



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2025

Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Partner with ODART for Full-Scale Emergency Exercise Simulating Catastrophic Earthquake Response

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe Emergency Management is participating in a full-scale exercise on June 14, 2025 in partnership with the Oregon Disaster Airlift Response Team (ODART). This exercise will provide participants with an opportunity to refine and demonstrate the capabilities of working with volunteer organizations in assisting emergency management in dealing with a catastrophic level event such as a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. The exercise will focus on safety, decision-making, and coordination. The exercise is intended to strengthen interagency coordination, enhance situational awareness through aerial observations, practice transporting supplies, people and animals, and emergency communications.

The Tribe is providing a donation of approximately 300 pounds of food and household supplies, which will be flown by a volunteer ODART pilot from the Aurora Oregon airport (KUAO) to the South Lewis County Airport (TDO). Lewis County Amateur Radio Emergency Service volunteers will maintain HAM radio contact between airports. Ground volunteers from the Civil Air Patrol will move the cargo and provide it to the Winlock Toledo Food Bank. Additionally, Cowlitz County emergency management drone pilots will conduct a mock damage assessment flight over the Tribe's Housing facility near the airport.

About ODART

ODART, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is run entirely by volunteers who respond to requests from local emergency managers to provide logistical support when communities face disruptions due to disasters. This exercise will show how small planes, piloted by volunteers, can land on a variety of surfaces – from paved runways and grass strips to sandbars and water –delivering food, medical supplies, and other essential items when traditional routes are obstructed.

About the Cowlitz Indian Tribe

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe is a growing force in community building in the Pacific Northwest. The Cowlitz Reservation neighbors Ridgefield, Washington, and is home to ilani, the Pacific Northwest's premier gaming, dining, meeting, and entertainment destination. The mission of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe is to preserve and honor the legacy of its elders and ancestors by empowering a tribal community that promotes social justice and economic well-being,

secures aboriginal lands, respects culture and sovereignty, and fosters justice, freedom, and mutual welfare. More information can be found at cowlitz.org.

Contact Information

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Calendar Events Notices

Full

June 7 and 14, 2025 – Oregon: Whale Run 2025. The Oregon Disaster Airlift Response Team – ODART – will conduct their 4th statewide, full-scale exercise simulating responding to a catastrophic event along the Oregon coast. Coastal communities all along the western side of the coast range will be isolated due to mudslides, downed trees and power lines, and damaged roads. ODART volunteer resources will respond to community emergency manager requests for water, food, medical and other logistical supplies. Ham radio operators will spring into action providing vital communications from the western coast to the inland airports. Volunteer pilots will survey damaged areas and send reports back to ODART managers at key airport hubs. Ground volunteers will package cargo by weight customized for loading onto general aviation aircraft. Approximately 5000 pounds of nonperishable food will be delivered into the waiting arms of food pantries serviced by coastal airports and waterways. For more information, please visit odart.org.

Slightly slimmer

June 7 and 14, 2025 – Oregon: Whale Run 25. The Oregon Disaster Airlift Response Team – ODART – will conduct its 4th full-scale exercise simulating responding to a catastrophic event along the Oregon coast. On June 7th, land, sea, and drone pilots will survey exercise ‘damage’ areas. On June 14th, four ODART staging airports – KBDN (Bend), KUAO (Aurora), KS12 (Albany), and K77S (Creswell) - will manage loading general land and sea aircraft with supplies destined for coastal airports. In light of lessons learned from Hurricane Helene, state planners have increased impetus to prepare for a disaster situation. Interested in volunteering? For more information, please visit odart.org.

Minimal

June 7 and 14, 2025 – Oregon: Whale Run 25. The Oregon Disaster Airlift Response Team – ODART – will conduct its 4th full-scale exercise simulating responding to a catastrophic event along the Oregon coast. In light of lessons learned from Hurricane Helene, state planners have increased impetus to prepare for a disaster situation. Float planes are encouraged. For more information, please visit odart.org.

Bare bones

June 7 and 14, 2025 – Oregon: Whale Run 25. The Oregon Disaster Airlift Response Team – ODART – will conduct its 4th full-scale exercise simulating responding to a catastrophic event along the Oregon coast. For more information, please visit odart.org.