

Creek: to be moved

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Because of flooding that occurred in 1996, Turo said, re-designing the creek will reduce the risk of potentially catastrophic events in the future.

Releasing stream energy on floodplain during over bank flow events and floods will benefit downstream infrastructure, Turo explained.

While floods like that of 1996 are very rare, occurring on average once every 100 years, Turo said the current channel shape lacks ample opportunity to release stream energy on the floodplain.

"We want to design for conditions that reduce flooding concerns, and improve fish habitat. That means designing for habitat at a range of more common or frequent flows and allowing higher or flood flows to spill onto the available flood plain," he said.

By opening up the floodplain, he said, it will reduce the risk for catastrophic flooding for those downstream—like the Museum at Warm Springs and Warm Springs Forest Product Industries.

The water levels will still rise downstream during high flows, much of the stream energy and power will be released in this



Area of Shitike Creek that will be re-routed.

project upstream. Large floods like 1996 and 1964 would surely over top this project and still pose serious concerns.

Biologists are working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and using funds set aside for the tribes annually. In addition, they're seeking grant money from sources like the Pelton-Round Butte Fund for a match to complete the project.

They are also working with the Forestry Department to figure out where the 160 trees necessary for the project might come from.

To build the engineered log jams in the meander bends for bank stability and pool develop-

ment, trees with root wads attached will be pinned together and partially buried in the bank. The structures will be permanent and not move during high flows.

Currently the Tribal Environmental Office is seeking grant money to remove the sludge from the two decommissioned wastewater ponds and open the area up for additional floodplain habitat and park expansion, Turo said.

While the project is still in the planning stages, biologists will soon start working with other departments to ensure that the project would have no adverse impacts.

They will also be holding a few public scoping meetings to gather input from the community concerning the project.

The project will have to be completed during an "in-stream work window," Turo said, meaning they have to work when there will be the least amount of conflict with fish populations.

That means they would be completing the project next summer, from July to August.

Turo encourages anyone with questions or concerns to reach him by phone at 553-2025 or by e-mail at sturo@wstribe.org.

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Casino delays

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Regarding the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe situation, St. Regis Chief Barbara Lazore noted that at his confirmation hearing, Kempthorne said that he did not support off-reservation gaming, although he pledged to set aside his personal views and follow the law.

"At best he has not lived up to his word, and at worst the secretary misled the Congress of the United States," Lazore said.

Earlier this month, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held a hearing on the backlog of land into trust applications before the interior department. The Oneida and Cayuga tribes of New York also have trust applications pending.

As governor of Idaho, Kempthorne was adamantly opposed to off-reservation casinos.

"The Secretary needs to put aside his personal objections and

recognize that New York is not Idaho, and that he is no longer a state governor, but a cabinet appointed official charged with implementing federal law," said Chief James Ransom.

Associate Deputy Secretary James Cason determined in December 2006 that the tribe's fee-to-trust application met the federal regulations for environmental review. In February, New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer agreed, completing the two-part determination required by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, and executed a tribal-state compact.

The tribe's three chiefs charged that Kempthorne "circumvented departmental practice" and had inserted himself into the decision-making process, even though the authority for deciding on the application belonged to Cason.

Mohawk tribal leaders and Spitzer have made repeated re-

quests to meet in person with him to discuss the matter and never received a response, the chiefs said.

"A slew of our requests to meet with Secretary Kempthorne have been met with nothing but deafening silence, which sadly speaks volumes about what appears to be a personal bias toward gaming as a viable economic development vehicle for sovereign nations," said Lazore.

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