

# Dragon boats due in town in April

## Dragons in the Wallawas club will be taking dues this month

By Kathleen Ellyn  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Volunteers have stepped up to organize the first dragon boat event — the ceremonial “Awakening of the Dragon,” tentatively scheduled for the last week of April.

“We plan to be on the water with two 6-16 boats by the first of May,” said organizer Mike Lockhart.

The 6-16 boats, similar to the Hong Kong racing boats, are light (800 pounds), 22 paddler boats used by most Portland racers.

Lockhart secured the boats for the season on a “swap lease.” The local club must undertake some modest fiberglass repairs and organize a “how to dragon boat” clinic taught by Jeff Campbell of Double Fifth Dragon Boating of Vancouver, B.C., prior to the boats hitting the water in exchange for free use of the boats through the season.

Lockhart has two members of his team who are experienced in fiberglass repair, so he has undertaken that part of

the swap deal. The club members will split the cost of the \$1,200 clinic.

Lockhart, who is president of both the Wallowa Lake Tram and the Wallowa Lake Tourist Committee, called the meeting to update interested persons and begin the work of creating a formal club. He hopes to back out of any club business as soon as it is off the ground and continue his focus on the late summer dragon boat races wearing his Wallowa Lake Tourist Committee hat.

The Wallowa Lake races have a tentative date of Aug. 27-28. The plan for the Wallowa Lake races is to include the traditional 500-meter sprint race as

well as a race unique to Wallowa Lake: the dragon slalom.

“Our slalom is unique,” Lockhart said. “It’s generating a lot of interest. I’ve received soft confirmations from seven teams. Bear in mind, most teams do wait until the month of the event to register because they have so many other commitments.”

With each team bringing not only 22 paddlers but alternates, tillers, callers, coaches and family, Lockhart said that finding motel or Airbnb rooms was potentially a problem and that he was hard at work on that.

“We’re definitely looking at expanding to Enterprise and surrounding areas,” he said.

The Sunday, March 27, meeting saw 18 potential club members in attendance and all supported the rules suggested by Lockhart.

“I’m trying to keep it as simple as possible and as cheap as possible,” Lockhart said.

Annual dues were set at \$60 per person with a free T-shirt thrown in. Rowing fees were set at \$10 per month.

Several members of the March 27 group volunteered to serve in committees to get the club off the ground. Election of officials will wait until the club has a formal membership list and knows for whom they are voting.

For now, the club has an

Awakening Ceremony Committee, a potential treasurer and a team captain who also will serve with another volunteer as the Scheduling Committee in charge of creating “time on the water” schedules for both competitors and recreational paddlers.

More than 40 individuals have indicated an interest in the club and event. The next step is for interested parties to sign up to the club and pay their dues. Lockhart expected to have registration forms online by mid-April.

To keep up to date on “Dragons in the Wallawas,” visit their Facebook page or dragonsinthewallowas.com.



Courtesy of Ellen Bishop

A volunteer firefighter prepares to enter a burning unit of the Cottonwood Apartments in Joseph on Friday.

## Fire damages apartment units

Wallowa County Chieftain

The fire departments of both Joseph and Enterprise and an Enterprise ambulance were dispatched to a fire at the Cottonwood Apartments, 304 W. Alder St. in Joseph on Friday afternoon.

The call came in around 3:15 p.m..

Joseph Fire Chief Jeff Wecks said the fire started in one unit, which saw extensive damage, and moved to a neighboring unit that received smoke damage but did not burn.

Wecks said the burned unit was vacant and that a new tenant was moving in when the fire started.

“It appears to be accidental,” Wecks said. “We were really lucky that we got in there quickly and got it stopped there (before it spread).”

Wecks said fire units in Wallowa and Lostine were moved to Enterprise as a precaution in case the fire got out of control.

“I saw a lot of smoke and flames showing when I got

there,” Wecks said. “On bigger fires we like to have everybody close.”

Officials from the Wallowa County Sheriff’s Office also responded to the scene.

## Micro-hydropower demand grows

### County farmers already benefit

By Jennifer Hobbs  
For the Chieftain

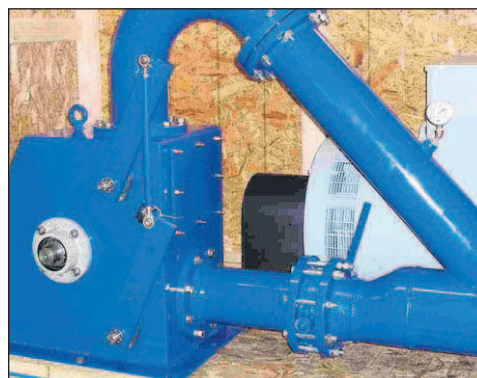
Increasing numbers of Wallowa County landowners are looking in to the potential of micro-hydropower.

“There is a lot of water coming out of the mountains; being able to harvest that energy in a low-impact way offers a real benefit to the community in terms of landowner bottom line, county resilience and sustainable natural resource utilization,” said Kyle Petrocine, renewable energy coordinator at Wallowa Resources.

Even small sources of flowing water — ditches, pipelines and municipal delivery systems — can work for micro-hydropower if they have sufficient flow and head. Flow is a measure of how much water comes through the intake, while head refers to the vertical distance between the water intake and the turbine.

In a micro-hydropower system, water spins turbines attached to generators to produce less than 100 kilowatts of energy. The projects are low-impact, maximize the use of local water for renewable energy, and can substantially offset electricity costs.

Irrigation systems are one good point of entry into micro-hydropower because the water is free of fish. Channeling irrigation water through hydroelectric generators



Courtesy photo  
Pelton wheels like this one are in operation in Wallowa County. Good for high-head applications, they can produce power efficiently at varying flows.

makes double use of it, and mountainous terrain means there are many candidates for project sites thanks to gravity flow.

“It is great to use a renewable resource in a non-consumptive way,” said Wallowa farmer Vern Spaur, who installed a hydroelectric generator in conjunction with his irrigation system three years ago and is now putting in a second micro-hydro project.

Feasibility studies are underway on four local irrigation systems and several indi-

vidual project sites throughout the county, while a handful of projects have reached the design and engineering phase.

The irrigation system feasibility studies are being run by Wallowa Resources as part of the Irrigation Modernization Campaign, which aims to achieve optimal irrigation ef-

iciency through partnerships. Increased efficiency means meeting the needs of the farmer with less water loss, while also leaving more water in stream. Additional aims of the project include agricultural resilience, rural economic development and environmental enhancement.

Spearheaded by Farmer’s Conservation Alliance (FCA) in collaboration with Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO), and partnered by Wallowa Resources Community Solutions Inc. (WRCSI), support for the project has continued to expand with the addition of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Nez Perce Tribes, Anderson Perry and Associates, and Black Rock Consulting.

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