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Indigenous people and others gather in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Saturday, May 2, 2026, to raise awareness about Indigenous relatives who have gone missing or who have been killed. (Nancy Marie Spears/The Imprint via AP)

Indigenous People Honor and Raise Awareness

Honoring Loved Ones Who Are Missing Or Have Been Killed

(AP) — Across the country, Indigenous people are gathering this week to honor loved ones who are missing or have been killed and to call for better data collection, law enforcement response and reforms to make their communities safer.

From U.S. state capitols and tribal community spaces to the streets of major cities, hundreds of marches, rallies, talking circles, self-defense classes and candlelight vigils are planned for the week of May 5, which is observed as a National Day of Awareness for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples movement.

The day reflects both the collective grief and the resilience of Indigenous communities, where the federal government has a legal responsibility to ensure public safety. All too often, resources to prevent and respond to violence are in short supply.

Many events call for participants to wear red, a color that has become synonymous with honoring Indigenous victims of violence in the U.S. and Canada.

Native Americans face disproportionate rates of violence in the U.S., a crisis that advocates say is rooted in the systematic removal of Native people from their land

and the federal government's efforts to rid them of their cultures.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Native Americans and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely than the general population to be victims of a violent crime, and Native women are twice as likely to be victims of homicide. At the end of 2025, the FBI's National Crime Information Center recorded just under 1,500 active federal cases involving missing Native Americans.

Experts say that's likely an undercount because of jurisdictional confusion, racial misclassification and inconsistent data collection.

Abigail Echo-Hawk, director of the Urban Indian Health Institute, said that there's been progress in accounting for the true scope of the crisis but that law enforcement resources have been slow to follow.

"Don't look at the numbers and feel sorry for us," Echo-Hawk said, a citizen of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. "Look at the numbers and say, 'How do we ensure that this doesn't continue?'"

In 2020, President Donald Trump signed Savanna's Act and the Not Invisible Act into law, both aimed at solving and preventing cases of violent crime in Indian Country with improved data collection and law enforcement reforms. But implementation of those laws has been slow and erratic. Under the Biden administration in 2022, a federal commission to study the crisis convened two years behind schedule. Its extensive recommendations — ranging

from expanding authority for tribal law enforcement to improving communication with the victims' families — were made public in 2023.

The recommendations were removed from government websites last year amid the Trump administration's purge of initiatives it associates with diversity, equity and inclusion.

Federally recognized tribes are sovereign nations within the U.S.

Meanwhile, Trump's Department of Justice has continued its Operation Not Forgotten initiative, surging dozens of FBI agents, analysts and other personnel to field offices near tribal lands on a rotating, temporary basis. According to the FBI, those assignments have yielded more than 200 arrests and convictions in homicide, domestic abuse and sexual assault cases since 2023.

Michael Henderson, director of public safety for the Navajo Nation, said there are "pros and cons" to a bigger FBI footprint in Indian Country. Federal officers can bring fresh eyes and high-tech forensic tools to cold cases. But Henderson said many of these agents arrive with little experience working in Indigenous communities or investigating violent crime.

"More manpower from the FBI on reservations, that's not a good solution in my mind," Henderson said, adding that federal funds could be better spent staffing and funding tribal police departments.

At a Sunday prayer walk in Colorado Springs, Colorado, marchers chanted, "No

more stolen lives on stolen land" and carried signs with the photos and stories of dozens of Indigenous people who have been killed or have disappeared.

Among the marchers was Denise Porambo. Her daughter, Destiny Jeriann Whiteman, was killed last August where she lived on the Ute Mountain Ute reservation in southwest Colorado. She was 24 and had an infant son.

"It hurts every day," Porambo said after the march, her voice breaking.

In the absence of a nationwide strategy for handling these cases, advocates in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples movement say that burden often falls to family members.

Grace Bulltail's 18-year-old niece, Kaysera Stops Pretty Places, was found dead several days after she disappeared from her home on the Crow Reservation in Montana in August 2019. Her family remembers her as a kindhearted person and a tenacious high school athlete. They organize marches, vigils and courthouse demonstrations to raise awareness about the case and tirelessly pester law enforcement for action and answers.

No arrests have been made, and the cause of death was ruled inconclusive. Stops Pretty Places' grandmother is organizing a demonstration Tuesday at a courthouse bordering the Crow Reservation.

"We have had to advocate for ourselves and for Kaysera every step of the way," Bulltail said. ___ Spears reported from Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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MHCC's Annual Community Event Is Almost Here

Barney's Bash, our annual end-of-the-year celebration is almost here — you won't want to miss it! Barney's Bash is a FREE, all-day ticket to fun, food, and unforgettable moments with family, friends, and the community. There will be free food, high-energy entertainment, and activities around every corner; from laser tag and bounce houses to a petting zoo, dunk tank, henna, a photobooth, and more!

This year, enjoy a special lunchtime performance from singer-songwriter and storyteller Glory Daze, a powerful eve-



Visitors enjoying the Bash in front of a bounce house. Photo courtesy of Mt. Hood Community College

ning performance by Portland Taiko, and a grand finale from the MHCC Jazz Ensembles. This is one of our largest annual community events where MHCC and the community can celebrate the end of the academic year at no cost. This event will be held on May 21st, 2026 from 12-7pm at MHCC Gresham Campus.

From 911 Call-Taker To Top Leader

New Director Selected for Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications

Since starting as a 911 call-taker, Steve Mawdsley has worked in every part of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications front-line services — and now he'll lead the whole operation.

Mawdsley was named the next long-term director today, after serving in an interim capacity since June 2025. He was appointed by City Administrator Raymond C. Lee III following a recruitment that did not result in a hire.



BOEC Director Steve Mawdsley

"It became clear we already have the leadership we need to help Portlanders in crisis and support our emergency communications team," Lee said. "Steve Mawdsley has dedicated more than two decades to making Portland safer, and I am grateful that he will continue in a leadership capacity."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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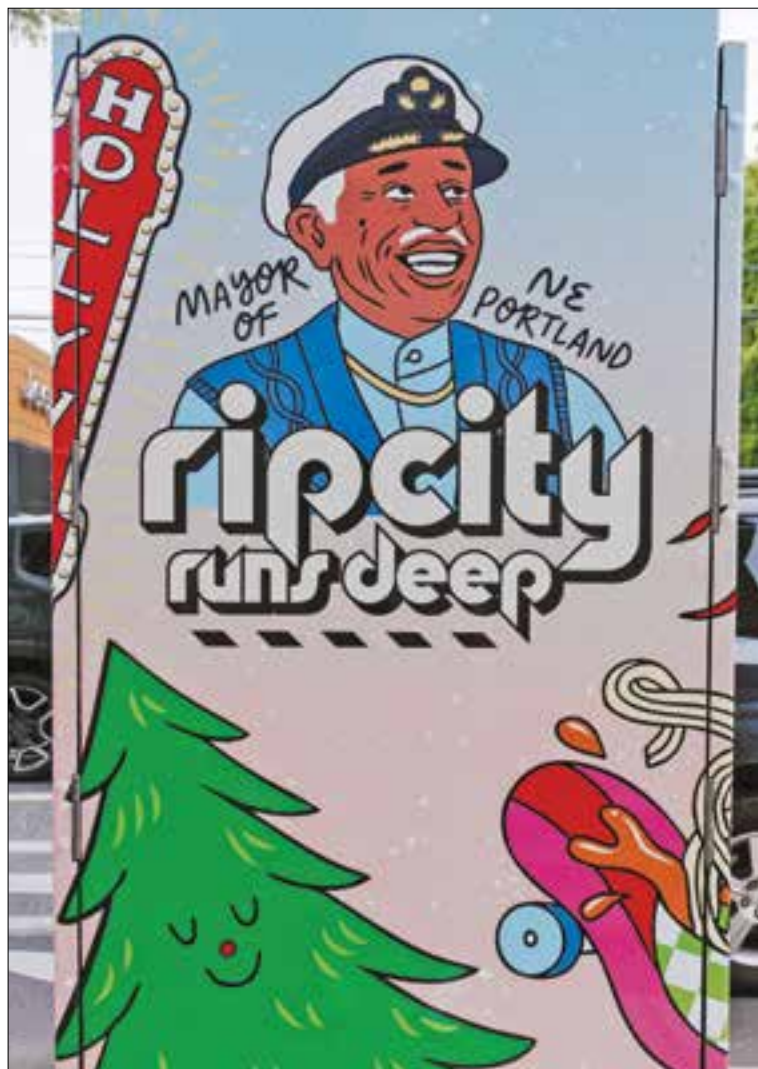
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Northeast by Jax Ko is a nod to Northeast Portland's history and its eclectic draw of restaurants, local music and art. The piece features a portrait of Paul Knauls, known as the "Mayor of Albina," who has been a pillar of the community for decades. Knauls ran the iconic Cotton Club jazz venue in Albina during the 1960s, hosting legends including Etta James and Sammy Davis Jr. He also pioneered the Dream statue initiative in Portland's Rose Quarter and celebrated his 95th birthday in February.

Public Art Expands Across Rip City

New Murals Spotlight Portland Neighborhoods

The Portland Trail Blazers have collaborated with local artists and the Portland Street Art Alliance (PSAA) to create three murals and with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) to wrap 47 utility boxes with designs representing the six neighborhoods that make up Rip City: North, Northwest, Northeast, East, Southeast and Southwest Portland.

"With Portland being home to so many talented artists and designers, we were excited to be a part of two incredible opportunities to collaborate alongside local creators to help beautify our city and the vibrant neighborhoods that so many of us call home" said Ryan Flaherty, Trail Blazers Senior Vice Presi-

dent of Brand Marketing "With the help of PBOT, we wrapped 47 utility boxes, and in collaboration with PSAA, we created three murals — all highlighting the iconic staples and unique voices that make Portland the city we are proud to play for."

"As a proud member of Rip City, PBOT is thrilled to partner with the Portland Trail Blazers and local artists to bring art, creativity, and the spirit of '77 to our streets and utility boxes," said Transportation Director Millicent Williams. "The addition of this artwork to our cityscape is a reminder to all travelers of our love for our home team and our city."

"Street art is one of the most powerful ways a city can tell its story, and this collaboration does exactly that. The three murals were produced through PSAA's Community Art Program, a place-based program that brings local artists together to create site-specific work with full creative freedom," said Tiffany Conklin, Co-founder and Exec-

utive Director of Portland Street Art Alliance. "What makes this collaboration especially meaningful is that the crews behind these murals include graffiti writers alongside muralists, writers who have long shaped Portland's visual culture from the ground up, often without institutional recognition. Bringing that tradition into a city-wide initiative of this scale and visibility is exactly the kind of shift in ethos we work toward every day. We're grateful to the Trail Blazers and PBOT for investing in Portland's creative community in such an authentic way."

Each utility box design represents one of the six neighborhoods that make up Portland, from North Portland all the way South to Southeast and Southwest. Each neighborhood will see six to ten utility boxes wrapped in their area. The three murals are located throughout Portland: "Rip City Roar" just outside Moda Center, "For Rip City" in Central Eastside and "Playoff Bound" in Northeast Portland.



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PCC's Board of Directors Announces College Leadership Transition

PCC President Dr. Adrien Bennings has Entered into a Mutual Separation

Today, the Portland Community College Board of Directors announced that the Board and PCC President Dr. Adrien Bennings have entered into a mutual separation agreement, with Dr. Bennings utilizing family medical leave benefits until her employment concludes at the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2026.

"We are grateful for Dr. Bennings' service and leadership at PCC over the past four years, particularly her passion for strategic planning, her work to strengthen curriculum alignment with Oregon's workforce needs, and her role as a champion for student success through programs like Drive to Thrive, ensuring PCC students have the supports they need from day one through degree or program completion," said Board Chair Tiffani Penson. "We appreciate the professionalism and shared commitment to the future of PCC and the students we serve during this time of transition.



PCC President Adrien Bennings

We know that Dr. Bennings will continue to effect change for the better in her next endeavor."

Dr. Bennings said, "I am thankful for the opportunity to serve PCC during a period of significant change and impact. I remain proud of the work accomplished along with so many dedicated employees, students, and community partners. I leave with gratitude for the opportunity to serve PCC and with continued belief in the transformative power of community colleges."



Katy Ho, Acting President

Dr. Bennings' current contract ends June 30, 2028, which, if terminated early, includes a full year's salary and benefits. The separation agreement includes nine months of salary with health benefits, and entitles Dr. Bennings to the \$25,000 retention benefit provided for in her employment contract.

The Board also announced today that PCC Executive Vice President Dr. Katy Ho will serve as Acting President, effective immediately. By resolution, the Board

transferred all the President's authorities and duties to Dr. Ho. She will also continue to oversee her current portfolio of strategic leadership for Operations, Strategic Planning & Policy, Information Technology, Brand Management, and People Strategy. Dr. Ho has requested that she maintain her current salary and compensation at this time even as she takes on this larger role.

"Dr. Ho is exactly the kind of leader we need for the next phase of PCC," said Chair Penson. "Her educational background, professional experience, approach to leadership, and commitment to PCC's mission will provide a stabilizing presence across our campuses. We ask the entire community to welcome her in this important role as a leader and a partner in building our future at PCC together."

At tonight's public meeting, and in a message to the PCC community, the Board emphasized its confidence in Dr. Ho to provide continuity of leadership and student-focused progress, while also looking forward to rebuilding for the future. The Board will provide updates as they become available on plans for identifying the next president, but those plans will be informed by community engagement at all levels, which is the immediate focus and priority for Dr. Ho and the Board of Directors in the coming months.





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From 911 Call-Taker To Top Leader

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Mawdsley has risen through the ranks since launching his career in emergency communications in 2005, beginning as a call taker and dispatcher.

He led several departments and worked with the director on budgeting and strategic planning. Most recently, as deputy director, he led 911 operations – including call takers, dispatchers, supervisors, managers and researchers.

As director, Mawdsley will oversee more than 160 employees and a budget of approximately nearly \$40 million. In recent years, Emergency Communications has focused on reducing the time it takes to answer calls. BOEC has reduced the average 911 hold time by more than 30 percent in the first quarter of 2026 from the prior year. This is the result of aggressive recruiting, hiring, training and certifying staff.

Under Mawdsley's leadership, the bureau recently announced that it has earned accreditation in emergency medical dispatch from the Accredited Center of Excellence – a prestigious recognition that places BOEC among an elite group of 911 centers worldwide.

Mawdsley brings to the workplace his real-world values of hard work, integrity, and leading by example. He is committed to creating a culture of support and excellence at BOEC and believes that his greatest responsibility is to support BOEC's team of professionals so they can continue to provide exceptional service to partner agencies and our community.

"Leading the exceptional team at BOEC is the greatest challenge and greatest honor of my career," Mawdsley said. "I am focused on continuing our path of progress to serve the changing needs of our community."

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Worksystems is seeking qualified and experienced organizations or individuals to serve as the One-Stop Operator for the WorkSource Portland Metro workforce development system. The RFP is posted on the Worksystems website at www.worksystems.org/news. Proposals are due by noon on June 15, 2026. Worksystems is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request. To place a free relay call in Oregon, dial 711.

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Oregonians May Regain Benefits as Federal Work Rules Take Effect

SNAP Benefits Guidance Released by ODHS

As the impacts of recent federally-directed changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) work rules begin to show in Oregon, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is sharing information to help people who have lost benefits, or may lose them soon, understand how they may be able to get them back.

The federal bill HR1 significantly expanded SNAP work rules, increasing the number of Oregonians subject to time limits. More adults must now meet SNAP work rules to continue receiving benefits. People who do not meet these rules and do not qualify for an exemption can only receive SNAP for three months within a three-year period. These are called countable months.

"SNAP plays a critical role in Oregon, helping 757,700 people, or one in six Oregonians, put food on the table," said Jessica Amaya Hoffman, ODHS SNAP Director. "In some communities, particularly in rural areas, people may not have easy access to jobs, training, transportation, or WorkSource offices, making it harder to meet work rules and increasing the risk of losing reliable access to food."

Many households receiving SNAP have very low incomes, with 35 percent at or below half of the federal poverty level which is \$15,960 per year for a single individual. ODHS has been working to connect with people before benefits stop. Of the approximately 20,000 people who were notified in March that their benefits would close, about 6,000 connected with ODHS and were able to either qualify for an exemption or meet work rules to keep their benefits. In late



ODHS shares how Oregonians can regain SNAP benefits as impacts of federal work rule changes begin to show.

March, 13,898 cases closed after people did not meet work rules or qualify for an exemption. As a result, they did not receive April benefits.

In April, 6,948 additional individuals are at risk of having their benefits close at the end of the month. Additional individuals are at risk of losing benefits in upcoming months as more people reach time limits.

ODHS is encouraging people to reach out as soon as possible if they have questions about their benefits or work rules. Many people may not realize they can regain SNAP after benefits stop, or may not know the steps to take.

If someone has used their three countable months and lost SNAP benefits, there are several ways they may be able to regain eligibility.

People may qualify again if they meet work rules. This usually means completing about 80 hours of approved activities each month. These activities may include paid work, searching for a job, training programs or volunteering. If someone meets the required hours for at least 30 days, they may qualify for SNAP again.

People may also regain SNAP if they qualify for an exemption. Exemptions are based on a person's situation and may include health conditions, caregiving responsibilities or other life circumstances. Some activities, such as receiving unemployment benefits or taking part in certain programs, may also count toward meeting rules.

In some cases, changes in a person's situation may affect whether time limits apply. This may include changes in the household or where someone lives.

"If your SNAP benefits have stopped, contact us right away," said Hoffman. "Benefits do not restart automatically, but we can review your situation and help you understand your next steps."

Even after benefits stop, support is still available. ODHS and the Oregon Employment Department can help people connect to employment and training services and work toward regaining eligibility.

ODHS encourages anyone who has questions about their SNAP benefits or work rules to reach out as soon as possible. Contacting ODHS early may help people keep or regain their benefits.

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Gas Tax Heads to Voters as Prices Soar

Oregon Democrats Found a Way to Improve Roads

(AP) —Appealing to voters’ anxieties about the soaring cost of living is central to Democrats’ messaging in their hopes of big wins in this year’s midterm elections. In Oregon, a question on the primary ballot is complicating that strategy.

The Democratic-controlled Legislature raised the state gas tax and a range of fees last fall as a way to pay for road improvements and plug a hole in the state’s transportation budget. Republicans responded with a petition to repeal the increases, leading to a referendum that will land before voters just as the Iran war is causing the price of gas to skyrocket around the United States.

“It is a hell of a time to be raising gas taxes on people,” said Jeanine Holly, filling up her tank on a recent morning in Portland. The gas tax repeal on the state’s May 19 primary ballot comes amid widespread disruptions in the oil industry from the war with Iran started by Israel and President Donald Trump. Discontent is high among U.S. consumers across the political spectrum, with the price of gas topping \$4.50 a gallon nationally on Friday and averaging about 80 cents more per gallon in Oregon.

The referendum will give voters a chance to weigh in on a hot-button issue hitting them directly in the pocketbook at a time when prices remain elevated for everything from housing to groceries. Nationally, Democrats have focused on the affordability concerns similar to those that helped propel Trump to victory in 2024. Some of their candidates have even proposed ways to cut taxes as a way to promote their agenda and counter a traditional GOP strategy.

“It’s difficult to imagine a worse situation for ... a gas tax increase than right now in American politics,” said Chris Koski, professor of political science and environmental studies at Portland’s Reed



An attendant prepares to fill a customer's tank at a gas station on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, in Portland Ore. (AP Photo/Jenny Kane)

College. Republicans wasted no time in appealing to voters after the Legislature and Democratic governor signed off on the tax increase, which also included a higher payroll tax for transit projects and a boost in vehicle registration and title fees.

They needed 78,000 voter signatures to qualify the referendum for the ballot. They quickly got 250,000. Republicans in Oregon have countered Democrats’ affordability messaging by portraying the tax and fee increases as further fueling the high cost of living.

“Do Oregonians want to pay more? The answer is no,” said GOP state Sen. Bruce Starr, who helped lead the referendum campaign. “Everything they’re looking at is expensive.” Oregon Democrats spent much of last year fighting to pass a transportation funding bill to help

raise money for services such as road paving and snow plowing. The debate came amid projections of declining gas tax revenue as more people adopt electric, hybrid and fuel-efficient cars.

They finally passed a narrower version of their plan during a special session called by Democratic Gov. Tina Kotek. She recently acknowledged the challenging timing of the referendum.


“Certainly, the conversation at the ballot this year ... is a tough sell right now, because I think everyone is feeling a pinch on their household budgets,” she told reporters. But she and other Democrats said the root cause of the spike in gas prices is Trump’s decision to go to war with Iran. She suggested the federal government consider reducing the federal 18 cent-a-gallon gas tax if it wants to provide relief at the pump for Americans.

Some Oregonians are receptive to the Democrats’ reason for passing the legislation last year. Kurt Borneman, 68, said he would support the gas tax increase, even though he’s now paying at least \$10 more to fill up his tank.

“I realize that money’s tight and roads need to be improved,” he said at the Portland gas station. “I want less government, but I also want nice roads.”


Democratic state Rep. Paul Evans said his party lost the battle over how to frame the gas tax increase to the public. So far, there has been no organized effort from Democrats and their allies to oppose the ballot referendum.

“When anything is reduced to, ‘Do you want a tax or not?’ Most people are going to say no,” he said. “The messaging got away from us, and it became focused upon the price instead of the value.”




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Waterway Cleanup Series Returns

Protecting Rivers and Waterways Through Community-Powered Cleanup

SOLVE and Clackamas Water Environment Services (WES) have officially launched the 2026 Waterway Cleanup Series, continuing their long-standing partnership to protect rivers, streams, and waterways through community-powered cleanup events across the region.

Now in its ninth year, the seasonal initiative brings together volunteers to remove litter from shorelines, parks, and natural areas before it can wash into local waterways and ultimately the Pacific Ocean.

The series kicked off on May 6 with a cleanup at Meldrum Bar Park and Dahl Beach in Gladstone, where 22 volunteers removed more than 250 pounds of litter from the area. Alongside commonly found waste like plastic packaging and cigarette



A group of volunteers gathered for the 2026 Waterway Cleanup Series by Clackamas Water Environment Services and SOLVE

butts, volunteers also pulled two tires, a shopping cart, and a pair of boots from the landscape.

Located along the Willamette River, Meldrum Bar Park, and Dahl Beach are popular destinations for paddling, fishing, wildlife viewing, and summer recreation. Keeping these spaces, clean helps protect aquatic ecosystems while ensuring they remain welcoming and accessible for the community.

Trash left on streets, trails, parks, and riverbanks often travels through storm drains and runoff systems into nearby creeks and rivers. Once in the water, litter can harm wildlife, pollute waterways, and degrade habitat throughout the watershed. Community cleanups play an important role in preventing pollution before it spreads downstream.

“The Waterway Cleanup Series is about protecting the

places that connect our communities,” said Kris Carico, CEO of SOLVE. “Every cleanup helps prevent pollution from entering our waterways while creating healthier spaces for people and wildlife alike. We’re incredibly grateful for our partnership with WES and for every volunteer who takes action throughout the summer.”

SOLVE and WES are encouraging individuals, businesses,

schools, and community groups to participate in upcoming cleanup events or organize their own local efforts this season. Cleanup supplies, volunteer support, and event guidance are provided to help communities take action in the places they care about most.

The Waterway Cleanup Series will continue throughout the summer and conclude with a wrap-up cleanup event on September 16 at High Rocks Park in Gladstone along the Clackamas River.

In 2025, more than 1,700 volunteers participated in 60 cleanup events, removing over 31,000 pounds of litter from 19 waterways and natural areas across Oregon and Southwest Washington, including Molalla, Clackamas, Rogue, Tualatin, Sandy, Wilson, Siletz, Elk, Willamette, and Columbia Rivers, Sellwood Riverfront, Johnson Creek, Fox Creek, Spring Creek, Abernethy Creek, Pass Creek, Bear Creek, Deer Creek, Griffin Creek, Hammond Marina, and South Umpqua River. Organizers hope to build on that momentum throughout.

OREGON PROBLEM GAMBLING RESOURCE

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