



# WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN

Enterprise, Oregon

Issue No. 13

www.wallowa.com

July 15, 2015 \$1



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

After three days of rain and a NOAA flash flood warning, the trickle on the left is the best Bear Creek can muster as it flows into the Wallowa River.

## Ponds, lakes cooking fish

The mystery of dead fish floating in the smaller lakes and ponds of Wallowa County has been solved.

The fish have been pre-cooked, so to speak, as water levels fall and the temperature in the ponds rises.

As a result, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife fish biologist Jeff Yanke has announced that fish managers are suspending summer trout stocking in Wallowa County ponds.

“Under current conditions it’s unlikely that trout stocked in these ponds would survive to be caught by anglers,” Yanke said.

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# Drought now critical in county

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Despite some unique flashes of good luck, Wallowa County teeters on the edge of a drought worthy of a state of emergency designation.

The U.S. Drought monitor reports Wallowa County in a state of severe drought — el-

evated from just a week ago when the mountainous region’s drought status was still designated as drought. “We are seeing stream flows we normally see in the middle of August,” said Diana Enright, water policy analyst for the director’s office at the Oregon Water Resources Department. “Conditions are 4-6 weeks

ahead of schedule across the state.”

In Wallowa County streams and rivers are “dropping really fast,” said Wallowa County Watermaster David Bates. “We’re way ahead of where we should be and none of the long-range forecasts are giving favorable predictions about stream flow.”

It is true, Bates said, that Wallowa County has enjoyed normal rain patterns, and even a series of real gully-washers on Mt. Howard in late spring.

“We had 10 inches of rain on Mt. Howard the first week in May till the first of June. That’s unique. No one else got that big storm like we did,” he said.

Even as recently as Thurs-

day, July 9, Wallowa County’s rain luck was holding. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) predicted flash floods in the county, which Bates said could be a real boon to stock ponds. “Those can fill right up in this situation,” he said.

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# THE MEMORY PROJECT TELLS THE STORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN LOGGERS



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Pearl Alice Marsh, daughter of African-American logger Amos Marsh, Sr. of Wallowa talks about the history represented in the many photos she has collected of former Wallowa city residents of African-American heritage. This project is showing in the Wallowa City Hall through July 20.

“ I WANT PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THERE IS A STORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN WALLOWA AND IT IS A STORY OF MIGRATION, OPTIMISM, LABOR AND COMMUNITY AND IT’S A POSITIVE STORY.”

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

The photo exhibit of African American loggers inside Wallowa City Hall is the result of “Office Depot and my computer coming together,” said organizer Pearl Alice Marsh. “It needs to be professionalized, but it’s a good story, a positive story.”

Marsh is the daughter of Amos Marsh, Sr. and the granddaughter of Joseph “Pa Pat” Patterson, Sr., well-known African-American loggers from

the Wallowa area. They are featured along with dozens of others in “The Memory Project” which will remain on display through the 20th of July — along with Marsh herself, available to answer questions.

Marsh was president of the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center for a number of years before her desire to create an oral history in a broader context led her to her own work.

The Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center, which has an office in Joseph, is centered around the experience of loggers in the tiny

Maxville village.

“Maxville is a brief part of this history,” Marsh said. “I’ve been collecting all these ancestors — many of them were in Maxville, but many more lived in other locations around the area.”

Marsh, for instance, lived with her family in Wallowa until she was 12 when the family followed Mike Holloran’s logging company to N. San Juan, Calif.

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# Dam rehab on track

By Rob Ruth  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Lake Dam owners’ plan to fund the 96-year-old structure’s rehabilitation by selling water downstream could be within mere months of gaining state regulators’ approval of water releases.

On July 7, the Oregon Water Resources Department’s Water Right Services Division issued a proposed final order on the March 2014 application from Associated Ditch Companies Inc. (ADC) to allow release of 4,200 acre/feet annually for flow augmentation purposes. Issuance of the proposed order marks the start of a 45-day period for lodging protests against the plan.

Previously, the application underwent 30 days of public comment, concluding in May 2014. Submitters of written comments included rural Enterprise rancher Chad Nash, Wallowa city councilor Garrett Lowe, Robert Reading of Wallowa’s Future Foundation, Enterprise resident Robert J. Hipple, Joseph city attorney Wyatt Baum, and Enterprise resident Marc Stauffer.

As summarized in the proposed order, issues the commenters raised concerned “water availability, release monitoring, how releases will affect other water right holders, how releases will affect the downstream bionomics, the effect these releases will have on the floodplain, and recently announced regulations from the Department of Land Conservation and Development, the Federal Emergency Management Administration, and National Marine Fisheries Service, and the impact this application may have on other uses.”

WRD determined, however, that “the proposed use will not impair or be detrimental to the public interest” as provided in Oregon law, one of the key points included in four pages of findings enumerated within the newly released draft permit.

Some of the findings are based on work of an Interagency Review Team (IRT) made up of representatives from WRD and Oregon departments of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and Agriculture (ODA).

“ODFW found that the proposed use, flow augmentation, will likely benefit sensitive, endangered and threatened fish species by increasing available habitat and potentially cooling waters of the Wallowa and Grande Ronde Rivers,” states the proposed order, which also notes other benefits from the plan.

While approval of the draft permit would basically clear the way for ADC to further pursue its plan of transferring stored water to users downstream, Tom Butterfield, ADC’s president, points out that each specific transfer of water rights will require its own application. ADC further envisions transferring rights through lease rather than through outright sale.

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# Tamkaliks celebrates past, future

This year’s event will showcase dancers and the longhouse plans

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

The 25th Annual Tamkaliks Celebration at the Homeland Project grounds outside of Wallowa will see special presentations, the top dancers in the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, and a celebration of both past and future.

Firstly, the event, which is scheduled for July 17-19, will celebrate one long-awaited accomplishment — the finalization of the longhouse plans.

It’s taken a decade of development, but the Tamkaliks Longhouse Project at the Nez Perce Homelands Project in Wallowa is finally going out for bids.

“Final plans have come in from architect Ralph Swinehart and will go out for bids very soon,” said Mary Hawkins.

The plans for the public gathering place on the site of the 320-acre Homelands Project outside the town of Wallowa had to be approved by the elders in three dispersed Nez Perce Reservations in Lapwai, Idaho, Colville, Wash., and Umatilla, Ore. It took a lot of conversation back and forth,



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Ralph Swinehart of Enterprise and Joe McCormick of Joseph worked together to reset the hot mucker for the showers at the Homeland Project site prior to Tamkaliks Celebration in Wallowa.

said Mary Hawkins of the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center, Inc.

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