

2011 Year in Review

(This is the conclusion of the 2011 review of notable events on the reservation.)

June

In June the Natural Resources Branch presented its recommended **allowable timber cut** to Tribal Council.

Natural Resources recommended an allowable cut of 31 million board feet per year. This figure represents the harvest level that is sustainable for future generations, according to the Natural Resources Branch.

Warm Springs Forest Products Industries, meanwhile, recommended an allowable cut figure of 43 million board feet. The mill could not operate with an annual harvest of 31 million board feet, and would have to shut down, WSFPI officials say.

Also in June, Tribal Council approved the construction start for the **new water system** to serve the Simnasho-Schoolie Flats community.

Arsenic in the existing domestic water supply at Simnasho is above the EPA safety standard. Simnasho residents have been using bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes for the past four years.

A permanent solution to the problem required securing \$2.05 million in funding. The funding now is in place, said Don Courtney, Utilities director. Meanwhile:

Gov. Kitzhaber officially expressed his support for a law that would enhance the jurisdiction of **tribal officers**. The proposed law would provide tribal police officers in Oregon with the same powers and protections provided by Oregon law to state and local law enforcement officers. Non-Indians could then be cited for committing crimes in Indian country, on the reservation. And this:

In June the Warm Springs **Housing Authority** announced the closure of nine of ten problem findings identified last year by the Northwest Office of Native American Programs.

Housing officials said they expect the one remaining finding to be resolved in a matter of weeks. Back in September of 2010, HUD said the agency would adjust some of or all of the tribes' future Indian housing block grants if the findings were not remedied.

July

This news from Finance: **Balancing the tribal budget** this year and next year could require employees to take one unpaid day off per pay period. This would be similar to furlough days implemented by other units of government within the state. The furlough-day proposal has been suggested by tribal staff during the past two budget planning cycles. Elsewhere:

Officials are investigating the cause of the **Upper Dry Creek fire**, which burned over 1,300 acres and forced the evacuation of dozens of families from their homes last Thursday. According to officials, 2011 has been Oregon's wettest spring in 117 years. Under the right conditions that means fuel for fires. Elsewhere:

StoryCorps is recording interviews in Warm Springs in July. StoryCorps is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, sharing, and preserving the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs. And this news:

The Warm Springs **canoe team** made their Second Annual Canoe Journey in July. The N'Chi Wanapam canoe family left Warm Springs on July 9, and arrived later in the month at Swinomish, Wash. The Paddle to Swinomish 2011 canoe landing and welcoming ceremonies were held over the course of a week, hosted by Swinomish Indian Community. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in 2010 rejoined other tribal canoe families when they took part in the Paddle to Makah.

The tribes in July were still considering the possibility of developing a **biomass** energy plant on the reservation, although now there are some significant challenges facing the project. Financing, an assurance of sufficient fuel, and time are the main challenges facing this project.

August

The new **Warm Springs library** is now open on campus, in the Family Resource Building. Meanwhile:

Native American inmates at the **Deer Ridge** Correctional Facility announced plans to host a powwow in an outdoor area at the facility. This will be the first powwow hosted by the inmates at Deer Ridge. In other news:

Tribal Council this week approved a **settlement** regarding bonds the tribes issued in 2003. The tribes issued the bonds in order to pay for the purchase of one-third of the Pelton-Round Butte hydroelectric facilities. Elsewhere:

Tribal Council has given the nod to a recommendation by the tribal legal team to move forward with the next step in participation to Senate Bill 412. The bill was recently passed by Oregon legislature, providing **tribal police** with limited authority off reservations for two years, including power to continue pursuing suspects who leave tribal land, and to take action when a crime is committed in front of them.

September

Close to 2,400 fire-fighter personnel were on the reservation in September, battling **range and wild land blazes** that burned across more 107,000 acres.

At times the flames approached very close to homes, but only one structure, a shed, was lost. More than 300 homes were threatened at different times. Some rural homes, such as in the Sidwalter and Schoolie flat areas, came close to catastrophe.

Defensible space around the homes, and the effort of the fire crews, are credited with saving the structures, said Dan Martinez, chief of Warm



The N'Chi Wanapam canoe family en route to Swinomish, Wash.

Springs Fire and Safety.

Martinez commended all the fire crews who helped, as well as the community, which showed great support for the responders. In other news:

An important deadline passed in September in the **Cobell vs. Salazar** class action lawsuit. All individuals who believed they are entitled to participate in the settlement—as a member of the trust administration class, and who are required under the terms of the settlement agreement to submit a claim form—were required to mail a properly completed and signed form to the claims administrator postmarked by Sept. 16.

Tribal Council and management are in a preliminary stage of considering the possible development of a **municipal solid waste gasification facility**. If the project moves forward, the facility would be located on the tribal trust property at the Madras industrial park. The tribes would lease the property to the developer-operator of the gasification plant, said Jim Manion, manager of Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises. In other news:

October

Tribal Council agreed in October to move forward with a plan to develop a **bio-mass** energy plant on the reservation. Council extended the site license for the company, Oregon Bioenergy LLC, that is planning development of the facility. The bio-mass plant will be located south of the landfill-transfer station, in the Dry Creek area. And this:

Warm Springs Forest Product Industries and the tribal Natural Resources Branch announced they may have developed a plan to keep the **mill** operating for at least the next few years. WSFPI and Natural Resource representatives met with Tribal Council this month, and reported they may have come up with a timber harvest plan that would meet the mill's needs. In other news:

This month saw a milestone in the endeavor to bring **migrating fish** back to the rivers above the Pelton-Round Butte dams. On October 9, an adult summer steelhead returned to the Pelton

fish trap: This was the first fish to accomplish the feat, as part of the reintroduction project. And this:

At this month's **Wasco Chieftainship** Protocol meeting, facilitator Charles V. Jackson presented the people with a recommendation compiled by the families of nominees, George Clements, Alfred Smith Jr., Garland Brunoe, Derek Tasympt, Grant Clements Sr. and John Katchia Sr.

"No small group or handful of people can make a decision for the entire group of Wascos," Jackson said. "Even though not all of us come to these meetings all the time, I think at some point we need to realize that we have to make a decision and move forward. We want to hear your concerns, and whether you have thoughts about this recommendation, either pro or con."

Tribal Council and the 509-J school district board were talking of the need for a **new school in Warm Springs**. The idea for a new school serving the reservation has been on the table for about a decade. Funding has been the obstacle to getting the project beyond the discussion phase. To build a new K-8 school in Warm Springs would cost an estimated \$18 million, said Rick Molitor, school district superintendent.

An idea mentioned at Tribal Council last week is for the school district to come up with half the money, and the tribes to come up with the other half.

Tribal Council could put the issue to a vote of the membership by referendum. The school district would go to its voters for a bond levy. The current Warm Springs Elementary School is decades old, some parts dating back to the 1930s. The location by Highway 26 is also problematic for safety and other reasons.

November

The **Warm Springs TeleCo** made great progress toward serving the reservation. New staff were on board, and the new teleco office opened at the industrial park were.

Danica Greene and Gabriel Walker joined general manager Jose Mantanane on the staff of the teleco. Walker is the sales and marketing coordinator for the enterprise. Greene is the teleco customer service manager. She and Walker are the first teleco employees hired after operations manager Mantanane, who started in April.

After eight public meetings, the Wasco people remain divided on how to proceed with the selection of the next **Wasco Chief**.

Charles V. Jackson once again served as the facilitator at this month's chieftainship meeting, guiding the people through another draft proposal, signed by four of the six eligible candidates—Garland Brunoe, George Clements Sr., Grant

Clements, and John Katchia Sr.

As part of the draft proposal, criteria for determining eligible voters may be modified to require a minimum of 1/16 Wasco blood. Vital Statistics would be utilized to assist in the voting process. No write-in votes would be allowed. A special panel of Wasco elders would oversee the process and hear appeals. Also in November:

The **National Congress of American Indians** met in Portland in November. This was the first time in 36 years that NCAI met in Portland, giving many Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs members a chance to attend some of the activities.

December

This month Tribal Council heard an update on various aspects of the **gaming enterprise**. The Council met with new Indian Head Casino general manager Ken Billingsley, and the newly-hired general manager of Kah-Nee-Ta, Carlos Smith.

Construction of the casino is progressing as planned, and the gaming board announced that February 4, 2012 will be the dedication day for the new casino. A grand opening will happen later in the month. Tribal Council then toured the building with Billingsley, Smith and other staff.

Year of progress for teleco



WSTC's Gabe Walker, Jose Mantanane and Danica Greene at the new offices.