

Passage Way poses resource questions

Is Passage Way timber sale the "passage way" into the future of the reservation? Are all areas containing large tracts of old growth on the Warm Springs reservation eventually going to be logged? Are some areas of the reservation too sensitive and too valuable to other resources to be removed? These are some of the questions that Tribal Council and tribal members must resolve?

Taken out of conditional use after a study in 1970 determined it could be logged economically, Passage Way was included in the 1982 Forest Management Plan as commercial forest.

Passage Way, located in upper Mill Creek drainage, encompasses 3,400 acres of old growth forest. Logging of 320 acres is proposed for 1988 along with construction of 46 acres of roads.

Clearcuts, overwood removals and shelterwood logging will result in the removal of 16 million board feet of timber over a three-year period. However, over a 30-year period two additional entries are planned with further removal of old growth trees.

"Approximately two-thirds of the old growth in Mill Creek Valley will not be treated" as cited in the sale planning report. "These leave-blocks can be considered in the future."

Ponderosa pine, grand fir and

douglas-fir dominate the area, some as old as 300 years. Western white pine, western hemlock and western cedar are also included in the sale.

The high elevation of the area provides spring, fall and summer range for deer and elk, blackbear and other wildlife species also inhabit the area.

A 240-acre wetland has been excluded from logging because of regeneration problems and the delicate nature of the area. "This marshy area," says Warm Springs watermaster Deepak Sehgal, "should be designated with a status protecting it from any future impacts by forest management activities."

The steep canyon walls of the Mill Creek drainage sale area drop quickly to Mill Creek itself where 30 percent of the water flowing in the Warm Springs River passes. Sixty percent of all water in Mill Creek originates in Passage Way from numerous springs and drainages.

Mill Creek has a flow able to support anadromous fish and resident trout. But during late summer the flow diminishes to an extent where irrigators on Sidwater Flat are unable to divert water in order for minimum stream flows to be maintained for fish.

Much effort has been directed at increasing fish production in the stream along with efforts aimed at increasing water quantity and improving water quality. Rehabilitation

projects, gabion placement, implementation of the Streamside Management Plan, the Strawberry Falls by-pass and water priority decisions indicate that the Tribe is very much interested in improving its fishery on Mill Creek.

Studies conducted both on and off reservation show logging and road construction to have an impact on water quality in streams which in turn impact fisheries. Watermaster Deepak Sehgal points out, "The volume of timber proposed for removal and the mileage of new roads required for this entry may cause problems in water quality and quantity in Mill Creek."

Warm Springs fisheries biologist concurs in his report on the sale area adding, "An area of great concern is the almost inevitable results in some erosion, and even small amounts of mineral matter enter-

ing Mill Creek resulting from road construction and clearcuts."

Research now taking place is aimed at aiding Sidwater residents to find ways in storing water from Mill Creek and in finding other sources of water. The importance and value of water cannot be disputed.

"No one can guarantee that there is no chance of impact to other resources, especially in light of present range and fisheries uses that are already causing minimum flow impacts," assistant forest manager Bill Appgar states in a letter to the Warm Springs Timber committee. That is also the concern expressed by tribal resource managers.

The proposed logging plan, both immediate and long-range, is just a plan, says Appgar. "From a technical, forestry point of view, this is

what we could do."

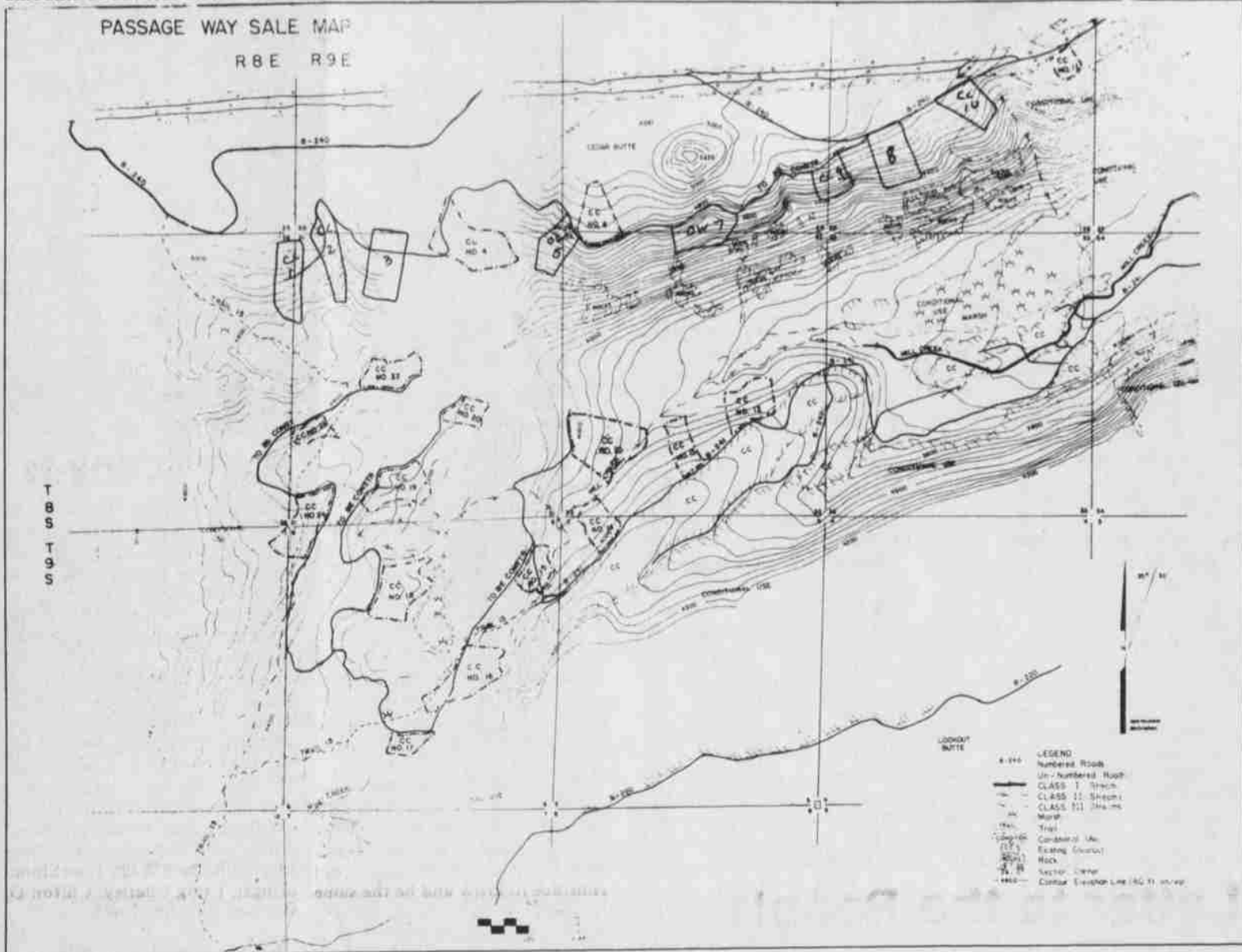
Any entry into the area will require stringent protective measures including, say resource managers, very high quality roads and drainage systems, grass seeding, road closures, strict adherence to the Streamside Management Plan along with 100 foot, no entry buffer strips around springs and drainage areas. "The only way resources are going to say yes," emphasizes Sehgal, "is if we specify all the mitigation measures on the contract."

Logging can be done in Passage Way, according to Oregon State University watershed specialist Dr. Hank Frolich, but precautions are necessary. Hired as an outside hydrology expert, Frolich will be submitting a written report to the Timber Committee before any decisions on the sale are made. Letters of concern have also been submitted by

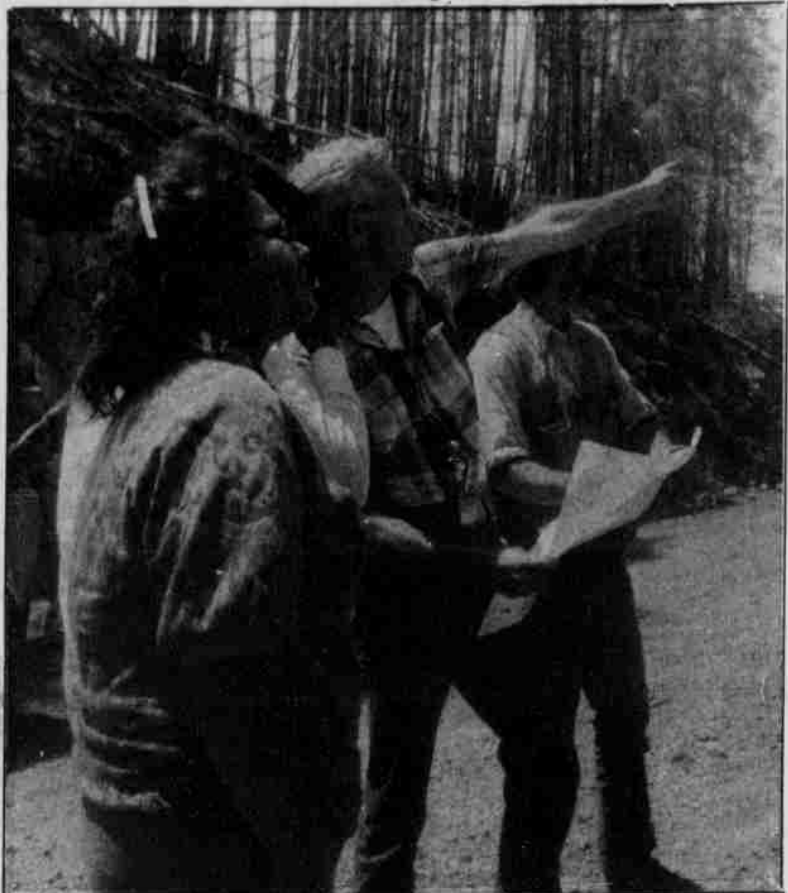
Culture and Heritage, Land Use and Fish and Wildlife committees. All of this will be taken into consideration before a decision is made by the Committee says Timber Committee chairman Ellison David. That decision is set for July 27.

Forester Bill Appgar aptly stated the position of the Tribes as landowner, "The tribes must be the ones to have final say on whether this unit 'goes' or doesn't and if it does, under what conditions."

Tribal Council in its final decision to log or not to log the Passage Way area must weigh economics against resources, or be able to combine the two compatibly. "Our business is logging" versus "I want my children to see this" encompass two prevailing attitudes expressed by tribal members that must be considered. The decision made is a long-lasting one.



Passage Way timber sale is located in the Camp Creek area. Areas to be logged are indicated.



Bureau of Indian Affairs forestry engineer Dale Sarkkinen points to the 3400 acres of forest included in the Passage Way during one of the several tours offered to community members.

Girdling/burning used to increase huckleberries

Two different methods are currently being employed to increase huckleberry production in the Mt. Wilson area on the Warm Springs Reservation.

The tree on five acres of forest land in the McQuinn Strip area are being girdled. This, according to forestry technician, Mike Cunningham involves removing the bark from the tree which will kill them. The trees will remain standing, providing shade but will not compete with huckleberries for water. The huckleberries should come back within three years, says Cunningham.

Three different areas will be

included in this project, each with different tree spacing to determine which is more advantageous to huckleberry production.

The burning of huckleberry fields in two to five acre plots on the east side of Mt. Wilson will also increase berry production. Scheduled for fall the burning will kill surrounding trees, leaving them standing for site protection and will remove slash from the ground.

This method has been used by Indians in the past, says Cunningham. The Culture and Heritage Committee and community members have requested this done. New

growth will be stimulated resulting in increased berry yields in six to 12 years.

Eventually other experiments aimed at increasing huckleberry production will occur. Three clear

cuts in the Badger Creek drainage have been set aside for this purpose. Logging methods will be employed which will project the berries.

PGE schedules tour of project

Portland General Electric company Round Butte employees and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife volunteers will be conducting tours of the Round Butte dam powerhouse and hatchery on Thursday and Friday evening, July 23-24, from 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, July 25, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Round Butte Observatory

will be open during the tour hours for anyone wishing to picnic as part of the project open house.

The P.G.E. hydroelectric project is located on the Deschutes River ten miles west of Madras. Turn west off of the old Culver highway and follow Belmont Lane out to the P.G.E. office.

Potter's Pond rehabilitation project proposed

Creating a healthy stream environment is the goal of a proposed stream rehabilitation project at Potter's Pond on Mill Creek. Plans for the project, aimed at stabilizing the stream where a log storage pond once existed, will be submitted to Tribal Council by the Warm Springs Natural Resources department July 16.

Currently, says Warm Springs fisheries biologist Mark Fritsch, a minimal number of fish are found in Mill Creek. With improvements, according to his report, "a conservative increase of approximately 1,016 spring chinook smolts and 538 summer steelhead smolts per year could be expected. . . . At current survival and harvest levels, this would result in an adult return to the Sherars Falls of 25 spring chinook and 22 summer steelhead annually."

Passage problems for anadromous fish became difficult when in the 1940's a dam was built to create a log storage pond. In December of 1980 the dam broke during excessive flood conditions and scoured the stream channel. Some minor efforts have since been made to stabilize the banks by planting and gabion placement. The fisheries resources has been somewhat improved by screening the Mill creek lateral canal and by the removal of the Strawberry falls barrier in 1984.

Unstable banks lacking riparian vegetations has caused degraded water quality. Livestock grazing has, also, reduced plant material from the stream's edge which is necessary for bank stability and fish cover.

Mill Creek is the largest tributary to the Warm Springs River, producing 30 percent of its flow, says Warm Springs watermaster Deepak Sehgal. The water level

gets low in the late summer but since implementation of the Streamside Management Plan in 1982 enough water to accommodate migrating anadromous fish is maintained in the stream.

Plans for the rehabilitation project call for narrowing the channel and providing vegetation to shade the area. Approximately 700 boulders will be placed in the 1/2 mile project area.

The first phase, explains Warm Springs fisheries technician Louie Pitt, includes boulder placement followed by fencing and the construction of livestock watering holes. Maintenance and monitoring encompassed in the third phase of the project.

Hopefully, says Fritsch, the project will begin at the end of July when no fish are migrating. Spring chinook begin passage through that

area in August and September and steelhead migrated three months ago so "this time frame gives us a window where we can work."

Success of the rehabilitation project is best told by the resource itself, says Pitt, "The fish tell us if it's a success." The standard of consciousness on the reservation has increased, he adds. Now we think, "Maybe we owe the stream something."

Tree spiking investigated

Police investigated a tree spiking incident in the Miller Flat area which caused damage to a chainsaw blade.

Ten-penny size nails were driven into five trees where work began on June 16 in a logging unit being worked by J.R. Smith Logging. The nails were driven into the tree trunk on the lead side at an angle where a faller's saw blade would enter, according to Warm Springs investigator Oliver Kirk.

A man with a black dog was seen

early that morning near the area but identification could not be made.

The perpetrator of the action, says Kirk, seemed to have had knowledge of logging methods as indicated by placement of the nails in each tree and the particular trees selected for sabotage.

Similar tactics have been used by environmentalists to prevent logging in old growth areas. This, however, is not an area of environmental concern, says Kirk.

No further incidents of spiking trees has been reported.

Basin planning begins

In the past salmon and steelhead research and management has been conducted by numerous federal and state agencies, Indian tribes, utilities and others. Each of these entities, in some cases, had its own interest and management objectives and due to the complexity of salmon and steelhead management that existed on the Columbia River Basin it was apparent that a cooperative system plan for their management be developed.

Currently this system plan is being developed by the fisheries and wildlife agencies and tribes in consultation with the Northwest Power Planning Council, hydro power project operators and regulators, Bonneville Power Administration, federal and state water managers, and interested members

of the public. The Columbia Basin system plan will be broken down into 31 sub-basins to ease evaluation and ensure integration and consistency with the system plan. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs will participate in subbasins planning in the Hood, Deschutes and John Day rivers and the Fifteenmile Creek.

The primary goal of the system plan will be to develop a set of coordinated and preferred alternatives to rebuild salmon and steelhead runs, especially natural spawning populations. Through this effort there is a hope to double existing runs from the present 2.5 million to 5 million adult fish that annual migrate upstream through the Bonneville Dam.



Fisheries technician aid Keith Moody studies plans for proposed Mill Creek rehabilitation project. With stream improvement usable habitat for young fish and passage for adult steelhead and chinook salmon will be increased.