

# The Natural Resources Branch

The Natural Resources Branch employs 205 people, over half of which are tribal members. The branch is responsible for managing fish, wildlife, cultural resources, water, soil, forest and rangelands, and recreation.

The workforce is made up of 180 tribal employees (116 tribal members) and 25 BIA employees. The annual budget is just over \$6 million, with \$1.4 million being funded by the tribes, \$1.2 from federal 638 contracts, and \$3.6 from other contracts and grants.

A number of noteworthy accomplishments highlight the 2000-2001 era. The Wagner Ranch, on ceded lands located with the John Day watershed, was purchased with mitigation funds provided by the Bonneville Power Administration. The ranch includes an important reach of the river used by wild salmon for spawning purposes.

Fish returns to the Columbia and Deschutes rivers established modern

records during the 2001 season. Spring chinook fishing for traditional and recreational anglers was the best in recent memory and steelhead fishing was also extremely good.

Natural Resources played a key role in the joint application that was filed for the Confederated Tribes and PGE to operate the Pelton-Round Butte hydro-electric complex, providing greater control for the tribes over the long-term. The application was sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for their approval. The agreement between the tribes and PGE is expected to increase future revenues and help to stabilize the local economy.

Other milestones include 401 certification for water rights, establishment of a pantry to allow greater flexibility for timber harvests, outplanting of juvenile chinook salmon to produce future runs in Shitike Creek, dedication of the Eugene Greene Sr. Natural Resources Building, revision of IRMP I for the



The tribes, through the Natural Resources Branch, reintroduced bighorn sheep onto the reservation in 2001.

Forested Area, and opening of the Hood River salmon fishery.

Goals for the future include a review of corporate and other-govern-

ment land use plans, services and projects to assess, protect and enhance tribally significant natural resource and cultural values.

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The branch plans to implement plans, strategies and management standards that increase production and cultural or economic resourcefulness of natural resources-based opportunities. Another goal is to improve community knowledge and participation in natural resources management decisions. Always high on the priority list will be ongoing efforts to provide for fish and wildlife populations and habitat that will sustain current and future needs of tribal members.

Natural Resources General Manager Robert Brunoe said the biggest challenge for the immediate future will be to maintain current programs and services under present and anticipated budget restraints.

## Summary

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A cultural aspect of education gained attention throughout the state when tribal representatives successfully lobbied the Oregon Legislature to pass a bill allowing fluent speakers of traditional languages to teach in public schools. Under the new law, a traditional language speaker can obtain a special certificate to teach the language to public school students. Gladys Thompson and Madeline McInturff testified during the legislative process.

A weak timber market and declining revenue forced tribal decision-makers to make \$1.1 million in budget cuts, which included reductions in government programs and services.

Some of the cuts were painful, but they also encouraged the tribal organization to reexamine the way we do business.

Consolidation, restructuring and improved efficiency were key elements in the merger of Indian Head Casino and Kah-Nee-Ta Resort. As a result, the new Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino reported \$15 million in gross revenue during the first nine months of 2001 and reinforced beliefs that the merger was a sound idea.

A corporation was founded to invest in ventures that create jobs and generate new revenue, as part of an effort to diversify the local economy. Tribal Council provided the first in-

vestment purposes and approved the board of directors. The Economic Development Corporation will seek out new ways of utilizing tribal resources, including a capable and willing work force.

Along those same lines, the Oregon Legislature passed a tax law that encourages new business development on the reservation.

The law eliminates the possibility of double taxation on businesses and allows the tribes to provide an incentive by means of a property tax deferral.

Tribal fishermen were encouraged by the record returns of spring chinook salmon during the 2001 adult migration. As of October 1 over 2,700 wild fish had passed Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery, shattering the previous modern record of 1,867. An additional 6,745 hatchery salmon had reached the facility during the same timeframe.

The record returns of salmon were a fitting prelude to the dedication of our new Natural Resources Building, a memorial to the late Eugene "Cougar" Greene. Family, friends, colleagues and visitors gathered for the dedication ceremony, which honored Greene's long and illustrious service to the Tribal organization and to the region's natural resources.

The swearing in of a new Tribal Council was certainly a highlight of 2001.

A total of 1,034 ballots were cast, re-instating all but one council member for a new term. Ron Suppah Sr. was the only new member elected during the April 9 vote. Olney Patt Jr. was reinstated as chairman and Garland Brunoe as vice chairman.

No synopsis of 2001 would be complete without mention of the great individual achievements that took place during the year. Among the most noteworthy was the selection of Luanne Foltz as the Oregon Indian Education Association's Teacher of the Year. We also take great pride in basket-maker Pat Gold's acceptance of the Governor's Arts Award, and Bodie Shaw's receipt of the Mark O. Hatfield Congressional Fellowship.

The year 2000 offered some unique opportunities to expand social programs and build financial stability for the future.

There were challenges to face, including the layoff of local mill workers, but decision-makers maintained their vision for long-term prosperity.

Following years of hard work and negotiation, the Tribes made a final commitment to take controlling interest of the Pelton-Round Butte hydroelectric complex.

Tribal members overwhelmingly approved a referendum to acquire an increasing stake in the project. A final tally of 753 yes votes and 127 no votes provided a resounding statement in favor of efforts to gain control of the entire project.

## Adult/Community Education

This branch was created when former Chief Operations Officer Jody "Charles" Calica divided the Education Branch into two branches. Wendell Jim is the General Manager of the Adult and Community Education Branch and Julie Quaid is the Director of Essential Education.

The branch encompasses Oregon State University Extension (OSU), Central Oregon Community College (COCC), the Workforce Development Department (WFDD), Culture and Heritage Department, and the Administrative Staff. There are 31 full-time and 18 part-time employees. Twenty-four full-time employees and 11 part-time employees are tribal members. The operating budget includes \$1,348,921 tribal dollars.

General Manager Wendell Jim said downsizing has eliminated some full-time positions and caused a decline in services to clients. However, at the same time, the branch has accomplished much. Jim has worked with a number of universities and colleges to further the cause of education in Warm Springs. He represented the Confederated Tribes at the Oregon government-to-government education meetings with the Oregon Department of Education (K-12), Office of Community Colleges and workforce development, and the Oregon University Systems. He assisted in updating the American Indian/ Native Alaskan State Indian Education State Plan and testified to the Oregon Board of Education. Wendell Jim helped develop the coordination of the "Mill Transition" plan for displaced WSFPI workers. Other achievements include the 2020 Partnership with Washington State University, Pacific Northwest Indian Education Summit 2001 and Native Language and Cultures Regional Conference 2001.

Some of the other branch successes included 257 kids participating in the Oregon State University extension camping program. OSU also developed the Warm Springs Weed Management Program, created Indian stories and games "in their own voices" educational program, and completed a draft of Warm Springs Stockman's notebook.

Two hundred students participated in Central Oregon Community College's programming as they pursued their 2-year degree. Forty-four students enrolled in remedial classes

and there was a 55 percent increase in the number of participants in traditional and vocational education. COCC also enrolled 199 people in computer classes, 14 different software applications with 6 being customized. Of those participating, 84.5 percent earned certificates.

Workforce Development's Affordable Housing & Training Development Program constructed 15 homes using apprentice carpenters. Other areas of work included tree planting, tree carding, gopher trapping and commercial tree thinning. An area that will be of great value for the organization in the future is the Pre-employment adult and youth skills bank created by WFDD. The WFDD also employed 140 youth in the summer employment program.

The Culture and Heritage department made headlines statewide when the State Legislature passed SB 690 after being introduced by the department. The department also taught Indian languages to 17 classes at Warm Springs Elementary. There were 789 hours of language taught to 336 students. Culture and Heritage received \$116,000 dollars from ANA Native American Grant award. The language staff completed college level studies at the Northwest Indian Language institute and assisted in creating the Indian Language Benchmarks for the State of Oregon.

The branch has provided and implemented distance education courses; computer training; remedial classes; Adult basic education and GED classes; apprentice and internship programs; on-the-job training; academic, self sufficiency and life management training; provided Sahaptin, Wasco and Paiute language instruction, and tribal government, history and traditional education curriculum and classes; cultural enrichment camps; so that tribal member youth, adults are able to attain the skills and training to be successful individuals, employees and so that they learn to preserve, and strengthen our Indian traditions, values, improve, protect, enhance, and support our tribal sovereign rights. When asked about the biggest challenge facing the tribes in the next few years, like many other managers, Wendell Jim said it is budget reductions and the growing tribal population.

## Public Safety

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The reporting system is being expanded from the police department to other departments of the branch, he said.

For the year 2001, the Warm Springs Police Department responded to 8,813 calls for service, with 13,182 incidents being logged.

On the fire safety side, Warm Springs Fire and Safety responded to 2,110 calls during the year 2001.

This department employs 17 full-time people.

The Fire and Safety has its main station in Warm Springs, but also has a station in Simnasho, and is in the process of developing a Seekseequa station, which should be done this year.

Overall response time of Fire and Safety continues to improve. Also, the number of structure fires has been in decline, as Fire and Safety continues its fire-safety education program.

At Victims of Crime last year, 199 primary victims and 217 secondary victims were served.

## Governmental affairs

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One stillborn child; 1 miscarriage; 28 tribal member adults, 6 non-member spouses; and 1 non-member child. There were 104 people enrolled in 2000 and 176 in 2001.

In December of 2001, the Office of Trust Fund Management shut down the IIM System. The Vital Statistics System has been set up to run Per Capita Checks, but have not been doing so because of the trust responsibility of the BIA. Since the IIM system was shut down for 60 to 90 days, Vital Statistics had to be prepared to run the Per Capita for 3 or 4 months, or until the IIM system is on line again.

One of the most time consuming responsibilities for the department is preparation for a Tribal Referendum. The Tribal Council calls elections by resolution. When the Vital Statistics department receives the resolution, a ballot is prepared using the language of the resolution, asking the question "Shall Resolution \_\_\_ be approved?" A cover letter is prepared for the Absentee voters. (There are now 601 absentee voters) The Ballot and cover letter are sent to printing. The Election/Counting Board is appointed by Tribal resolution, by the Tribal Council. Once an election is called, the Board is notified of the place and time

to report for the voting and counting. Envelopes are ordered to mail absentee voters their packets. They are stamped with the absentee voter stamp and the return address stamp. Labels are placed on each envelope so that they can check the voters name off the list when it is returned. Postage can range from 43 cents to 60 cents per envelope depending on the size of the ballot. Envelopes are stamped with the Absentee Ballot stamp and they include a plain white envelope that the ballot will be sealed inside when it is returned.

The ballots are stamped with an "Official Ballot" stamp. Packets are prepared for each absentee voter, which includes the cover letter, the ballot and information regarding the ballot question, the plain white envelope and the stamped return envelope. The postage is always first class, and the postage can range from about 40 cents to \$1.10.

The preceding is just a small part of the process that the Vital Statistics department goes through for each election. There are 13 steps in all that must be completed before the election can be held. The referendum process is a very arduous process for the ladies at the Vital Statistics department, and yet they always greet the public with a smile.

## Comp and benefits continued...

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voluntary retirement plan for the tribal organization. Managed Care will strive to provide quality service, while operating in a fiscally responsible manner and extending limited funding so all priority health care services are provided to eligible community members. Staff will research the feasibility of paying Part B Medicare premiums for program eligible tribal members and develop a plan on how best to utilize the unspent dollars that have accumulated in the Managed Care budget through sound fiscal management. There is some uncertainty awaiting Comp and Benefits and Managed Care. Health care costs continue to escalate due to medical and technological advancements. The rising costs are pitted against tribal budget cuts and wage freezes, making it ever more difficult to provide quality benefits at affordable prices.