



WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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River plan would boost fish habitat, prevent erosion

Million-dollar project could begin next fall

By Paul Wahl

Wallowa County Chieftain

Around the time the invasion of two-legged visitors to Wallowa County began leaving, a red legless species arrived.

Kokanee salmon have been spawning in the Wallowa River for several weeks in large numbers.

Their presence could grow significantly with the implementation of the Upper Wallowa Restoration project. Increasing the amount of Kokanee and Bull Trout spawning grounds is one aspect of the plan, which was released in February.

The goal is to restore the alluvial fan where the river meets the lake, splitting it into

multiple and braided channels as it enters the lake for fish habitat and assisting with erosion control on 1 1/2 miles of the river and West Fork Wallowa River.

Funding to implement the plan likely won't be in place until next spring or summer, according to Matt King, who has been shepherding the project for its sponsor, Wallowa Resources, the past two years.

The project will also undergo a federal permit process required for stream restoration under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, King said.

In addition, a state Removal/Fill Permit issued by the Department of State Lands, will also be required.

The initial study cost

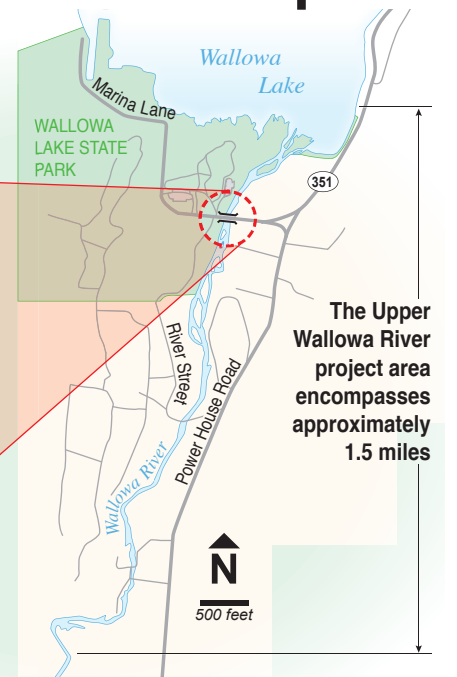
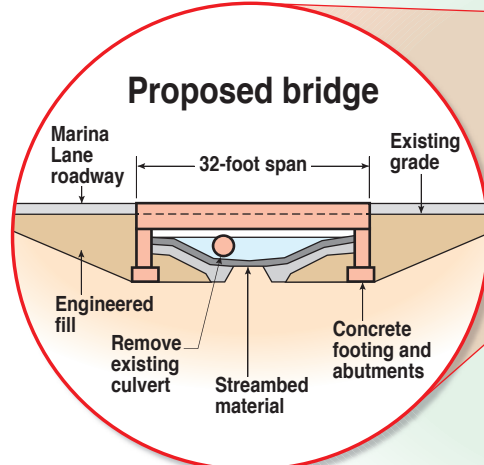
\$100,000. The project itself will cost a million dollars. Funding will come from public and private sources, according to King.

Conditions on the stretch of the river have been deteriorating for years. According to one report, to prevent flooding of Wallowa Lake Park, riprap was installed along portions of the stream bank. "This solution did not correct the flooding problem but shifted the stream bank erosion problem to the other side of the river," the report said. "From the late '60s and onward, OPRD would bulldoze the river to dike the gravel deposits and deepen the channel."

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Marina Bridge replacement plan

Part of the Upper Wallowa River habitat restoration and bank stabilization project includes replacing the bridge at Marina Lane with a new 32-foot span. The new bridge would be more than twice the length of the existing structure.



Source: GeoEngineers, Inc.

Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

ALPENFEST CELEBRATION



ABOVE: Members of the Tirolean Dancers of Oregon go airborne during Saturday night's performance at Alpenfest 2017 at Edelweiss Inn at Wallowa Lake. Members of the band come from across Oregon and Washington. Alpenfest opened Wednesday and concluded Sunday afternoon.

RIGHT: Linda White and Joan Blaser, original members of the Polkatonnes dance band, perform during Saturday evening's celebration of Alpenfest 2017. The Polkatonnes are regulars at Alpenfest and have been performing since 1971.



MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 8 AND AT WALLOWA.COM

Photos by Paul Wahl/Chieftain

Library district push faces hurdle

Enterprise having second thoughts

By Kathleen Ellyn

Wallowa County Chieftain

The newly formed Wallowa Valley Library Foundation is facing a serious hurdle in the race to meet the Nov. 6 deadline to put a special district request on the May 2018 ballot.

The first of the several steps required to form a district is resolutions of support from the county and the four cities.

Susan Roberts, County Commission Chairwoman, has told the foundation that the county would initiate the process with its own resolution, once the boundaries of the proposed district have been determined.

The county commission is poised to do this as early as Oct. 16 but are awaiting the boundary resolutions from Enterprise and Lostine.

The Joseph City Council has approved a resolution and the city of Wallowa has agreed to do so.

Lostine and Enterprise have concerns.

Lostine, which has no library, held a community meeting Monday, Oct. 2 and a council decision is expected Oct. 11.

"We need to find out if the community wants a library or if they don't want the taxes," said City Recorder Toni Clary.

Enterprise's decision will take longer. A survey seeking the input of all property own-

INFO SESSIONS PLANNED

The Wallowa County Library Foundation is hosting a series of public meetings to inform voters about the proposed Library District that will be on the ballot in May, 2018. The purpose of these meetings is to share the Economic Feasibility Study and other facts, as well as answer questions.

- Enterprise: 5:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 9, at Cloverleaf Hall
- Lostine: 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 10, at the Grange Hall
- Wallowa: 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11, at Wallowa Senior Center
- Joseph: 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 12, at Joseph Center

All residents are welcome at any of the meetings.

ers went out with city water bills this week and answers are expected by Oct. 16.

"Our council finds Enterprise in an unusual position," explained City Administrator Michele Young. "This is a county issue, and all of a sudden we're thrown into this district. Our library hasn't been through any budget cuts."

The foundation emphasizes that city resolutions are a formality for setting the

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Commissioners find ears open to forestry issues

By Kathleen Ellyn

Wallowa County Chieftain

The overall consensus seems to be that a breath of fresh air is blowing across the landscape of forestry issues in Eastern Oregon.

County commissioners from six eastern Oregon counties discussed the changes and other topics with U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) in Enterprise recently.

The consensus is the worm had turned particularly with regard to views of forest fire management due to catastrophic fires this summer and their impact on more urban areas and urban values.

"I don't think Oregonians want their forests destroyed by runaway fires every summer and their air-sheds choked to the point that they can't breathe," Walden said. "I think we have real momentum to do good pub-



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Representative Greg Walden explains the details of county/forestry relationships at a meeting of Eastern Oregon County Commissioners, Sept. 19, in Enterprise.

lic policy."

The public policy changes sought by commissioners is centered on addressing dangerous natural disaster situations before they become catastrophes and getting the right people to the table

to discuss forest management.

Commissioners have long been frustrated when agreements reached with the U.S. Forest Service are discarded by other agencies that were not present when discussions took place.

Wallowa County Commissioner Susan Roberts said she recently wrote to Regional Forester Jim Penya complaining that the USFS was not working with the county on the Blue Mountain Forest Plan as originally promised.

Forest plans describe the social, economic and ecological goals of National Forests and provide frameworks for future management decisions.

"In January, when we met in Pendleton, they handed us a grazing portion of the forest plan that looked workable," she said. "When we got it in June, it was totally changed; nothing in it was like it was in January."

Roberts is not the only commissioner fed up with the process.

"I've told Penya I'm not going to make a decision until the regulatory agencies (such as National Incident Management System and U.S. Fish and Wildlife) put their rules on the table, because every time you wait until the regulatory puts in their rules, you have an entirely different document," said Union County Commissioner Steve McClure.

But the last few weeks have seen an abrupt change in the attitude of forest managers. Commissioners reported that in August, Penya was uninterested in their issues and let them know that conversations were over and USFS was moving forward with forest plans re-written by agencies.

Just two weeks later, commissioners reported, Penya seemed in the mood to negotiate.

"He called me and asked me about

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