

NEZ PERCE

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of Discovery” supported by Christian religions since the 1400s and used to justify the destruction of indigenous cultures and people.

Thomas Jefferson, then U.S. Secretary of State, recognized the doctrine as law in 1792. The law declared that ownership of land came into existence by virtue of “discovery” of that land by Europeans.

The International Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church began addressing the culpability of its organization in the matter in 2012.

“We declared a four-year period of repentance and educating ourselves and repenting for the ways in which the expansion harmed the people who lived here before Europeans came,” said Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky, Bishop of the Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska.

At the “returning” ceremony along the Wallowa River, Stanovsky repeated a passage from the formal apology issued by the church to all indigenous peoples.

“To our native and indigenous brothers and sisters we say, we have destroyed your way of life, dehumanized your people, and degraded your cultures along with your dreams your peace and your great love of the land. Today we acknowledge that all this is not in the past. We pray to God to give us a new heart and a new spirit so that we may truly repent of our grave sins, petition for forgiveness and work towards healing.”

The sincerity of the apology and the astonishing acceptance of responsibility for ongoing pain were not lost on the Nez Perce representatives.

“My heart is singing,” said Miles.

The United Methodist Church originally purchased 110 acres of land along the Wallowa River above Wal-



Kathleen Elynn/Chieftain

Students who were attending the Nez Perce Cultural Camp at United Methodist Church Camp at Wallowa Lake were honored to replace the rock that symbolized the transfer of riverfront land from the church back to the Nez Perce. The rock had been presented to the Nez Perce in July and was returned to the river Aug. 1 as part of a ceremony honoring the apology for historic mistreatment of indigenous people and act of friendship offered by the United Methodist Church. Campers are, from left, Aurelia Ellenwood, Raequel Domebo and Robert Denunzio. Maurice Renteria also attended.

“Each tribe was put in a specific place but they did not feel that land was privately owned. Most of the tribal leaders would have said that only the creator makes that decision.”

— Wilfred (Scotty) Scott
VFW member and Nez Perce historian

lowa Lake in 1923 and over the years sold portions of that land to support projects. It now owns 58 acres and operates one of six camp and retreat ministries in two states.

Over time, the property along the Wallowa River be-

came landlocked and unsuitable for development. The idea of returning that land to the Nez Perce came to Wallowa Lake Camp co-director David Lovegrin in 2017 when he was walking along the river and realized that the stretch owned

by the church was great Sockeye salmon spawning habitat.

“It seemed like a great thing to do to gift this land to the tribe as they have been very active in restoring fish habitat and re-establishing fish populations,” said co-director Peggy Lovegrin.

Conversations began immediately.

“It’s been a learning experience as we build a respectful relationship with the tribe,” said Todd Bartlett, executive director of camp and retreat ministries for the Oregon-Idaho area. “We’re working to honor tribal culture so we want to do this in partnership.”

The partnership between the church and Nez Perce culture has been deepening for some time, Bartlett said. Culture camps held twice a year at Wallowa Lake Camp are a favorite for Nez Perce youth.

“Youth are given a choice of campsites for culture camp — they always choose Wallowa Lake Camp — it’s home,” Bartlett said.

Nez Perce Culture Camp was in session when the Aug. 1 returning ceremony took place, and Nez Perce youth played an important role.

Students distributed gifts to all attendees as part of the ceremony, sat in the drum circle and performed sacred songs with Elder Pete Wilson of Spirit of Renegade Drum, and were honored to formally return the stone to the river.

Miles addressed the gathered youth specifically.

“As you (young people) become our leaders you are going to lead us into some more wonderful things that are going to happen just like this because I know you have a heart for the Nimi’ipuu and a heart to return us to where we belong,” she said.

Elders, native speakers and language teachers Bessie Scott and Florene Davis also encouraged the youth to “always remember this beautiful day in the heart. You have been a part of it. Always remember.”

Second wolf attack in two weeks reported

Chesnimnus pack members latest culprits

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

In the second confirmed wolf depredation in two weeks, a 350-pound calf survived a wolf encounter, but suffered severe injuries in the process. It happened in Joseph Canyon in the Cougar Creek area.

On Aug. 1, a calf was discovered on a large U.S. Forest Service allotment. It was taken to a local veterinary clinic for treatment on Aug. 2. The producer who found the calf noted he had seen wolf tracks in the area the day before.

Another rancher in the area suffered three depreda-

tions in the vicinity earlier this year.

Investigators found more than a dozen canine tooth scrapes on the outside and rear of both hind legs measuring up to a quarter-inch wide and four inches long. Five puncture wounds also were found.

Further examination revealed a large open wound between the rear legs behind the scrotum that measured nearly 8 inches long, 2.5 inches wide and at least 2 inches deep.

Some of the injuries on the calf had begun to heal and were estimated to have occurred a week before. The size, location and extent of the injuries were sufficient to confirm wolf depredation by the Chesnimnus pack. The calf was found about three miles from where three calves were injured in June by the same pack.

POLICE

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Council member Marty Hamilton said he was under the impression that the city could cancel the contract after a year if it weren’t satisfied. Sajonia said that didn’t agree with her reading. Sands said he thought the quarterly meetings would address such issues.

After the contract was read, it was interpreted that the sheriff was only to provide a quarterly summary and monthly reports at the council meetings. Lockhart said he didn’t disagree with the council but said that looking at the other side of the contract, the sheriff was committing to an additional deputy for three years.

“So you don’t want to tie his hands too tight,” he said. Sajonia agreed.

Lockhart added that the council already had a long discussion with the sheriff about what duties were expected of the deputies but that they should be defined

for the edification of future council members.

“I want the contract; I want it as quickly as we can get it, but if we go back to that, it can be helpful,” Lockhart said. He added he would like to know if the city would pay for the deputy’s court time and other nonpatrolling duties.

Sajonia responded she was still unhappy with the three-year contract length. She added that she’d like to see the deputy hand-deliver ordinance enforcement letters.

“I don’t see anywhere here that ordinance enforcement is addressed,” she said. Sands said it was addressed in the services section of the contract and read off the corresponding text. He also noted that response to mailed ordinance infractions was upwards of 90 percent.

Lockhart made a motion to approve a three-year contract with the stipulation that the contract would clearly define the deputy’s duties for which the city would be billed, although he later dropped that portion.

BOOKS

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Literacy kits have already been transferred to Building Healthy Families. Now, librarians and Imnaha and Troy schools have asked for permission to visit the county library to determine what books would best fit their communities. Enterprise Librarian Denine Rautenstrauch has volunteered to house all of the large-print books, which were popular among elderly readers.

The foundation also sug-

gested that books with rare or historical value be donated to local museums and books unfit for library use due to age, relevancy or condition be sold to raise funds for library programs.

“We’ve realized, talking to the librarians, there is no way the other libraries can absorb all of what the collection was,” McCoy said. “We’ve reached out to Wallowa Resources, and they have some (storage) space in their basement we may be able to use.”

The first order of business, McCoy said, was to examine the collection, allow librari-

ans access to the collection and find the paperwork outlining the correct handling of books purchased through grant programs.

City libraries currently receive a small donation (approximately \$300 per library) from the county, and Marks suggested the commissioners might like to increase that amount going forward.

“The county used to provide more funding,” said Commissioner Susan Roberts. “I had suggested when this (closure of the county library) all started that the county may be willing to ... boost the amount back to

what it had been.”

That might not happen until next year.

“Maybe we can coordinate a little bit with the city libraries going into the next budget cycle, next year, and figure out how we might work together there,” said Commissioner Todd Nash.

The formal proposal of actions, however, needs to be made before winter sets in and the county library collection could be left sitting in an unheated building.

McCoy said the foundation could have a formal proposal within six weeks.

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