

## Mill...

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WSFPI has an agreement with the tribes providing the enterprise with first right to the timber harvested on the reservation.

Currently, tribal and WSFPI officials are reviewing this agreement and may revise the document. The original agreement was implemented in 1992, and expires at the end of this year, providing the opportunity for the WSFPI and tribal officials to re-visit provisions of the agreement.

Because WSFPI has the first right to timber harvested on the reservation, the annual allowable cut, as adopted by Tribal Council, is an important figure for the mill. The annual allowable cut is the number of board feet of timber to be harvested from reservation timberland during the year.

For the coming year, Tribal Council has set the allowable cut figure at 37.6 million board feet across the 14 forest planning units on the reservation.

For the current year the figure is 52 million board feet indicating a fairly substantial reduction from 2001 to 2002 in the allowable cut level.

Calica said that the annual cut of 37.6 million board feet represents a sustainable harvest level for the reservation timberland. The figure was developed after detailed research into the conditions of the forest, he said. (See related story on this page.)

People at the WSFPI mill were not happy upon hearing word of the 37.6 million board feet allowable cut level. John Katchia, manager of the WSFPI mill, said the figure seems quite low, considering that the reservation includes over 300,000 acres of forested land.

"We're being forced to purchase off-reservation timber," Katchia said. "To do that and make money at the same time is going to be very challenging."

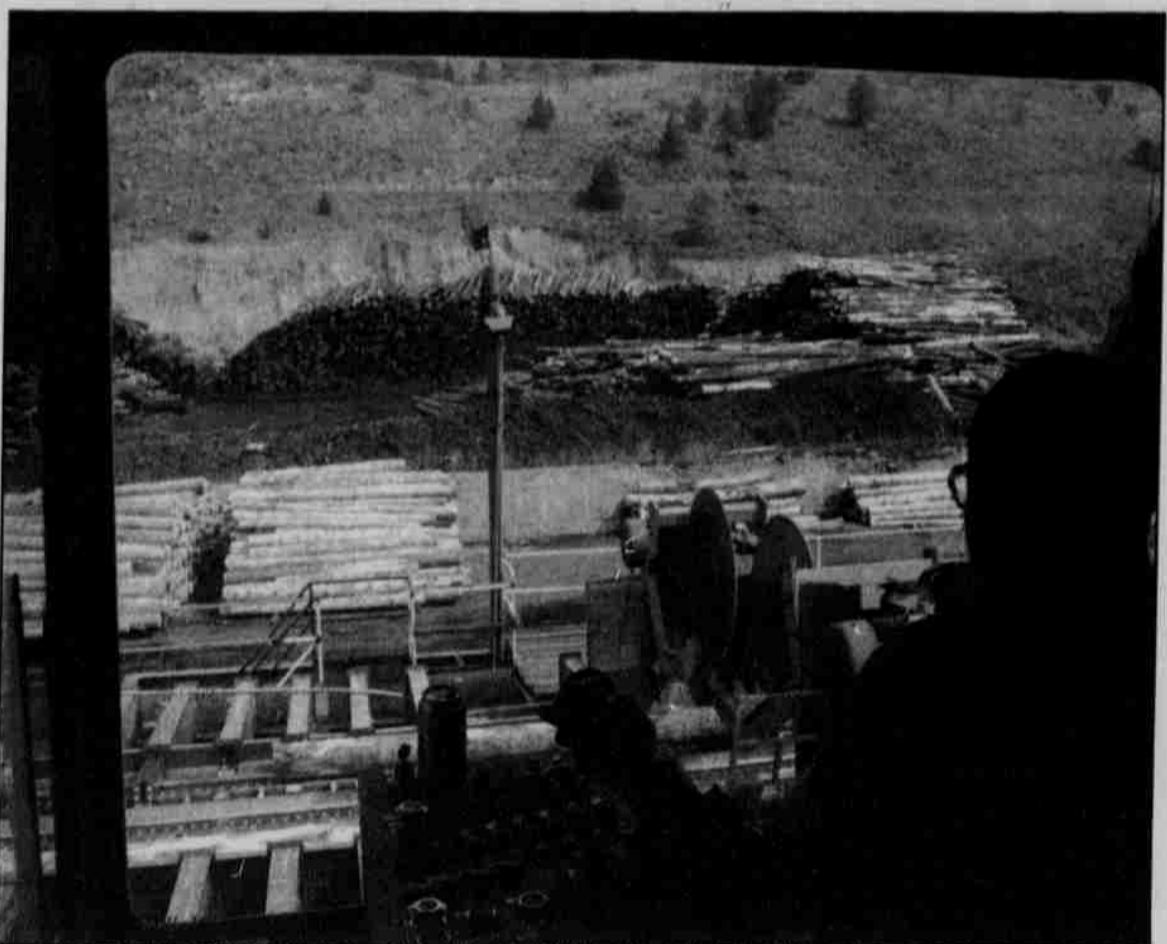
The mill now has an annual consumption rate, or log requirement rate, of 4 million board feet per year. In other words, the mill needs to process that amount of timber to operate competitively in the market.

With the allowable cut for 2002 set at 37.6 million board feet, WSFPI will have to purchase a significant number of logs — perhaps 25 percent of its total — from off the reservation.

For the current year, the allowable cut on the reservation was about in line with the mill production rate, so the mill did not rely much on off-reservation logs, said Potts.

Last year, the mill added a new saw for large logs, and efficiency in overall production greatly improved, said Potts. For these reasons, WSFPI in 2000 did purchase a higher than usual number of off-reservation logs.

However, prior to the year 2000, WSFPI purchased only minimal numbers of logs from off the reser-



The photo at top is of mill superintendent Katchia at log debarking machinery; and above, a saw operator prepares logs for further processing inside the mill.

Photos by Dave McMechan

vation; instead, the mill relied almost entirely on the allowable cut on the reservation.

### Past cut levels

The numbers regarding past cut levels tell the story of the changes in forest management on the reservation. For a number of decades prior to the 1980s, the cut level was in the range of 50 to 55 million board feet per year, said Calica.

Then in the 1980s the annual harvest levels doubled. In one year more than 130 million board feet, including salvage, were harvested from the reservation.

Concerned about over-cutting

and the unsustainability of the harvest level, the Tribal Council in the 1990s brought the allowable cut back to the range of 50 to 55 million board feet. The Council set these figures at the recommendation of foresters working for the tribes and for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

For the year 2002, the Council has set the cut level at 37.6 million board feet, showing the on-going if not increased concern for sustainability of reservation timber.

So in looking to the future WSFPI for the first time is facing the need for a prolonged reliance on off-reservation logs. This presents a serious, but by no means insurmount-

able challenge, said Potts.

Some factors are working in WSFPI's favor, including the recent closure of the Ochoco mill in Prineville. This and the closure last year of a mill in the Mt. Hood area should free up additional logs for the WSFPI mill, said Potts.

In coming years WSFPI should be able to purchase logs from the Deschutes and Mt. Hood national forests, and from the Yakama Reservation, among other sources, Potts said.

"We are confident that we will find logs on the open market off the reservation that will fulfill our needs," he said.

school.

This may not be necessary, though, because charter schools, with up to 50 percent non-certified teachers, can be less expensive to operate than regular public schools, said Gilles.

One of the main hurdles toward creation of a charter school is funding of the facilities, that is, the buildings where the classes are to be taught.

For the Confederated Tribes, this issue may be resolved in the fall of 2003, when the new Warm Springs Elementary School is scheduled to open. The new school is made possible by the adoption this year of an \$8 million design and construction plan.

The Confederated Tribes and School District 509-J are sharing the costs of this project.

When the elementary school is relocated to its new facilities, the existing buildings of the Warm Springs Elementary School will be open for a different use.

It is possible that a charter school could operate in the existing elementary school buildings, said Olney Patt.

Earlier this year, during hearings

in the community, people gave suggestions on how the existing elementary school buildings might be used after the new elementary school opens.

There were three main suggestions, said Julie Quaid, director of Warm Springs Early Childhood Education. The three suggestions, Quaid said, were a charter school, a vocational/job-skills teaching center, and a place for activities of the Boys & Girls Club.

Whatever option is chosen, the tribes will have to work in partnership with the BIA, which owns the elementary school property, said Quaid.

The BIA leased the property to the tribes until the time when a new elementary school opens, said Quaid.

She added that the BIA very likely would be willing to continue allowing the tribes to use the buildings after 2003.

Another issue, she said, is the need for renovation at the existing Warm Springs Elementary School buildings. A big issue will be funding to remodel the buildings for older students, rather than elementary school children, said Quaid.

## Tribes' forest planner explains harvest level

The annual allowable cut of timber on the reservation can be a point of controversy.

Some tribal members today feel that the cut levels of the 1980s were too high, and that the comparatively low cut level set for next year is a consequence of past years of over-cutting.

The Tribal Council last month set the 2002 allowable timber cut on the reservation at 37.6 million board feet.

The number could increase by up to 2.5 million board feet, if forest managers determine that some of the ponderosa pine management group should also be harvested. There is no scheduled harvest for this management group. Instead, some pine could possibly be harvested as salvage, or in order to improve the health of the forest.

The 37.6 million board feet to be cut next year is a fairly significant reduction from the 52 million board feet of the current year.

For perspective on the board-foot numbers: The Warm Springs Forest Products Industries mill in one year processes 48 million board feet of timber.

Allan Derickson, the tribes' forest planner, recommended to the Tribal Council the allowable cut for next year. Derickson explained that for next year, specific cutting levels are set in each of the 14 planning units of the reservation timberland.

This will be the first time that such levels have been established for the various units, which represent different watersheds on the reservation.

The reason why the 2002 allowable cut level is below that of last year in part has to do with the ponderosa pine ground on the reservation, Derickson explained.

A full explanation of the situation, he said, requires a brief overview of the history of timber harvesting on the reservation.

Back in the 1940s and '50s, which were the early years of commercial timber harvests on the reservation, the focus was on taking trees that were seen as otherwise being wasted. These often included older trees, ones that had blown down, or trees that were unhealthy from disease or fire.

Harvest levels steadily increased, and in the mid 1960s the tribes entered the lumber market, with the establishment of Warm Springs Forest Products Industries. The WSFPI mill is at the site of the old Jefferson Lumber mill.

Into the 1970s the focus of reservation forest management remained on the harvesting of older trees, and the planting of new ones that someday will be ready for harvesting.

The rate of growth in younger forests is faster than that of old growth, which creates the incentive, from the harvesting perspective, to convert the old stands of trees to new stands.

On the reservation this management approach peaked in the 1980s, when over 100 million board feet were being harvested annually.

At the end of the 1980s people

*"The Warm Springs Reservation is in a unique position geographically for managing natural resources."*

Allan Derickson  
Forest planner

were increasingly concerned that the reservation timberland was being over-cut. In response, during the first part of the 1990s, the tribes developed an Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP), which was adopted in 1992.

The IRMP was the first such plan for a reservation, and was looked on as a model for other tribes.

Essentially, the IRMP called for forest management that takes into consideration timber harvests, but also factors like water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and cultural resources.

Under the IRMP, a sustainable allowable timber cut on the reservation was determined to be about 55 million board feet per year. However, rather than drop sharply from the high cut levels of the 1980s to the new target level, the Tribal Council decided to phase in the reductions over a few years.

An issue that complicated this process involves the reservation's low-elevation ponderosa pine management group, which had been harvested to a great extent until 1992.

Initially in the early 1990s, while developing the sustainable harvest-level number, the forest managers included a harvest level for the pine. The level was about 20 percent of the total cut.

In 1992, though, an independent study indicated that the pine ground on the reservation had been over-cut.

The Tribal Council then adopted a 10-year moratorium on pine ground harvesting.

However, during the 1990s and into this year, the long-term sustainable cut figure of approximately 55 million board feet was not adjusted to reflect the pine ground moratorium.

For 2002, the adjustment is being made, which helps explain why the harvest level is dropping from 52 million board feet this year to 37.6 million board feet next year.

Derickson said that the IRMP approach to forest management has many benefits for the tribes' forestland.

"The Warm Springs Reservation is in a unique position geographically for managing natural resources," Derickson said.

The reservation, encompassing many watersheds, goes from the crest of mountains in the west down to a major river in the east. This allows the tribes to determine the quality of water in the streams and the health of the habitat for fish. Traditional food gathering areas and other cultural resources can also be protected, Derickson said.

## Traditional leave...

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Work on developing a traditional leave policy for the tribal government began last summer.

The initiative for the project came when elders at last year's Huckleberry Feast mentioned the need for such a policy to Charles Jackson, secretary-treasurer of the Confederated Tribes.

Later, Heath, working with a committee of traditional food gatherers and preparers, developed a draft for review and consideration by Tribal Council.

The new policy applies to any tribal employee, in the employment of the tribal government, who is an active practitioner of a traditional tribal religion of one of the three confederated tribes.

Such an employee can take leave from employment with full pay and benefits to participate in all traditional religious activities of the Confederated Tribes, according to the policy.

The extent of such leave, the policy states, is dependent on the specific role of the employee in an approved activity and shall include sufficient time for preparation prior to the event and rest after the event before the traditional practitioner must report back to work.

Also, the policy applies to an employee taking a Ichishkin, Kikshit or Numu language class, with a 2-hour per week limitation.

The new leave policy requires the employee taking leave to give prior notice to his or her supervisor.

## Charter school...

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Charter schools provide innovative and more flexible ways of educating students within the public school system. The Oregon Legislature adopted the charter school law in 1991.

Fifty percent of the teachers at charter schools must be certified, but another 50 percent do not need teacher certification.

The arrangement would allow a person of the local community who is expert in a certain subject to teach at the charter school, without requiring the person to become a certified teacher.

In instance, tribal members who have knowledge of traditional languages and culture, or of the tribes' government and history, could teach at the charter school.

The Tribal Council last week met with Joni Gilles, program specialist with the Oregon Department of Education. Gilles, a former principal of a charter school, said that the Warm Springs proposal fits perfectly with the spirit of the charter school

legislation.

Charter schools, she said, "are designed to provide alternatives, because children don't all learn the same way."

A charter school in Warm Springs would be unique in that no other reservation in the state has such a school, Gilles said.

A charter school is created through an agreement with the school district. Funding of the charter school comes from the state, administered through the school district.

As with regular public schools, charter schools are funded by the state on the basis of the number of enrolled students. State funding for a public charter middle school is 80 percent of the amount per student provided to the non-charter public middle school.

For a charter high school the amount is 95 percent of the amount per student provided to the non-charter public high school.

The local community can choose to make up the difference in funding by contributing to the charter