



# Spilyay Tymoo

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Photo by Selena Boise

## Good clean fun

Even in losing the struggle in tug of war, there was at least the consolation of a cooling dip in the mud on the Fourth of July in Warm Springs. Hundreds of families gathered from late morning to the dark of night for food, fun and fireworks. For more photos, see Page 5.

## Gorge plan for casino progresses

By Dave McMechan  
Spilyay Staff

Step by step the Warm Springs Tribal Council is piecing together a plan for expansion of the Tribes' gaming enterprise. In time, perhaps later this year, a specific proposal will be put to a referendum vote of tribal members.

Tribal members may be asked to approve development of a \$150 million casino on 47 acres of tribal trust land overlooking the Columbia River, near the town of Hood River. This venture could generate more than \$100 million in annual revenue.

Even as the plan is nearing completion, some residents of Hood River County maintain a hope that the Tribes will develop the Gorge casino on Government Rock at Cascade Locks, about 15 miles west of the town of Hood River.

For people in favor of the Cascade Locks site, and for people opposed to the Hood River site, time is an important factor: Once tribal members vote on a specific development plan, the issue is concluded. The only way to reverse a referendum would be through another referendum, an unlikely scenario, said Rudy Clements, chairman of the Tribes' gaming commission.

This week at Cascade Locks, officials of the city and the Port of Cascade Locks discussed the Gorge casino issue with tribal officials. Cascade Locks Mayor Roger Freeborn said most people in his community would welcome a tribal casino at Government Rock, a 30-acre property that the Tribes purchased last year.

Freeborn also said, though, that Cascade Locks is aware that the Tribes very likely may have no choice but to develop the Hood River site. In that case, he asked what plans the Tribes might have for Government Rock.

Tribal Councilman Raymond Tsumpti commented the Tribes might build a resort hotel on the property. Cascade Locks and tribal officials then agreed to begin working on terms of agreement regarding development of a hotel on Government Rock.

The Tribes and Cascade Locks currently have such an agreement in regard to development of a casino on Government Rock. The parties developed this earlier agreement before Gov. John Kitzhaber blocked the Government Rock casino plan.

The initial discussion regarding the hotel resort idea for Government Rock further demonstrates that the Tribes are nearing a final plan to develop a casino at the Hood River site.

"We're moving forward with the Hood River site, with all of our resources, because that is the site available to us," said Clements. Fairly soon, he said, "We have to start looking at holding a referendum of the tribal members."

Tribal officials see expansion of gaming as essential for future economic development and financial stability. This is true mainly because of a substantial decline in recent years of revenue from timber on the reservation.

The Tribes can build a casino at the Hood River site despite opposition from the Governor, while approval of the governor is needed for development of a casino at the Cascade Locks property.

Some residents of Hood River, organized as a group called No-Casino, are actively opposed to the Tribes' plan to build there. However, said Clements, the level of opposition appears to be less than that of a couple of years ago, when the Tribes first proposed Hood River as a casino development site.

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## Fourth of July fires underscore danger

### Arson may have hit 360 acres

A fire possibly caused by arson last week burned 360 acres of rangeland along Highway 3.

The blaze, the first on the reservation for the 2001 fire season, caused no property damage. An old building that used to stand on the site burned five years ago in the Simnasho fire.

Last week's fire was first reported at 12:19 a.m., Thursday, July 5. Response crews had a line around the blaze by 4 a.m. Mop-up continued through Thursday and into Friday.

The Sunnyside fire, as it was labeled, was one of 18 that crews responded to during the evening of July 4 and the early morning hours of July 5.

The Sunnyside fire was by the largest, as the next biggest one, near Quail Trail, was contained to a two-acre area.

Fireworks were the cause of all 18 blazes, with the possible exception of the Sunnyside fire, which was investigated as a deliberate arson.



Photos by Dave McMechan

Just days after knocking down dry grass and weeds (bottom photo), fire crews found themselves mopping up after a fire.



## Fire season a scorcher

The fire season this summer on the reservation could be an active one, as drought conditions have left vegetation dry and highly flammable.

"The potential is there for above-normal fire activity this season," said Gary Cook, Warm Springs Fire Management officer.

Last year saw a fairly quiet fire season, in comparison, for instance, with the season of 1999, which saw the HeHe and Rainbow Quarry fires. The HeHe blaze,

caused by an escaped control-burn, blackened more than 6,000 acres.

Also, 1996 was an especially bad fire season. In '96 the Simnasho fire - the biggest wildland blaze on the reservation since the 1930s - destroyed 10 homes, and scorched 120,000 acres.

Approximately 60 percent of all wildland fires are human caused, said Cook. Discarded cigarettes, campfires that are not wholly extinguished, children playing with matches and fireworks are some of the more common sources of ignition. Lightning strikes are a common natural

cause of wildfire.

During an average fire season, the reservation sees about 85 wildfires, burning an average of 12,000 acres, Cook said.

So far this summer, the reservation has seen about 20 blazes, most of them small. The largest, at 187 acres, burned near Kah-Nee-Ta. A 12-acre blaze also happened earlier this summer on Upper Dry Creek.

During the summer, Warm Springs Fire Management, the primary response agency for wildfires on the reservation, has a total staff of 90 people.

The agency has nine fire engines, three bulldozers and a helicopter on contract during the summer.

Warm Springs Fire and Safety, whose primary responsibility is structure fires in and near Warm Springs, provides support to Fire Management when needed in wildland fire situations.

In case of very large fires, other agencies - the BIA, Forest Service, BLM, and state agencies - provide support.