

Spilyay Tymoc

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Past year saw many big news stories

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoc

Some years it's hard to come up with the top five local news stories, but in 2004 there was no shortage of items to choose from.

Here are some statements by people around Warm Springs, when they were asked to name the top story of 2004:

"In my opinion, it was the skate park for the kids," said Fritz Miller, records specialist at Tribal Council. "It has been a need for a lot of kids in the community. They've had to travel to other parks around the state. Now, this gives them a central place they can feel is their own, where they can spend time doing something positive."

Urbana Ross, tribal member recruitment and development manager at Kah-Nee-Ta, said the construction of the new gymnasium at the elementary school was the important event. For a while it seemed like nothing was going to happen, she said, but now the new building is nearly done.

Charlotte Herkshan of Community Counseling said the McQuinn-HeHe settlement was the important event of the year for the tribes. The money, she said, won't replace what was there - the natural resources - but the \$16.4 million settlement is justified.

Paul Young, BIA superintendent of the Warm Springs Agency, said the formal agreement signed in 2004 regarding future operation of the Pelton-Round Butte hydroelectric facilities was the big event.

Clearly, there was a lot of news in 2004. Which makes the task of choosing the top five stories somewhat easier this year. So, in keeping with the annual tradition, the following is the top five news list in order of importance, in my opinion:

The number one story is the McQuinn-HeHe settlement. There are two reasons for this. One, the dispute lasted over a decade, so its resolution was especially welcome. And two, the amount of money involved is large.

The lawsuit over the McQuinn-blowdown timber sale began in 1996, a few years after the BIA sale of timber from the McQuinn strip. Years later, after many legal motions and arguments, the tribes were finally awarded close to \$14 million to compensate for the mishandling of the sale.

The HeHe suit, also against the federal government, was for the loss of timber due to a wildfire that originated from a BIA controlled burn. In 2004 the tribes settled both the McQuinn and HeHe cases for a total of \$16.4 million.

Hydro agreement

The tribes and other governments in 2004 signed an agreement for the long-term management of the Pelton-Round Butte hydroelectric facilities. The agreement was a final major step toward the granting of the new 50-year license for operation of the dams, co-owned by the tribes and Portland General Electric.

In attendance at the July 2004 signing ceremony, conducted on the grounds of the Museum at Warm Springs, were the Tribal Council, fish and wildlife advocates, along with representatives of many state and federal agencies, including Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. In the five or so years leading up to the agreement, the tribes and PGE worked with government agencies and other interested parties toward renewal of the operating license.

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Youth gathering focuses on traditional solutions

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoc

Archie Neskahi said that true warriors spend only a little time fighting an enemy. "A warrior is someone who takes care of his people," he said.

In doing so, the warrior protects his land and his people to the death, if necessary. And inside each one is a spot where anger can live but must be replaced by love.

Neskahi, a Navajo lecturer and singer based in Seattle, spoke at the Winter Workshop for Youth at the Agency Longhouse Dec. 29-30.

Neskahi spoke to just over 30

tribal members, including children and adults, in four sessions during the Thursday-Friday workshop.

He recalled a conversation with a woman he met while he was working at Chemawa School in Salem. The woman became serious when she started talking about an ancient spirit that would come upon the students at the school.

"She said that when the spirit comes upon them, two things are going to happen," he said.

He said the youth would start looking around, and that they would cause destruction. "She said, 'We used to know what this spirit was. We used to

understand it. We used to know how sacred it was,'" he said. "She said don't fight against it; respect it."

She said it was "the warrior spirit," and that the spirit looks for what hurts the Native people, and then it strives to wage war against those hurts.

"All over our Indian land, we're starting to see more violence and starting to see more destruction," he said. "The sad part about it, and the most dangerous part about it, is we're doing it to each other."

He said that never in the history of our people have we done violence to our own people. "So something has been turned around, and this is what

she was trying to explain."

Neskahi said the purpose of his part of the workshop was to get people to not treat their anger as a problem but understand where it comes from.

Understanding the root of the anger, he said, will help Natives avoid destroying themselves, through such things as substance abuse or addiction, and to each other in the form of violence.

When asked to consider some of the things that have made them angry, both past and present, the assembled group also thought up things that discourage them about the future.

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Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Sean Sohapp maneuvers down one of the ramps at the Elmer Quinn Skate Park, which was dedicated last week. Open just two weeks, the park already has become a popular place for young people. During the opening dedication ceremony, Jim Quaid, Social Services manager, announced that a BMX track for bicycles would be the next project, in conjunction with the skate park. Bikes are not allowed on the skate park area, as they can damage the surface of the ramps. Skaters are advised to wear helmets and pads.

Treaty of 1855

Activities planned to mark 150th anniversary

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoc

One hundred and fifty years ago this June, members of the Wasco and Warm Springs tribes gathered at a place now called the Treaty Oak site. By the Treaty Oak, in the area of The Dalles, 152 tribal members accepted the terms of a document known as the Treaty of the Middle Oregon Tribes, or the Treaty of 1855.

The treaty created the reservation of the Confederated Tribes, while relinquishing 10 million acres of land, the Ceded Lands. While relinquishing these lands, the tribes kept their hunting, fishing and gathering rights at the usual and accustomed places throughout the vast Ceded Lands area.

The tribal rights within the Ceded Lands, which include some of the fastest growing areas in the Northwest, are a central part of the Treaty

of 1855. The 150th anniversary of the signing of the treaty is a good time to examine and reflect on the state of the treaty rights, said Louie Pitt, director of tribal Government Affairs. "That is a serious question that we're hoping to push in 2005," said Pitt.

Pitt is a member of the Middle Oregon Treaty of 1855 Celebration Committee. The group has been considering ways to mark the anniversary of the signing of the treaty, and is planning soon to bring a plan before Tribal Council. Education will be a focus of the anniversary activities, said committee member Evaline Patt, who works as the special projects coordinator at the Museum at Warm Springs. An idea is for the tribes to give presentations in towns within the Ceded Lands.

Presentations would be on the main aspects of the treaty, in particular the aspect regarding tribal rights to the usual and accustomed hunting, fishing and gathering areas. "It's something that today we need to point out," said Pitt.

"It's getting harder and harder for people, because the land is becoming more and more private."

By coincidence, the 150th anniversary of the treaty - its sesquicentennial - is in the same year as the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as it passed down the Columbia River through Wasco and Warm Springs territories.

The arrival of Lewis and Clark is not something that the tribes celebrate, said Louie Pitt, so the tribes' emphasis, instead, is on the treaty.

Some ideas the anniversary committee has discussed include placement of a marker at the site of the Treaty Oak, which is on private land at Mill Creek near The Dalles. The museum will have limited edition Pendleton blankets commemorating the anniversary of the treaty. The blanket design is by artist Lillian Pitt. There will be 125 of the blankets on sale at the museum gift shop.

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Plan allows hunting of cougar

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoc

No one has to tell Jason Smith cougars are at large on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation.

He's been close enough to shoot them, and he's seen what they can do.

Smith, protecting his herd of horses, shot one last October, about two weeks before a 120-pound male cougar was hit by a vehicle on U.S. 26 near Warm Springs Forest Products Industries Nov. 3.

Under a new management plan approved by Tribal Council, tribal members with approved tags can hunt for cougars during a 10-month season from August through May, and can legally shoot them if they pose a danger to human life or to livestock.

Cougar tags are currently available at the Warm Springs Natural Resources complex. The tags are free to tribal members and only available to tribal members.

Smith, Range and Agriculture manager for the Confederated Tribes who also raises horses and cattle on reservation land, said he thinks the new provisions for hunting cougars "definitely necessary."

"They haven't had a predator (hunting) them," he said. "Normally, every animal has a predator, but there's nothing hunting them."

"My theory is the reason they're really concentrating on livestock is that the deer population is so down."

Under Resolution No. 10,454, approved Nov. 29, tribal members can take one cougar, male or female, between August 1 and May 31 of the following year.

The hunt does not include spotted kittens, or females with spotted kittens.

Hunters, though, can also take a cougar during the closed period during June and July if it is a threat to human life or livestock.

In either case, any tribal member taking a cougar must notify the Warm Springs Natural Resources Department and provide the carcass within 48 hours of the kill. This is required so that Warm Springs Fish and Wildlife biologists can inspect the animal to determine its age and any diseases or parasites it might have had.

"We've required that they take the cougar to Natural Resources within 48 hours so we can look at the physical condition of the animal, take a stomach sample for parasites," Terry Luther, Warm Springs Tribal Fish and Wildlife manager, said.

The resolution was passed based on facts that the cougar population has increased since they became off-limits to hunters in 1986 and have become increased threats to tribal members and livestock on the reservation.

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