a whole can of worms that we need to approach very carefully," said Sarah Porter, the Kyl Center for Water Policy director at Arizona State University. "Who gets to be the entity that decides what's an appropriate amount of use for any particular water user or community?"

The groups see it differently. For example, they think farmers should be incentivized to change "wasteful" irrigation practices and consider growing crops better suited for certain climates. An example they gave of "unreasonable" use is year-round flood irrigation of thirsty crops in deserts. In cities and industries, wasteful use includes watering ornamental turf or using water-intensive cooling systems.

In a 2003 case, the bureau invoked the provision when it ordered water reductions to California's Imperial Irrigation District, the largest river water user, after determining it couldn't beneficially use it all. The district sued and the dispute eventually settled.

### **Concerns from farmers and cities**

California's [Imperial Valley](#) relies 100% on Colorado River water. The desert's temperate, mild winters are ideal for growing [two-thirds](#) of winter vegetables consumed nationally.

Andrew Leimgruber, a fourth-generation farmer here, has tried to reduce his use with water-savings programs. He grows crops like carrots, onions and mostly alfalfa, which he often flood-irrigates because it fills the plant's deep root system. For up to 60 days in the summer, he doesn't water it at all.

*Farmer Larry Cox walks in a field of Bermudagrass with his dog, Brodie, at his farm Aug. 15, 2022, in Imperial Valley near Brawley, Calif. (AP Photo/Gregory Bull, File)*

Water cuts because of "unreasonable" use could mean people won't be able to eat a Caesar salad in New York City in January, Leimgruber said. He worries about short-term food shortages and putting farmers out of business.

Bill Hasencamp, manager of Colorado River Resources for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, said the agency supports an annual process to ensure water is being beneficially used, even as that definition changes, but he doesn't think it's meant to solve the river's existential crisis. He worries invoking this tool could result in litigation. "Once things go to court, there's always a wild card that's sort of out of anyone's control."

## **A California provision as a model**

Some experts point to [California's constitution](#) as a potential model, which contains a provision on reasonable and beneficial use. How that is interpreted is fluid and decided by state water regulators, or the courts.

“The way it’s written is actually very adaptable to the times, so it’s actually about what is wasted and reasonable use in a given time,” said Felicia Marcus, fellow at Stanford University’s Water in the West program and former chair of the California State Water Resources Control Board.

**“So things that would have seemed to be reasonable 50 years ago, no longer are.”**

*The Hoover Dam appears on the Colorado River, Aug. 22, 2024, near Boulder City, Nev. (AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson, File)*

The [state water board](#) has invoked its beneficial and reasonable use provision in times of drought, for example, to help support using less water in cities. It’s deemed washing sidewalks or washing cars in driveways as unreasonable. In another case, the water agency argued and won that it was unreasonable for a senior water rights holder to take so much water that fish couldn’t swim to cold water refuges.

Water regulators have also threatened to apply their unreasonable use authority to get the holders of water rights to better manage their use. “It’s a tool that gets used as both a threat and a backstop,” said Marcus.

## **Addressing shortages requires multiple approaches**

Leimgruber, the Imperial Valley farmer, said limiting population growth and expansion in arid areas could help. John Boelts, a farmer and Arizona Farm Bureau president, suggested more desalination projects. And Noah Garrison, a water researcher at UCLA, found in [a recent study](#) he co-authored that states could do more to recycle wastewater.

Still, as decades-long droughts plague parts of the basin and with critical deadlines approaching, some experts say it’s time for the bureau to be more assertive.

“There’s responsibility here to be the water master on the river or it gets thrown to the Supreme Court, which will take years to work its way through,” said Marcus. The “beneficial use petition is one way to say, ‘Here’s a tool you have, step up and consider it.’”

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The Associated Press receives support from the Walton Family Foundation for coverage of water and environmental policy. The AP is solely responsible for all content. For all of AP’s environmental coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/climate-and-environment>.