

Air quality important health issue

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoo

Located 15 miles from the next town and more than 50 miles from the nearest real urban center, the Warm Springs reservation has relatively clean air. But there are factors that can threaten the area's pristine air quality that may affect peoples' respiratory health.

Gerry Shipp, an air quality specialist, is aware of that, and is working to keep Warm Springs residents informed of what their air is like.

"I think many people take the air for granted. It's just there. It's invisible," Shipp said.

With the use of an air quality monitor located near the Warm Springs Fire Management office at the Natural Resources complex, and with a portable monitor, Shipp measures the amount of toxins in the air, measured in particulates.

The particulates measured in a cubic meter of air make up a scale, from which air quality specialists determine levels of risk to the air quality.

Shipp has been posting his results in 12 different places around the Warm Springs community on a daily basis. The informational bulletins include the air quality index for Warm Springs and the high and low ratings from Oregon and around the western U.S.

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Gorge town honors Clements

By Raelynn Ricarte

CASCADE LOCKS — The late Warren Rudy Clements was remembered in Cascade Locks recently as a "human being" in the truest sense of the word. Former Cascade Locks mayor Rogers Wheatley said Clements had once portrayed a human being as someone who was honest and unselfish.

He said the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs government leader had earned that title by always putting the welfare of his people above his own interests.

"The world was a better place because he was here," said Wheatley, one of 60 people attending the mid-day memorial service.

The Cascade Locks City Council and numerous other Hood River County dignitaries joined tribal representatives in the Pavilion at Port Marine Park. The blustery weather outside seemed to fit the somber occasion where speakers struggled, sometimes unsuccessfully, to keep their tears at bay.

In honor of the occasion, the city had flown the United States flag at half-mast to denote mourning. Just below the national standard, the Warm Springs flag had been raised to show respect for Clements.

On Dec. 28, Clements died at the age of 69 in Bend from complications related to diabetes.

At the Jan. 7 ceremony arranged by Cascade Locks port and city officials, Clements was praised for uniting the two communities.

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Nicola Stwyer

New Miss Warm Springs

In the past, three of Nicola Stwyer's relatives have achieved the title of Miss Warm Springs. So it was only natural that Stwyer should vie for the honor of representing the Confederated Tribes.

Last week at the Miss Warm Springs Pageant, Stwyer was chosen to succeed Christina Johnson as Miss Warm Springs.

Stwyer, 19, was one of three candidates this year, along with Amelia Spino, 21, and Courtney Buck, 19.

"Last night went by fast, the whole pageant went by fast," Stwyer said.

The competition included the introduction of the contestants, and then presentation of a set of five questions to each contestant. The questions were about the reservation and the Confederated Tribes.

Each contestant also presented her talent, and a traditional dance. Stwyer's talent was the restoration of a dress. She told of the history of the dress and how she restored it, and she wore the dress for the pageant.

"My beadwork was actually my aunt Pearl Stwyer's," she explained. "My aunt had a whole outfit. Then she went to school over on the East Coast, and when she got back there were only leggings and a belt," she said.

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Water standard reflects higher fish consumption

Tribal population consumes 8 to 9 times more fish

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoo

For a people who depend on fish as a major part of their diet, the quality of the water those fish swim in, and are caught from is important.

Water quality specialists from the Warm Springs Environmental Office, members of the Tribal Water Board and representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took a step toward finishing the tribal Natural Resources Branch triennial review of water quality on the reservation. The step toward completion of the review was a public hearing at the Warm Springs Community Center Jan. 10.

The Tribal Water Control Board and the Tribal Environmental Office have proposed a revision to Ordinance 80, which provides definitions for low flow periods and changes the allowable levels of certain toxins for the protection of human health.

The toxins manifest themselves not only in the water people drink, but through the fish they eat. And Native Americans eat more fish than the general population, Rawlin Richardson from the Environmental Office said.

"In 1994, the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission concluded that tribal populations eat eight to nine times more fish than the general population," he said.

During the water quality review process, Richardson said, "I think our main issue was the fish consumption rate for the toxics section of our standards. We wanted to look at consumption rate as it represents the tribal population, rather than EPA's old standard of 6 1/2 grams-per-day consumption rate."

He said, "We decided on 175 grams a day, which would protect 99-plus percent of the children and 95 percent of the general population.

We got a nice table from the EPA and calculated all the values for all the toxics in the tables. That was the biggest issue."

Deepak Sehgal, manager of the tribal Environmental Office, said his office and the Water Control Board conduct periodic studies to review the standards under Ordinance 80, and determine whether any changes are necessary.

Tribal Ordinance 80, of Warm Springs Tribal Code Chapter 432, addresses water quality standards, beneficial uses and treatment criteria in following the tribes' water code, adopted in 1968.

The group worked for a year and a half on the revision to Ordinance 80. During that time, "We had fairly intensive discussions with the EPA over this fish consumption issue," said Sehgal.

"From all of that, it seems like we don't need to change a whole lot of the existing standards, other than the fish consumption number, which then changes our toxics levels."

Becky Lindgren from the EPA regional office in Seattle, said Warm Springs is the first tribe to adopt a fish consumption rate based on local data.

Lindgren said that her agency would prefer and encourage other Indian tribes to gather such data on their own.

The public hearing on the revision lasted just under a half-hour, and the floor was open for comment for about an hour afterward. With no one offering public comment, the hearing closed.

"This will be our first effort of a triennial review, and hopefully we'll get it completed in the next couple of weeks and submit it to Tribal Council for their review and approval," Sehgal said.

Casino project remains on track

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

The late Warren R. "Rudy" Clements was the chairman of the tribal gaming enterprise. His passing on Dec. 28 was a loss to the enterprise and to the tribes as a whole.

"As a leader, he was well-known in the region, and even across the nation, to some extent, for his cultural and spiritual leadership," said Margie Tuckta, Gorge casino special projects director.

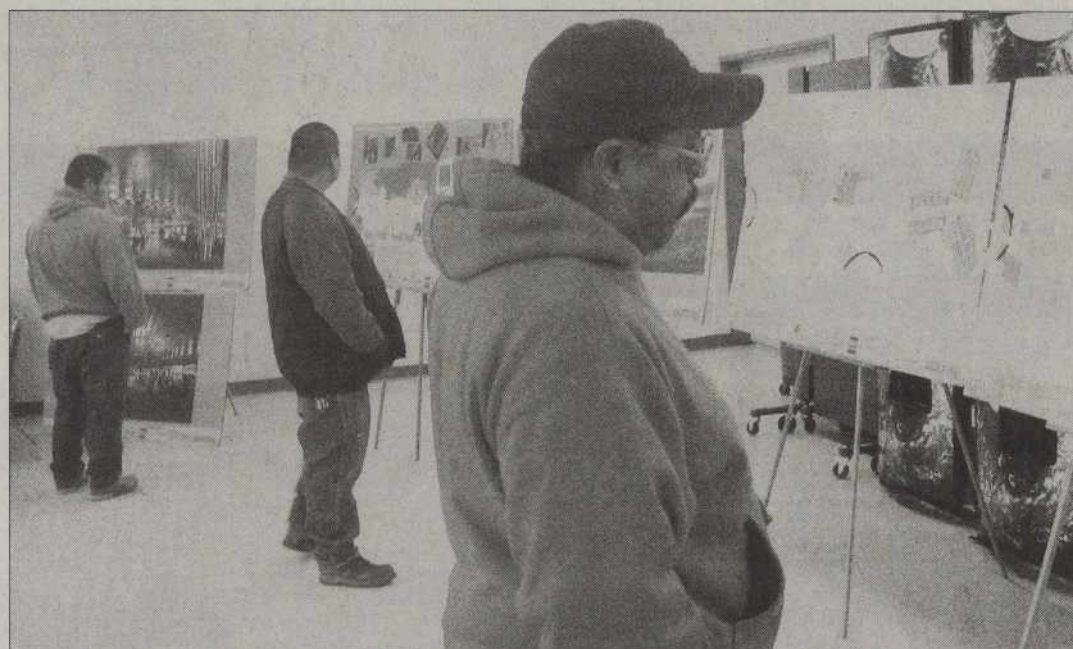
Clements was one of the people who could walk in two worlds — the traditional cultural world, and the business world, said Tuckta.

Ed Manion was vice-chairman of the gaming enterprise before Clements passed away. Manion is now serving as the acting chairman.

"We lost a real supporter and tribal leader," Manion said of Clements. "He worked well with people, and was able to keep them aware of what is going on with the casino."

Clements had a significant place in the gaming enterprise, but the project will continue to move forward despite the loss, said Tuckta and Manion.

"We have good people in place," said Manion. "And Rudy let us know



Roy Spino was among the people who attended the casino information gathering last week at the Agency Longhouse.

what his feelings were as to the important pieces of the casino, and we will keep that in mind as we move forward."

"He set direction for us," said Tuckta. "He was there for the negotiations with the state and the Port of Cascade Locks."

Fee to trust

The Gorge casino project is about in the middle of the environmental impact statement (EIS) process.

The process is a necessary step toward bringing the Cascade Locks industrial park casino property into trust. Once this is accomplished, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton will

consider approving the gaming compact that was agreed upon by the Confederated Tribes and the state of Oregon.

An initial step in the EIS process was collecting public comment on the impact that the casino project would have at Cascade Locks last year. The federal government has also indicated that the EIS should look at the potential impact of a casino at the trust property that the tribes have near the town of Hood River.

Manion said the gaming board is hoping to have a draft EIS completed in the summer and then a final EIS done by next winter. The final EIS will then go to the Secretary of the Inte-

rior.

Other gaming issues

Information on the casino was presented last week at the Agency Longhouse. The information included the architectural drawings of the casino. Many people visited the longhouse throughout the day, and received sweaters and jackets donated to the tribes by Mount Hood Meadows Ski Area and Resort.

Besides planning for a new casino, the tribes' gaming commission is also working on important issues related to Kah-Nee-Ta.

For instance, the resort and the casino have been combined into a single organization, but a clear direction, in terms of staffing from top to bottom, is needed, said Manion.

The gaming commission this week was working on this project, he said.

There is one vacancy on the gaming commission, which the Tribal Council will fill.

The current members are Manion, tribal records manager Lynn Davis, tribal probate administrator Richard Tohet, Portland attorney Celeste Whitewolf, former governor Victor Atiyeh, consultant and former secretary-treasurer Ken Smith, and CPA Dick Donaca of Bend.