



Nicholas K. Geranios/The Associated Press, File

In this April 11, 2018, photo, water moves through a spillway of the Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River near Almot, Washington. A dozen tribes issued a joint press release last week rejecting the notion that tribes based near Puget Sound might have differing goals than inland tribes.

Twelve Northwest tribes united to save salmon

Some tribes criticize suggestion they have competing opinions on saving salmon runs

By NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
The Associated Press

SPOKANE — Some Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest are criticizing the suggestion they have competing opinions on how best to save endangered salmon runs, saying tribes are united in pursuing the removal of four hydroelectric dams on the Snake River in order to preserve the iconic fish.

A dozen tribes issued a joint press release last

week rejecting the notion that tribes based near Puget Sound might have differing goals than inland tribes.

“Any efforts to divide the indigenous peoples of this region by suggesting that the Puget Sound Tribes don’t have the same interests as the Northwest Inland Tribes have been soundly rejected by tribal leaders,” Nez Perce Tribe Chairman Samuel Penney said in the release. “We are all salmon people.”

The dozen tribes are united behind a controversial proposal by U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, an Idaho Republican, to spend some \$33 billion on efforts to save salmon that include

breaching the four dams.

The dams are located on the lower Snake River between the cities of Pasco and Pullman in eastern Washington state, and are blamed by some for blocking salmon from reaching spawning grounds. Supporters of the dams point to ocean conditions, overfishing and other causes for the decline of salmon numbers.

Simpson’s plan to remove the Ice Harbor, Little Goose, Lower Granite and Lower Monumental dams also includes a 35-year moratorium on lawsuits, ending costly litigation over the dams’ environmental impact. That

provision has caused a split among major Northwest environmental groups over the plan. Democratic Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Republican members of Washington’s congressional delegation also oppose Simpson’s plan.

The 12 tribes who support Simpson’s proposal are the Nez Perce; Confederated Salish and Kootenai; Umatilla; Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; Kootenai; Yakama Nation; Spokane; Shoshone-Ban-nock; Coeur d’Alene; Shoshone Paiute; and Burns Paiute.

State population growth was the slowest in a decade

By MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — Oregon added fewer than 32,000 residents last year, the slowest growth in a decade — since the last recession, in fact.

That’s not a coincidence. Migration typically slows, in Oregon and elsewhere, during broad economic dips. The same was true during the Great Recession, notes Oregon Employment Department economist Sarah Cunningham, and during the steep downturns that Oregon endured in the early 1980s.

Last year, though, there was another key factor: Deaths outnumbered births for the first time in Oregon history.

The same was true in 25 other states, according to Charles Rynerson with Portland State University’s Population Research Center. In Oregon, preliminary numbers indicate 315 more people died than were born during 2020.

Oregon’s “natural population increase” has been slowing for years, reflecting an aging population and lower birth rates. Rynerson notes that Oregon births peaked at 50,000 babies in 2007, compared to about 40,000 last year.

Economists had long anticipated that Oregon deaths would outnumber births, but that milestone hit years earlier than forecast.

COVID-19 was one big reason why. Even though the pandemic accounted for just about 4% of the 40,000 Oregon deaths during 2020, it was a substantial share of the 7% increase in total deaths.

Last year was actu-

ally the third consecutive year Oregon recorded slower population growth, reversing a steep upward trajectory that began in 2012. In an analysis last month, employment department economist Damon Runberg said a slowing job market and rising home prices are the most likely explanations for the pre-pandemic slowdown.

“Although Oregon’s housing market remains more affordable than neighbors to our north or south,” Runberg wrote, “many of the region’s largest metropolitan areas are losing the ‘low cost’ competitive advantage.”

Population growth was vital to the remarkable economic lift Oregon enjoyed in the decade after the Great Recession. Smart, young migrants buoyed the state by bringing new

skills, and by attracting employers in search of their abilities.

So while migration clogs the highways and further amps up competition for Oregon houses, it’s also essential for the state’s rebound after the pandemic recession. Despite the higher prices, Runberg said Oregon remains an attraction — if only because other West Coast hotspots are even more crowded.

“Once the health crisis gets under control and consumer confidence rebounds, our migration patterns will likely bounce back to normal levels,” he wrote. “Oregon will remain attractive from a quality-of-life perspective, and there is every reason to believe that Oregon’s economy will recover as quickly as the national economy.”



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Leah Johnson, owner of the new art shop in Joseph called Element, shows one of her encaustic paintings that demonstrates the medium’s ability to capture texture Thursday, May 27, 2021.

ELEMENT

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didn’t really give the energy toward my creative side for quite a while,” she said. “It was a pretty creative job, if you’re going to be in a bank, doing marketing is probably the most creative you can be, but I just started feeling I needed a career change or else I was going to work in the bank my whole career. I stumbled across the fact that this portion of the building was for rent.”

So she set up Element at 2 S. Main St., in the former location of Stewart Jones Designs. She opened May 18 with a “soft opening” posted on social media.

“Now I’m on my own and doing it,” she said.

In addition to her own art, Johnson sells works by other local artists. Some of those include pottery by local farmer Terra Leven, bronze by Shelley Curtiss, pottery and stoneware by Jack Coelhol, woodworking by Christian Niece, robes and skulls from the Stangel Bison Ranch and vintage photos of the area.

“I’m hoping to get more of those in,” Johnson said. “Some other people are working on things for me.”

She also sells custom-made furniture from Bilt Well in Portland, sheep-related items, down pillows and textiles.

Element also offers art classes on the encaustic medium.

“Part of the business is doing a Friday evening workshop if people are interested in learning and trying their hand at some small (encaustic) paintings,” Johnson said.

Although she’s been open only a short time, she’s been encouraged by the start.

“I had a very good first week. Had a lot of good local support and a lot of people from out of town just happening by,” she said. “I’ve already rearranged things on the wall because I sold a couple of my paintings and one of Shelley’s bronzes yesterday. It’s been really good.”

Johnson is assisted part time by daughter Haven, who also has an artistic bent.

“A little. I do a little collage, I am going to do some collage cards,” Haven said.

Another local, Cailey Murray, also is helping for the summer.

She said her husband and her parents, Joel and Marsha Svendsen, were a big help getting the building ready for Element’s opening.

SOON

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wanted to move into the adjacent space ever since Looking Glass Books moved out about two years ago.

Escamilla said there will be no grand opening for the new addition because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Once restrictions are lifted there likely will be a grand-opening event.

Raul’s has been operating at its present location on Adams Avenue since it opened in August 2011.

The restaurant’s most popular foods, Escamilla said, are street tacos, Raul’s burritos and huaraches, which is fried cornbread topped with beans, meat,

cheese and tomatoes.

Escamilla said the past year has been one of the restaurant’s toughest because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He credits loyal customers with allowing his restaurant to continue operating when many others could not.

“The support we have received has been amazing,” he said.

WHEAT

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normal, but international travel to customers will continue to lag, Hoey said. The commission expects no

in-person trade teams again for the 2021 harvest.

“It is rare to say the words ‘unfortunate’ in reduction of expenses, but that one is an unfortunate reduction in expenses as the relationships with our trading partners are critical and we are looking

forward to seeing them in person again,” she said.

The commission will be 2022 hosts for the U.S. Wheat Associates summer conference, so the commission budget reflects increased spending in relation to hosting the event, Hoey said.

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