Welcome

We are pleased to share the 2022-2026 Burns Paiute Tribe Community Strategic Plan. The development of this five-year plan was created by gathering input from Tribal Council, staff, and community members. It also builds upon the information and priorities that were established as part of the 2015 Community Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

This plan provides information about the services we provide, our goals for the future, and the strategies we will undertake to meet our current and future community needs over the next five years. The plan is organized into the following sections:

- Community Overview
- Strategic Framework: Mission, Vision, and Values
- Strategic Goals
  - Goal 1: Enhance services to improve the QUALITY OF LIFE for all tribal members
  - Goal 2: Increase the FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY of the Tribe
  - Goal 3: Invest in our INFRASTRUCTURE to support community growth
  - Goal 4: Invest in our EMPLOYEES to strengthen our services
  - Goal 5: Strengthen TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY by conserving natural resources and perpetuating our culture
- Annual Planning Cycle
- Strategic Plan Priorities

We know that the members of our community are our greatest asset. As the Burns Paiute Tribal Council, we strive for organizational excellence and continuous improvement to ensure that we can serve our community’s evolving needs.

Cecil Dick
Vice Chairperson

Lucas Samor
Sergeant at Arms

Gabe First Raised
Member at Large

Diane Teeman
Chairperson

Tracy Kennedy
Member at Large

Brenda Sam
Member at Large

Margarita Zacarias
Member at Large
OUR COMMUNITY

The Burns Paiute Reservation is located in rural eastern Oregon. The Burns Paiute Tribe is primarily comprised of the descendants of the Wadatika Band of Northern Paiutes. The traditional homelands of the Burns Paiute include 5250 square miles of land in central-southeastern Oregon, Northern Nevada, northwestern California and western Idaho. The Burns Paiute still maintain aboriginal title to much of our aboriginal territory. The Tribe currently has 437 enrolled members of which approximately 160 people call the Reservation their home.

OUR RESERVATION

On September 12, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant approved a 1.8-million-acre Reservation (Malheur Reservation) to be set aside for the Northern Paiute Tribal people. Unfortunately though, due to the discovery of gold in the area, gold prospectors were able to assert tremendous pressure on the Federal Government, and the size of the Reservation was greatly diminished. Finally, after being caught in the middle of a war between the Bannock Tribe and the Federal Government, a war in which the majority of the Paiute people did not even fight, the Paiute People were forced from their homes, exiled to Fort Simcoe Washington and the Malheur Reservation was thrown open for cattlemen and homesteaders. They remained in Fort Simcoe until, as a result of the Dawes Act of 1887 the Tribe was invited back to their former Reservation. Those returning were supposed to be given 160-acres of land. Although this was marginal land not suitable for cultivation, it was at least something. However, only 115 parcels were allotted the Tribe so many Paiutes received nothing.

In 1927, a Catholic Priest, Father Heuel, moved into the area with the goal of improving the lives of the Paiute people. With his help, in 1928, the Tribe acquired 10 acres from the Egan Land Company. The land, which at one time was the Burns City dump, was restored and 20 homes constructed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Then, in 1928 a Catholic Church was constructed on the property.

In 1935, the Tribe received a loan from the federal government to purchase 771-acres. Additionally, Father Heuel, championed a petition to the Federal Government for compensation for losing the Malheur Reservation previously reserved for the Tribe. After 35 years of pressing the issue, the Burns Paiute Tribe was compensated for the property at the 1890 value of the land. Tribal members received $800 per person.
The Tribe received legal recognition by the BIA in 1968. The 771-acres purchased by the Tribe in 1935, and the 10 acres received in 1928, were combined in 1972. Congress presented to the Tribe a clear title to the land which became the Burns Paiute Indian Reservation.

OUR PEOPLE

The ancestry of the Burns Paiute Tribe is made up of bands of Tribal people who collectively shared the Great Basin culture with other Northern Paiute Tribes. A total of 18 Northern Paiute Tribes hunted, fished, and gathered in a vast area extending as far south as northern Nevada and California and as far north as Idaho and Central/Eastern Oregon, an expanse of 5,250 square miles. And, although these people shared the same fisheries and hunting grounds, as well as plant and water resources for thousands of years, the different bands of Northern Paiute’s were generally peaceful toward each other.

The ancestors of the Burns Paiute Tribe, historically called the Wadatika, followed the food supplies, seasonally camping along lakes, rivers, and streams where water resources and food was readily available. They gathered plants and roots, they fished especially in the spring and in the summer, and they tracked game and collected seeds. In the fall the Wadatika hunted waterfowl. It was necessary for the Tribe to store a considerable amount of food in order to make it through the harsh winter months on the high desert. In order to make food accessible, the Tribe built dwellings from bulrush mats near ice-free wetlands where waterfowl, plants, and wildlife could be readily harvested.

In the 1820’s the Wadatika people encountered white beaver trappers and other white settlers who introduced the Tribe to cholera and smallpox. Unfortunately, the Paiutes had no immunity to these diseases. Consequently, the Indian population was grossly reduced. By the 1840’s so many white settlers were traveling through Indian Territory that inevitable skirmishes began to flare-up. As a result of these conflicts the Paiutes were forced to negotiate for some reserved land free from encroachment by the land-hungry settlers. This was the only choice the Wadatika people had if they were to maintain any of their traditional ways.

Today, the Burns Paiute Tribe has a population of 437 enrolled members. Around one hundred sixty Burns Paiute Natives live on the Reservation along with non-tribal people. Further, several more Burns Paiute Tribal members and their families live in the adjacent towns of Burns and Hines Oregon. The remaining Tribal members live in areas outside of Harney County.

Although so much of the culture and traditional ways were temporarily lost due to the disruption of their lifeways for so many years, the BPT leaders have no more pressing desire than to instill the cultural values of yesterday into the hearts and minds of Tribal children and youth.
Our Government

The Burns Paiute Tribe General Council is comprised of duly-enrolled tribal members eighteen years old or older, and who are registered voters. This group is qualified to vote in all tribal elections, referenda, and meetings of the general council. The General Council elects the Tribal Council, which—except as it is expressly limited by this constitution and by Federal law—exercised the governing power of the Burns Paiute Tribe.

As stated in the Constitution of the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Tribal Council is composed of seven members that include the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Sergeant at Arms and three Council Members. All Tribal Council candidates must be members of the Burns Paiute Tribe who physically reside in Harney county, Oregon, who are twenty-one years old or older, and who are qualified voters.

In general, each Tribal Council member is elected for a term of three years and holds office until a successor has been certified and seated. Terms of office for the seven council members are staggered, so that two to three positions are up for election each year.
Our strategic plan is grounded in the Tribe’s vision (the ideal state of the community in the future), our mission (how we plan to achieve our vision), and values (the principles by which we strive to work).

OUR VISION IS THAT …

The Burns Paiute Tribe is a community of people dedicated to the healthy development of our families. While maintaining the endurance of cultural values and the protection of our vital natural resources, community members enjoy a healthy lifestyle with ample opportunity for vocational and recreational activities. Thanks to the Tribe’s early emphasis on health, wellness and education, our social and justice programs are minimal since the issues that require the need for those programs have all but been eliminated. Tribal leadership is strong, fair and a great model to be followed by future generations of Burns Paiute leaders.

OUR MISSION IS TO …

Protect the inherent rights, resources, and sovereignty of the Burns Paiute Tribe and preserve our culture and tribal identify for the well-being of all Tribal members.

OUR VALUES

Strong Leadership
Our leadership is strong, fair, transparent, and collaborative. We strive to build constructive relationships between Council, management, and staff.

Strong Work Ethic
We aim to create a healthy work environment based in a strong work ethic, respect, and commitment to doing our jobs well.

Culture and Heritage
We are focused on providing opportunities that strengthen familial and community ties with each other as we work toward the common goal of revitalizing our culture and Wadatika Yaduan language.
Positive Outlook
We maintain a positive outlook for our future that is grounded in both the recognition of our challenges and optimism in the strength of our community.

Community Pride and Prosperity
We take pride in our community and aim to provide high-quality and responsive services to meet the needs of our people, including health, housing, safety, recreation, jobs, and expansion of the reservation.

Spirituality
We care for the spiritual well-being of ourselves and our community.

Natural Environment
We will work together to grow in harmony with our natural environment and protect our natural resources.

Family and Education
We are committed to ensuring that today’s youth and future generations will be strong in their tradition, language, and culture.
With input from Tribal Council, staff, and community members, we have set the following strategic goals to guide our work for the next five years.

**Goal 1. Enhance services to improve the quality of life for all tribal members**
Improve the quality of life for our community members by improving access to affordable housing and expanding services to support our people.

**Goal 2. Increase the financial self-sufficiency of the Tribe**
Ensure the Tribe has adequate and sustainable financial funding to continue and expand the core services we provide to our community.

**Goal 3. Invest in our infrastructure to support community growth**
Expand and improve Tribal infrastructure—including buildings, equipment, and technology—to ensure that our community can grow and prosper.

**Goal 4. Invest in our employees to strengthen our services**
Enhance our recruitment and retention efforts to ensure that all employees are well-trained, supported, and engaged.

**Goal 5. Strengthen tribal sovereignty by conserving natural resources and perpetuating our culture**
Celebrate and protect Paiute history, culture, values, and natural resources.

In the following section we have listed each goal area, along with the specific objectives and priority actions that the Tribe can take to accomplish each goal. The objectives and actions are listed alphabetically, rather than in order of importance or urgency.
GOAL 1: ENHANCE SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL TRIBAL MEMBERS

Improve the quality of life for our community members by improving access to affordable housing and expanding services to support our people.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Childcare - Expand the childcare program.

- Document current levels of need to determine the potential scale of the program and determine the service type (government service provided at free or reduced cost, or enterprise). Depending on findings, Council may or may not approve investing additional resources to expand the childcare program.
- Expand the childcare program. Activities may include:
  - Identifying and securing grant funding.
  - Hiring additional service providers and at least one manager.
  - Developing a workplan to address service levels, funding strategy, staffing, space options, launch activities, etc.

Education - Support our community’s young people through education.

- Develop a strategic plan to for Education and the Tu-Wa-Kii Nobi/Kids House.
  - This strategic plan will develop a path to achieve the Tribe’s long-term vision for a K-12 language immersion charter school that would use Northern Paiute-centered curriculum.
- Continue current efforts to provide both the in-person tutoring services and the agreement with the TutorMe platform that offers 24/7 tutoring.
- Increase current efforts to secure grant funding to support educational programs.
- Invest in vehicles to enable cultural and educational field adventures for young people.

Education - Provide resources and support help future and current students graduate from college.

- Continue efforts to advocate for additional scholarships for Indigenous students, with a focus on partnering with the state to continue and expand current scholarship opportunities.
- Continue efforts to provide higher education clinics focused on helping current and prospective college students obtain scholarships and reduce their student loan burden.
Establish a mentorship program where Tribal members who have graduated from college can mentor high school and/or undergraduate students from the community.

Emergency Response - Increase the Tribe’s emergency response and management capabilities.

- Develop an emergency response plan for the reservation.
- Sponsor training in areas like BIA fire management, search and rescue, and FEMA emergency management to ensure that government staff are appropriately prepared to assist the community during a natural or man-made disasters.

Healthcare - Expand healthcare services provided on the reservation.

- Explore options to expand health services. Additional or enhanced services may include:
  - Recruiting a Native mental health counselor to ensure delivery of culturally relevant services
  - Expanding diabetes education and treatment options
  - Establishing onsite eye care
  - Developing on onsite lab

Housing - Expand access to affordable housing and housing support.

- Explore options to build multi-family homes to increase affordable housing (see Goal 2).
- Seek additional funding—including grants—to invest in the housing support program.
- Update and develop additional policies and procedures related to housing support to ensure consistent processes and equitable access.

Jobs - Expand employment training for community members with a focus on young people.

- Expand the job search assistance and training program with a focus on meeting the needs of 18-25 year olds with limited job experience. Activities may include:
  - Documenting current levels of need to determine what types of services or programs are most needed.
  - Identifying and securing grant funding.
  - Hiring at least one staff member to oversee program development and implementation.
  - Exploring local partnership opportunities.
Outreach - Improve communication to community members.

- Administer an annual community survey to better track community needs, concerns, and satisfaction with governmental services.
- Create a cross-functional group to explore and implement enhanced community outreach for social services and resources.
- Implement a centralized calendar and process to coordinate community surveys and significant outreach efforts so individual departments are not operating independently.
- Once a GM is hired, explore options to improve communications. Activities may include:
  - Developing an annual communications calendar to coordinate how information is shared by individual departments and the tribal government as a whole.
  - Publishing an annual report to the community
  - Hosting an annual open house

Survivors of Violence - Increase income assistance for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Youth Shelter - Explore options to establish a youth shelter or transitional family home.

- Document current levels of need to determine the potential scale of the program. Depending on findings, Council may or may not approve investing additional resources establish a youth shelter.
- Establish the program. Activities may include:
  - Identifying and securing grant funding.
  - Hiring at least one staff member to oversee program development and implementation.
  - Developing a workplan to address service levels, funding strategy, staffing, space options, launch activities, etc.

Performance Indicators

- Community engagement survey results related to housing, health services, education, and employment
- High school and college graduation rates
- Number of households living within the reservation
- Number of households on the waiting list for affordable housing
- Unemployment rates by age group
GOAL 2: INCREASE THE FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF THE TRIBE

Ensure the Tribe has adequate and sustainable financial funding to continue and expand the core services we provide to our community.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Economic Development - Increase local economic development.
- Continue efforts to refresh and implement the Tribe’s Economic Development Plan, including developing specific goals for this area of work.
- Continue current efforts to collaborate with local partners around economic development activities.

Enterprise Revenue - Generate revenue for the tribe by identifying and investing in new enterprises.
- Adopt appropriate business entity codes and policies.
- Establish processes to identify, evaluate, and fund enterprises.

Financial Management - Improve the efficiency of the Tribe’s financial management.
- Conduct annual budget reviews.
- Continue current efforts to replace the Tribe’s financial management system.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for financial processes, including procurement. Provide annual training to all relevant staff positions.
- Establish a process of monitoring and reporting progress towards financial goals and strategic initiatives every 6-12 months.

Grant Revenue - Generate additional grant revenue to support government services.
- Hire a Grant Manager position to help identify new grant opportunities, provide oversight of grant deadlines/compliance, offer training and support to staff who manage grants, and coordinate grant management activities the organization.
• Invest in a comprehensive grant management system and related staff training to ensure consistent usage.

IT Fund - Explore options to establish a dedicated IT replacement reserve fund.

Performance Indicators

• Financial health indicators
  o Revenue and expense measures (revenue actuals-to-budget by type, operating vs net income, expense actuals-to-budget by area, revenue vs. expenses)
  o Working capital ratio
  o Liabilities to asset ratio
  o Program efficiency (total program service expenses/total expenses)
  o Operating reserve fund balance
• Enterprise-generated revenue
• Grant revenue
• IT replacement reserve fund levels
GOAL 3: INVEST IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROWTH

Expand and improve Tribal infrastructure—including buildings, equipment, and technology—to ensure that our community can grow and prosper.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Community Broadband - Explore options to provide low-cost community broadband so that all community members have access to this public utility.

- Document current levels of need and potential costs to determine the anticipated scale of the program. Depending on findings, Council may or may not approve investing additional resources into providing low-cost community broadband.

Downtown Center - Complete the renovation of the downtown center.

Fleet - Ensure Tribal government vehicles are well-maintained and adequate to meet program needs.

- Create a prioritized list and process to purchase additional vehicles.
- Develop an inventory of the current fleet, including vehicle type, owner department, and current conditions.
- Implement a maintenance and replacement schedule for all vehicles.

Infrastructure - Improve Tribal infrastructure and buildings to enhance services.

- Establish a dedicated Planner position committed to overseeing the comprehensive planning process and long-term development of buildings and lands.
- Create a 10-year comprehensive plan for expansion, development, and space planning on tribal lands. High priority needs include:
  - Building multi-family homes to increase the availability of affordable housing.
  - Building a dedicated administration facilities (e.g., administration building, workspaces, storage capabilities, etc.)
  - Building a dedicated Social Services building for multiple services (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, family counseling, etc.)
  - Building or expanding the Education Center building.
  - Improving water infrastructure for the reservation
o Renovating the health services facilities
o Exploring options to build or upgrade recreation facilities and infrastructure (e.g., Armory, bike/walking paths, ball fields, fitness center, event/gathering spaces, playgrounds, etc.)
o Building an artifact repository (see Goal 5)

- Perform a facilities condition assessment to identify all maintenance needs on current Tribal-owned buildings.

**Performance Indicators**

- Facility conditions assessment results
- Number of community members with access for affordable broadband
- Percentage of Tribal-owned vehicles in good working condition
- Staff and community engagement survey results related to government buildings and recreation facilities
GOAL 4: INVEST IN OUR EMPLOYEES TO STRENGTHEN OUR SERVICES

Enhance our recruitment and retention efforts to ensure that all employees are well-trained, supported, and engaged.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Council Support - Invest in training and governance support for the Tribal Council to ensure it has adequate skills and support to function effectively.

- Provide annual governance trainings.
- Develop a strong onboarding process to help new Council members understand roles and responsibilities.
- Perform annual council self-assessment.

Employee Retention - Increase employee retention efforts.

- Administer regular employee engagement surveys (every 4-12 months) to document employee morale, solicit ideas, and track challenges and progress over time.
- Conduct a salary study for all employees.
- Review employee benefits like paid time off and flexible work arrangements.
- Explore options to establish fully or primarily remote positions.
- Establish a performance evaluation program and system.
- Establish management training for all supervisors.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for HR processes. Provide annual training to all relevant staff positions.

HR System - Invest in a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) to track and manage employee data and provide self-service access to HR services.

Management Stability - Improve the stability of the Tribal government management team.

- Continue current efforts to hire a General Manager.
- Hire a Deputy General Manager position to provide support and back-up to the GM. This position could oversee select departments and strategic initiatives.
• Review benefits provided to senior management to determine if changes can be made to increase retention. Options may include:
  o Establishing multi-year contracts
  o Reviewing and increasing salaries or benefits like paid time off and flexible work arrangements
• Develop succession plans for all department directors.

**Records - Develop an enterprise-wide strategy for document and records storage, archival, and data retention.**

• Assess current needs and develop a plan and process to centralize physical storage and increase storage space. Activities may include:
  o Inventorying current storage needs and practices for all departments.
  o Determining the optimal storage method (physical, digital) for all inventoried items.
  o Digitizing relevant records.
  o Developing a data retention policy and procedures.

**Performance Indicators**

• Employee engagement survey results
• Percentage of staff positions at or above industry standard compensation levels
• Staff and leadership turnover rates
GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY BY CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES AND PERPETUATING OUR CULTURE

Celebrate and protect Paiute history, culture, values, and natural resources.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Culture - Expand programs, activities, and events that teach and celebrate Paiute history, culture, and values.
- Continue current language preservation efforts.
- Develop and maintaining a space for contemporary cultural education, art, and interpretation.
- Expand nature education programs and opportunities for youth and elders.
- Explore options for building a certified artifact repository that would enable the Tribe to repatriate tribal artifacts (see Goal 2).

Land Base - Expand the Tribe’s land base.
- Establish policies and processes to accept land via donation and as part of mitigation actions.
- Explore options to establish a Land Department.
- Survey existing land boundaries and update mapping to create a comprehensive land inventory.

Natural Resources - Continue and expand efforts to protect the Tribe’s natural resources.
- Continue agricultural development efforts.
- Continue efforts to adjudicate hunting and fishing rights and develop necessary tribal regulations.
- Continue the Wildlife Protection Program, the Salmon Protection Program, and other conservation efforts.
Performance Indicators

- Conservation indicators based on monitoring of fish, wildlife, land, and water resources (ex: habitat condition metrics, wildlife and fish trend data, water temperature, and nonnative species abundance)
- Number of Wadatika Yaduan language speakers (beginner, intermediate, fluent)
- Total land base of the Tribe
ANNUAL PLANNING CYCLE

Each year, the Tribal management team will review the Strategic Plan and select specific objectives and actions that they believe will be critical to focus on for the upcoming year. These priorities will then be reviewed, edited, and approved by Tribal Council. Once priorities have been established, the Tribal management team will develop a high-level implementation plan to identify specific actions, timelines, and responsible parties. At the end of the year, the Tribal management team will report on progress to Tribal Council. The general timeline will be as follows:

**September**
- Management selects objectives/actions for implementation in the following fiscal year and bring the proposal to Tribal Council for review and approval

**October**
- Tribal Council reviews and amends the priorities

**December**
- Tribal management submits related budget requests

**January**
- Tribal Council approves budget for the following year
February

- Based on budget allocations and emergent needs, Tribal management develops a high-level implementation plan that describes actions, related timelines, and responsible parties
- Tribal management reports on progress toward the strategic priorities to Tribal Council from the previous six months (August-December)

July

- Tribal management reports on progress toward the strategic priorities to Tribal Council from the previous six months (January-June)

September

- The planning cycle begins again
TBD. The final report will include a spreadsheet with all objectives/actions ranked by priority (critical, high, medium, low). We will also note which projects can be paid for via the Tribe’s COVID relief funding.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the people who dedicated time and provided valuable input during the development of this strategic plan.

Burns Paiute Tribe Community Members
Burns Paiute Tribal Council
Burns Paiute Tribal Management and Staff

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