

Airport Plan Reviewed Despite Small Turn-out

A public hearing held Sept. 8 to solicit tribal members' comments about a proposed airport on the Warm Springs Reservation was poorly attended, but the Planning Department advised that it is certainly not too late for interested people to familiarize themselves with the plan and have some input.

Even though the airport master plan is now being finalized for approval by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Tribal Council, the tribes have no immediate plans to implement the plan. Assistant Planner Uren Leonard also pointed out that no action involving Tribal funds would be taken without further public meetings and a general referendum.

In the meantime, copies of the master plan, drafted by CH2M Hill Consultants, are available for inspection in the Planning Department and people's comments are welcome.

The Airport Master Plan, the result of three years of study, specifies a site already approved by the Tribal Council, as well as the physical lay-out of runway(s) and roads. It also estimates development costs and describes the environmental impact of an airport.

As explained by CH2M Hill Consultant Mal Miner at the public hearing, discussion of the

need for an airport dates back at least twelve years but the feasibility study did not begin formally until 1973 when the Oregon Aviation System Plan indicated a need for an airport to serve the Tribes.

As perceived today and described in the report, the needs are twofold:

1. Tribal and BIA air travel and local emergency and special services flying, such as fire control, medical transport, crop dusting, and range riding.
2. Tourist traffic destined for Kah-Nee-Ta.

"The trend in business is to use more airplanes," stated Miner. He added that if tourists have air access to Kah-Nee-Ta, "the Lodge can draw from a larger population over a much wider area," such traffic being a "real income producing activity."

Of the four sites considered for an airport, the flat top of a butte north of the mill and east of fire control was recommended by CH2M Hill, selected by the Tribal Council and approved by the FAA. Known as Section 19, the proposed site compared favorably with the other sites at Miller Flat, Dry Creek and Kah-Nee-Ta. Factors such as safety, environmental impact, development costs and land availability were weighed.

Section 19 was selected for several reasons. All the land needed for initial construction is tribally-owned; there is space for expansion; its high and flat characteristics are ideal for safe landing and take-off; it is convenient for both Tribal and Kah-Nee-Ta business; and the development cost is relatively low.

The Kah-Nee-Ta site was

felt to be unsafe and noisy. The plot of ground at Dry Creek would have required too much earth fill, bringing the development cost up. Miller Flat was felt to be too distant to be practical, and allotted land would have to be acquired.

The primary disadvantage of the selected site is the need for an access road, the construction of which would be time-consuming and expensive. However, the cost of a road, estimated at \$150,000, is included in the total development estimate and it was agreed that road building would have to precede the actual airport construction by one year.

As conceived by CH2M Hill, the initial airport development would provide for one runway 3800 feet long. After the airport is operational for a period of time it might be found that a crosswind runway is necessary.

Wind data collected for over two years indicated that the ideal alignment of the runway depends on the seasonal change of winds. Since summer usage of the airport would probably be heaviest, the first runway will most likely be laid out correspondingly.

The development would also include parking space for 50 small aircraft, runway lighting for night landing, an administrative and operations building, and a caretaker's residence.

Other than the runway lights there would be no navigational aids such as beacons or radio control for foul weather conditions. Nearby airports that are so equipped could be used if landing in Warm Springs is impossible.

Noise and other environmental factors were examined quite closely. As Miner noted, the sound of aircraft would be

quieter than the truck traffic that exists now. Noise contours indicate that the only area where the noise would be at a "disagreeable level" is on the development site itself.

CH2M Hill estimated the cost of initial development at \$678,200, although Miner warned that this figure will probably increase as time goes by.

The Tribal share might be \$163,000 if they pay the entire cost of buildings, or \$37,000 if the buildings are funded some other way. Over a 20-year period, total development costs for two lighted runways and all other facilities are estimated at \$1.6 million.

Possible funding sources are the Federal Airport and Airway Development Act which pays 90 percent of building costs with monies collected through aviation taxes. The State of Oregon and the Tribes might share the 10 percent balance.

Another potential source is the Economic Development Administration (EDA) which can fund airports 100 percent, as it did on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota.

Some discussion at the public hearing centered on the possibility of the Tribes purchasing their own airplane. Ralph Minnick, administrative assistant to the General Manager, later said that representatives of airplane companies come in regularly to do analyses of Tribal travel and make recommendations. "We've allowed these people to come in but we've never pushed for a plane," said Minnick.

Although the Tribes continue to look at various flying options, such as their own aircraft, chartering or renting, there has been no special effort to follow up with any firm plans.

• Election Results

Voters Okay Water Project

Voting 387 "YES" and 34 "NO", Tribal Members cast their ballots to approve funding for the development of the Simnasho-Schoolie Flat domestic water system yesterday.

The results of the election revealed that 92 percent of the people favored the project with a total of 421 casting ballots in the Sept. 15 election. There were 79 votes over the required one-third needed.

With the people's stamp of approval, the Tribal Council and management staff are proceeding with the necessary paperwork for the funding of the water project.

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) will provide a \$360,000 grant for the drought-affected domestic water system, and a low interest loan for the same amount to cover the Tribes' half of the project cost.

The voter turnout was significantly better than it was for the first referendum election try held on August 9. Although the voters approved the project five to one, thirteen too few eligible voters cast their ballots, invalidating that election.

School Announcements High School

Counselor Mike Clements is looking for two adults from the Warm Springs community to assist with Indian Club. The Club which is in the process of organizing now, will be based in Warm Springs so that it can become more a part of the community. Meetings will be in the evening at least twice a month. With events such as the Northwest Indian Club Powwow in May to prepare for, the Club would like to get started as soon as possible. Contact Mike at 475-3888 if you are interested in being an advisor.

Jr High

There will be an open house for parents at the Junior High on Tuesday, Sept. 20 from 6:30 to 9:00. Parents will have an opportunity to meet new staff and get acquainted with their kids' teachers. They are invited to visit each of their kids' classrooms and then talk informally with staff and other parents in the cafeteria, where refreshments will be served.

Top Health Branch Slot Vacated

A memorandum originating in the General Manager's office was circulated Sept. 13, informing Tribal employees that Noel Day, head of the Health and Social Service Branch, was leaving the position effective the date of the memo.

The branch will be administered from the General Manager's office until another manager is found. All staff will report to Ralph Minnick in the interim.

The search is on for a qualified person to fill the position. It is expected to take at least two months to advertise the job, interview candidates and hire a manager.

Day was asked to come to work with the Tribes two years ago while holding the position of supervisor of social programs for the BIA. His letter of resignation was received by the Tribal Council and management on the same day the memorandum was circulated.



(COYOTE NEWS)

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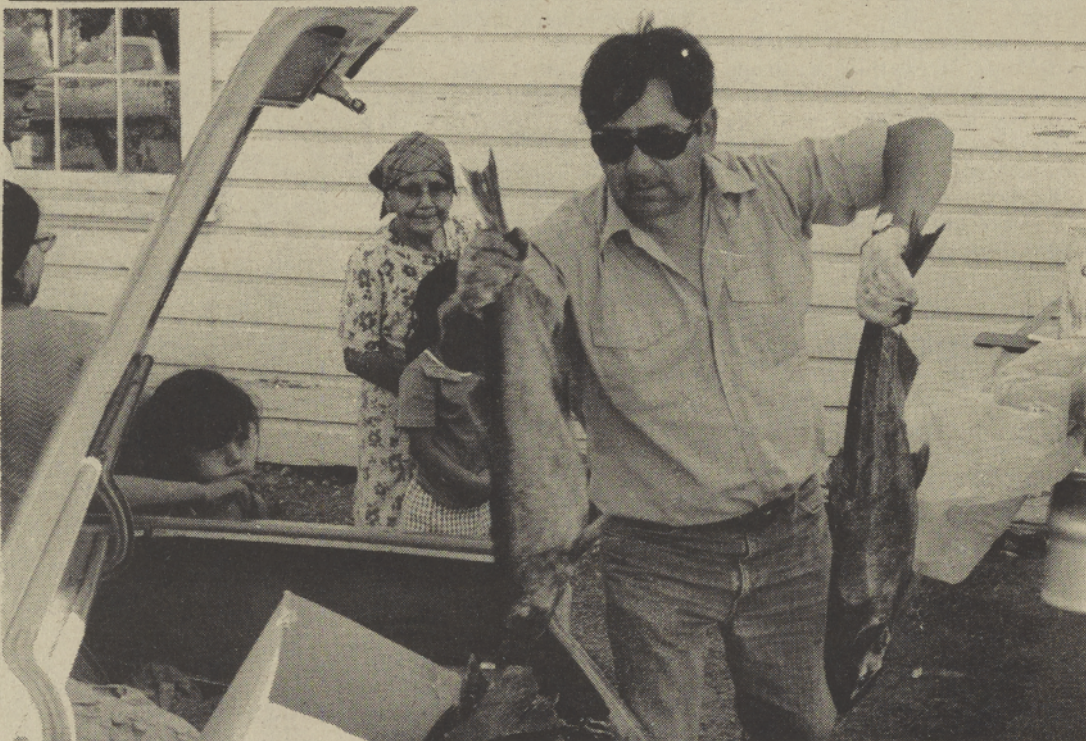
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Six to twenty pound chinook were distributed to senior citizens Sept. 7 following the last egg-take at Round Butte Hatchery this year.

Roscoe Smith (foreground) hefts two of the fish into a waiting trunk. Watching is Jessie Arthur. (Sandy Rangila photo)