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Spilyay Tymoo

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Spilyay Tymoo photo by Behrend

NO PARKING

Campers, floaters dismayed with flood

by Pat Leno

Here one minute and gone the next... that's just about how fast the flood waters on the Deschutes River went the afternoon of July 16. For rafters on the river, the idea of being dumped into the river is accepted but they didn't expect the river to be dumped into their cars. That is what happened to several who had parked their cars in the park area located across from the Rainbow Market.

Throughout the day, there had been summer rain showers with brief periods of clearing. Suddenly, during one of the showers, a torrent of water rushed down the river. It happened so quickly, that a family camping in the park had their entire camp submerged. They said they didn't have time to get anything out of the way of the waters and all of their

gear was "sopping wet." Thus ended the family's weekend.

A rafter enthusiast, Steve Pomp of Portland, returned to the park to find his car filled with river water and his boat trailer covered with weeds. Water rushed out of his car as he opened a door to inspect damage to his personal belongings. He said this sport of rafting has become an expensive hobby for him. Earlier this year he lost a drift boat and all his new gear to the river. He said he hoped his insurance would cover the latest damage. A close look into his car revealed puddles of muck on the floor and seats soaked with water.

For some unfortunate river drifters the discovery of the flooding water would not be made until they returned from their trips down to Trout Creek or Maupin.

Lightning causes malfunction at hydro plant

The first anniversary of the dedication of the Tribe's hydroelectric project July 16 was marked with an unusual chain of events beginning with a severe lightning storm which resulted in an unanticipated rise in the Deschutes River. The 4.6 foot wall of water shooting down the Deschutes was caused after lightning disabled controls at the Portland General Electric reregulating dam four miles upriver from Warm Springs adjacent to the tribally-owned hydroelectric project.

The storm, which began with ominous black clouds enveloping the area, deposited .15 inches of rain and hail in the Madras and Warm Springs area in a short time. Accompanying the downpour was intense thunder and lightning which created an

unusual chain of events resulting in the overflow of water through gates at the Pelton reregulating dam.

According to Pelton-Round Butte dam project superintendent Bud Catto, lightning struck close to the reregulating dam disabling a control cable which sends information from the river level gauging station 200 yards below the reregulating dam to the reregulating powerhouse.

After lightning struck the cable, causing a malfunction in the equipment, wrong information was received by the control equipment. The reading indicated the river was low.

Four spillway gates opened automatically upon receiving this computerized information. The 14 foot openings allowed 22,500 cubic feet per second of water to run into the river. Normal flow is 4,600 cubic feet per second.

The operator at Pelton Dam was also receiving the same low river information on his gauges and left Pelton Dam to check on the situation at the reregulating dam. Upon arrival he realized the malfunction and closed the gates manually. Gates at the reregulating dam had remained open for half an hour adding enough water to the Deschutes River to make a

4.6-foot wall of water contrary to the reported eight-foot wall as seen in statewide news releases.

A meeting held by PGE officials and Pelton Dam operators has resulted in the addition of more controls on the dam to minimize the possibility of such a

malfunction in the future.

PGE public relations spokesman Steve Mueller related that some steps had already been taken. "The gates will open automatically only one foot," he explained. Any greater opening would require manual operation. This one foot opening is necessary to

maintain a flow for fisheries.

The possibility of lightning producing such a chain of events to cause the overflow of water through the reregulating dam spillways "is very remote," says Catto. Equipment at the dams have lightning protection to minimize the effects of lightning strikes.



Spilyay Tymoo photo by Leno

The waters receded quickly from the park area located across from the Rainbow Market during the recent flooding, but for rafters who had parked their cars close to the riverbanks the water remained inside their cars creating puddles of muck and mud.

Weather

JULY	HI	LOW
18	86	48
19	80	60
20	77	54
21	87	49
22	94	60
23	91	64
24	80	61
25	75	44
26	80	50