

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Catering Services for the Wallowa Gathering – May 2026

Issued by

Wallowa Land Trust

Enterprise, Oregon

1. Organizational Background

Wallowa Land Trust (WLT) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2004 by Wallowa County landowners and residents. Our mission is to protect the rural nature of Wallowa County by working cooperatively with private landowners, Indigenous people, local communities, and governmental entities to conserve land. We use voluntary, non-regulatory tools to protect the places we love in our corner of Northeast Oregon, including natural areas, wildlife habitat, open spaces, and working lands.

2. Background on the Wallowa Gathering

The Wallowa Gathering welcomes Indigenous families back to their ancestral Homelands in Wallowa County to gather First Foods and traditional medicines on privately owned lands. In 2026, Wallowa Land Trust will host the Gathering for the seventh year.

This unique program has become a national model for increasing Indigenous land access and stewardship and for building equity through cultural preservation. The Gathering brings together Indigenous communities, private landowners, and local partners in a way that supports both rural communities and Tribal Nations across the region.

The Gathering is seasonal and weather dependent, timed to coincide with the full development of First Foods and traditional medicines, particularly cous (biscuitroot). As a result, the exact dates cannot be determined far in advance. The event typically takes place sometime in May.

3. Purpose of This RFP

Wallowa Land Trust is seeking proposals for catering services for the 2026 Wallowa Gathering. We are looking for a caterer or catering team capable of providing nourishing, well-organized meals for a large group over multiple days in a rural setting.

WLT strongly encourages proposals from Tribal members and Tribal-owned businesses, as well as individuals and community-based groups.

4. Event Details (Preliminary)

- Location: Wallowa County, Oregon
- Estimated attendance: 170–200 people
- Dates: May 2026 (exact dates to be determined)
- Duration: Thursday evening through Sunday morning

Event Location and Facilities: The Wallowa Gathering will have a central “home base” where participants check in, gather for meals, and receive information. While the exact location has not yet been confirmed, Wallowa Land Trust anticipates that the home base may be located at the Wallowa Longhouse.

The Wallowa Longhouse includes a full kitchen, which would be available for use during the event. Many Tribal members are familiar with this facility. Final confirmation of the location and available facilities will be made closer to the event date.

Proposers should describe their ability to work in a setting where the primary food preparation and service location is not yet fully confirmed and note any facility requirements that would affect their proposal.

5. Meal Requirements

The selected caterer will be responsible for providing meals as outlined below.

Thursday

- Dinner on site

Friday

- Breakfast on site
- Sack lunches that participants assemble themselves and take into the field
- Dinner (community potluck; see below)

Saturday

- Breakfast on site
- Sack lunches for field use
- Dinner on site

Sunday

- Breakfast on site
- Participants will be encouraged to pack remaining leftovers for the drive home

Friday Potluck Dinner

Friday evening dinner is a community potluck. We typically see around 75-100 members of the community attend the potluck. The caterer will provide the main dish (burgers) and one or two side salads. Gathering participants are not expected to bring any food for the potluck, therefore the caterer will need to provide enough food to support additional dishes brought by members of the public.

Not every event participant will attend every meal, meaning the numbers can fluctuate.

6. Scope of Services

Proposals should describe the proposer's ability to provide the following:

- Meal planning and preparation for 170–200 people
- On-site food service for breakfasts and dinners
- Ingredients and packaging for self-assembled sack lunches
- Accommodation of common dietary needs such as vegetarian or gluten-free
- Coordination with WLT staff regarding meal timing and logistics
- Cleanup of food service areas (details to be clarified)
- Proposals should also note any assumptions related to kitchen facilities, equipment needs, staffing, refrigeration, power, water, or storage.

7. Food Safety and Community Care

Providing safe, nourishing food for participants is an important part of the Wallowa Gathering. Proposers should describe their experience preparing food for large groups and their general approach to safe food handling.

Wallowa Land Trust recognizes that many applicants may be individuals or community-based groups rather than formal catering businesses. Applicants are not required to hold a food service license at the time of proposal. Those who do not currently hold applicable permits or certifications should indicate their willingness to work collaboratively with WLT to ensure appropriate food safety practices are in place for the event.

WLT is committed to working in a supportive, solutions-oriented way with the selected caterer to address food handling, storage, and service needs in a manner that aligns with community values and event logistics.

8. Budget Information

Wallowa Land Trust has allocated an estimated total budget of approximately \$15,000 for catering and food costs for the 2026 Wallowa Gathering. This includes approximately \$6,000 for labor, coordination, and catering services and approximately \$9,000 for food and food-related supplies.

These figures are provided to help proposers understand the scale of the event. There is some flexibility within this budget, and WLT is open to discussing different approaches or cost structures that meet the needs of the Gathering.

Proposals should clearly describe how costs are structured, what is included in pricing, and any assumptions that affect cost.

9. Proposal Content

Proposals should be concise and include the following information:

- Name of individual or business
- Primary contact person
- Phone number and email

- Tribal affiliation, if applicable
- Description of relevant experience, including experience with large groups, multi-day events, or community or cultural gatherings
- General description of the proposed food approach (a final menu is not required), including approach to sack lunches and the Friday potluck dinner
- Estimated cost or cost range, with an explanation of what is included
- Availability and ability to accommodate dates once they are confirmed, including any scheduling constraints

10. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- Capacity and experience serving large groups
- Quality and appropriateness of the proposed food service
- Cost and overall value
- Ability to work collaboratively in a community-centered event
- Preference for Tribal members and Tribal-owned businesses

11. Submission Details

- Proposal deadline: March 31, 2026
- Submission method: email to kathleen@wallowalandtrust.org
Questions may be directed to: Kathleen Ackley, 541-426-2042

Wallowa Land Trust reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and to select the proposal that best meets the needs of the event.