

Tribes ask feds to restore sacred site destroyed by U.S. 26

By CATALINA GAITÁN
The Oregonian

MOUNT HOOD — The Federal Highway Administration and U.S. Bureau of Land Management should restore a sacred site and burial ground near Mount Hood that was destroyed to make room for a left-turn lane on the U.S. Highway 26, an attorney argued this week before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The agencies should replant trees and medicinal plants and remove a grass embankment that now covers an ancient burial site, said Joe Davis, an attorney representing tribal elders and two nonprofit groups.

Justice Department attorney Joan Pepin said the site already had been destroyed by the time the plaintiffs filed suit, so their arguments are moot.

“These features that they claim made their site sacred are irretrievably gone before the suit was even brought and there’s no relief that can bring it back,” Pepin said.

Pepin also said the responsibility for handling several of the plaintiff’s requests — including removing guardrails from the highway near the site and replanting trees — would fall upon the Oregon Department of



Barb Gonzalez/Bend Bulletin, File

This 2014 photo shows Mount Hood looming over U.S. Highway 26 east of Sandy. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is deciding on a case that could restore a sacred site and burial ground near Mount Hood that was destroyed to make room for a left-turn lane on the highway.

Transportation, which operates the highway, not the federal government.

Attorneys for both sides appeared Tuesday, Nov. 16,

in a virtual hearing before the three 9th Circuit judges in San Francisco.

Elders of the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde

and the Klickitat Tribe of the Yakama Nation, along with nonprofits Cascade Geographic Society and Mount Hood Sacred Lands

Preservation Alliance, sued the federal government in 2008 over the mile-long construction project west of Government Camp.

The highway expansion began that same year after community outcry over increasing car accidents, including one fatality, due to a lack of a left-turn lane. It was completed by July 2009.

The plaintiffs contend the highway expansion felled a cluster of old-growth Douglas Fir trees and turned part of the sacred site into a grass embankment. The site is traditionally known as Ana Kwna Nchi nchi Patat, meaning “The Place of Big Big Trees.” It was where Native Americans camped while on the way to trade at Celilo Falls or picked camas in the Willamette Valley, court records show. Native Americans also used the site as a burial ground and a place for vision quests, prayer, tobacco offerings, medicine gathering, fishing and hunting.

Tribal elders contended the government had violated a section of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act by destroying the site.

But U.S. Magistrate Judge Youlee Yim You dismissed the lawsuit in March 2018, saying the elders did not show that their right to exer-

cise their religion had been “substantially burdened.” You also said the site is not the only area where the plaintiffs can practice their religion, as the entire Mount Hood and Willamette Valley is sacred to them, and that they are still able to access the site through the East Wemme Trail Road.

Tribal elder Carol Logan of the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde, Wilbur Slockish, hereditary chief of the Klickitat Tribe of the Yakama Nation, and the two nonprofits appealed in May.

“We have been waiting for over a decade for this injustice to be set right,” Logan said in a statement Nov. 17. “It is past time for the court to recognize that without our sacred land, our religious traditions will be lost.”

Davis said he expects the court to return a decision by the spring. He said the impacts of this decision would have consequences for people of all religious faiths.

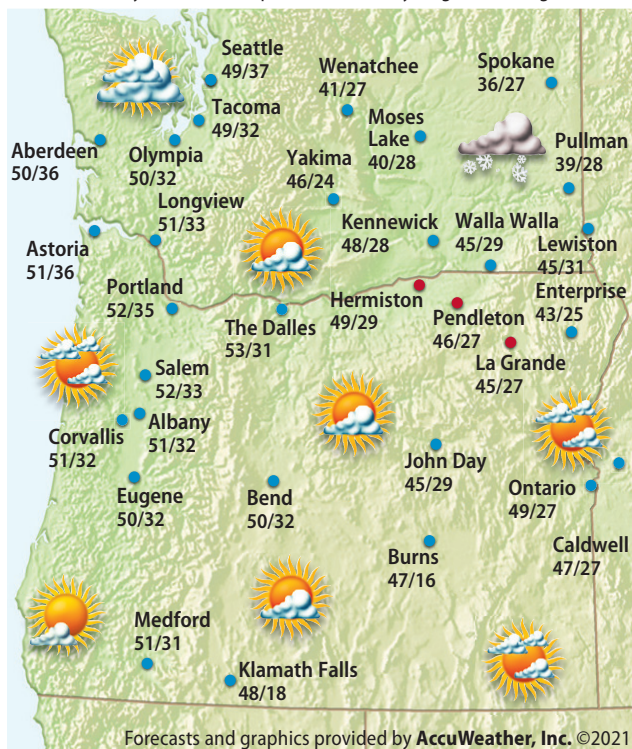
“It would mean that the federal government has a blank check to destroy sacred sites on its property and that it can’t be held accountable for it, and that would be profound injustice,” he said. “That would also be thoroughly inconsistent with our nation’s protections for religious freedom.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Morning fog; partly sunny	Mostly sunny and chilly	Partly sunny	Winds subsiding with a shower	Some sun, then increasing clouds
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
46° 27°	43° 29°	46° 31°	49° 34°	48° 34°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
49° 29°	44° 29°	46° 33°	54° 37°	49° 36°

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	39°	34°
Normals	48°	32°
Records	74° (1897)	7° (2014)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.21"
Month to date	1.17"
Normal month to date	0.87"
Year to date	7.20"
Last year to date	12.13"
Normal year to date	11.19"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	42°	38°
Normals	49°	32°
Records	67° (2012)	10° (1929)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.22"
Month to date	1.08"
Normal month to date	0.68"
Year to date	5.00"
Last year to date	3.90"
Normal year to date	7.15"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	WSW 4-8	NE 4-8
Pendleton	W 6-12	NNE 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:02 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:20 p.m.
Moonrise today	5:08 p.m.
Moonset today	8:24 a.m.

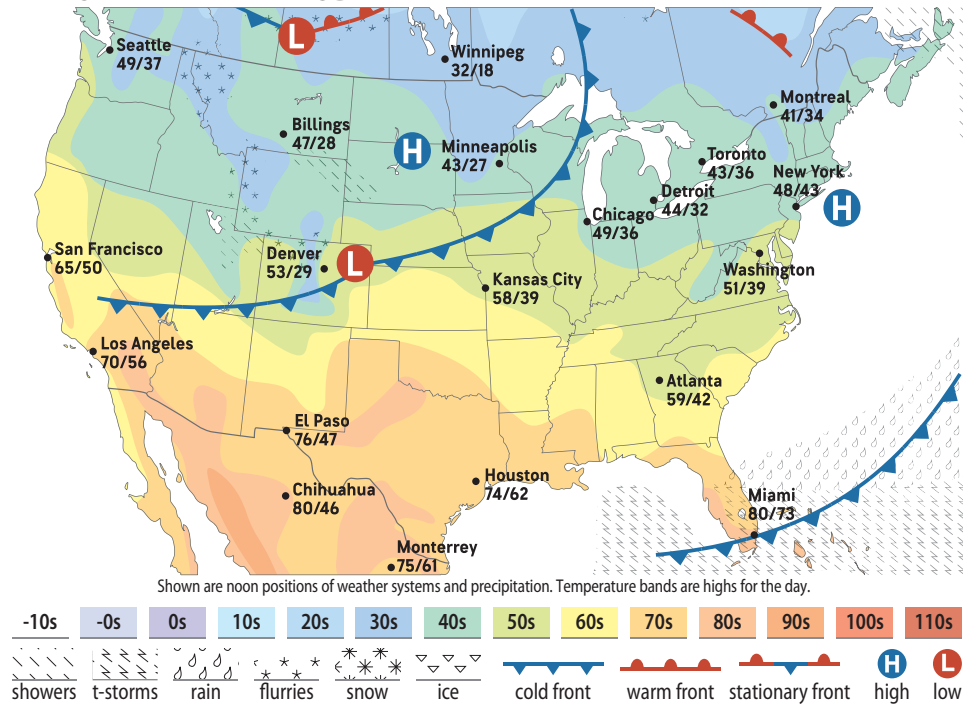


NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 86° in Fort Myers, Fla. Low -3° in Lake George, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Expert sees gains in war on hornets

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

WHATCOM COUNTY, Wash. — A Washington agriculture department entomologist said Tuesday, Nov. 17, he was hopeful that Asian giant hornets have been contained in Whatcom County and will be eradicated.

Sven Spichiger told the Senate agriculture committee that all four nests found in the past two years were grouped near the U.S.-Canada border, about 110 miles north of Seattle.

One hornet was trapped less than a mile away in British Columbia in October, but was probably a straggler from one of the nests eradicated earlier in the U.S., Spichiger said.

No other hornet was confirmed on either side of the border this summer or fall, though the department, other agencies and volunteers put up more than 1,600 traps.

“We are very cautiously optimistic that we still have a very contained event,” Spichiger told senators at a pre-legislative session workshop.

“As long as we keep- ing working on it and get

the awesome support we’ve gotten from everybody, we can hopefully wrap this one up,” he said. “We don’t often get to say that with invasive insects.”

Asian giant hornets are the world’s largest hornets and have a painful and occasionally fatal sting to humans. They prey on other insects, including pollinators such as honey bees.

The hornets were unknown in North America until appearing in British Columbia and Whatcom County in 2019. No nest has been found in B.C., and sightings have been rarer.

The Washington agriculture department destroyed one nest in October 2020 and three more this year. The nests were all within an area about 3 miles long.

The department suspects that unmated queens had left the nest last year by the time it was destroyed and survived to form the three nests eradicated this August and September.

Nests this year were found early enough to prevent them from being the source of more unmated queens, department spokeswoman Karla Salp said.

The department can’t rule out that Asian giant hornets have spread beyond the immediate area of the destroyed nests.

The department received a photo Sept. 6 of a flying insect near Mount Sumas, farther east in Whatcom County.

The insect resembled an Asian giant hornet. The department said the report was concerning, but it could not positively identify the species.

Some Asian giant hornets were trapped last year in Whatcom County and British Columbia outside the area where the nests were found.

One dead specimen was found in June near Marysville, about 80 miles south of the eradicated nests. Entomologists don’t know how the hornet got there, but believe it was from the previous year.

Salp said the department probably will conduct a trapping campaign in 2022 similar to the one this year.

Asian giant hornets have shown they can survive Northwest winters, she said. Specimens put on ice in coolers and even stored in freezers have revived.

IN BRIEF

Wallowa County nonprofits win Umpqua Bank grants

ENTERPRISE — Two Wallowa County nonprofits were among the 77 recipients of community grants awarded by the Umpqua Bank Charitable Foundation, a 501(c)(3) of Umpqua Bank, a subsidiary of Umpqua Holdings Corporation, according to a press release.

The Josephy Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph received \$3,000 to support learning about world cultures and diversity through art. Former Development Director Kellee Sheehy submitted the grant application.

Wallowa County Business Facilitation also received \$3,000 to support its small-business programs and services. Jolene Cox, a Wallowa Business board member, submitted the grant application.

The latest round of community grant funding totaled \$305,500 to local nonprofits across five states.

In total, the three rounds of community grants contributed \$1 million to community

organizations across Oregon, Idaho, Washington, California and Nevada and are part of Umpqua Bank’s overall foundation and corporate giving program that has invested \$12.8 million since the Foundation was formed in 2014.

The nonprofits were selected from hundreds of applicants that demonstrated a steadfast commitment to serving low- to moderate-income populations in at least one of eight categories: family engagement and resiliency; financial competency; housing stability and home ownership; college, career or technical readiness; entrepreneurship and business expansion; vibrant and equitable neighborhoods; technical and digital connectivity; and small business support and financial guidance.

Third-round community grant recipients received between \$3,000-\$10,000. The next deadline for community grant applications will be announced soon. Learn more at www.UmpquaBank.com/Community.

—EO Media Group

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