

Spilyay Tymo

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Adoption election planned for fall

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymo

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs may conduct an adoption election this fall.

Tribal Council has not yet adopted a resolution setting a date, but the issue is on the Council agenda. The adoption election may be in October or November.

The Confederated Tribes have conducted two adoption elections in recent years, though neither election was successful due to low voter turnout. The elections were held in the fall of 2001 and then in early 2002. The last successful adoption election was conducted in October 1996.

To qualify for inclusion on the ballot, a person must be at least 1/8 Indian, and a descendant of a Confederated Tribes member or former member. Local residency is also a requirement.

According to the residency requirement, the candidate must have lived on the reservation for three years in order to qualify for the ballot.

The 1996 adoption election did not include the reservation residency requirement, and 168 people qualified for the ballot, of which 135 were adopted.

For the 2001 and 2002 elections, there were 75 adoption candidates on the ballot.

The lower number, in comparison to the 1996 vote, was due mainly to the residency requirement, said Madeline Queahpama-Spino, director of tribal Vital Statistics.

If a person meets the requirements of adoption, the person can stop by Vital Statistics in the administration building and pick up an application for inclusion on the ballot.

People who were on the 2001-2002 ballots should stop by Vital Statistics and update their application information.

The Spilyay Tymo will publish a special adoption section before the election. Each candidate can submit a photo for publication, or the picture can be taken at the Spilyay.

Each candidate can submit a statement of no more than 300 words for publication along with the picture. Call if you have any questions, 553-3274.

Fee to trust for casino is a lengthy process

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymo

Back in 2002 tribal members approved a referendum to build a casino at the Columbia River gorge. Since that time, Tribal Council and the gaming committee have done much work, and made significant progress toward fulfilling the referendum.

The tribes, for instance, won the governor's approval to build the casino at Cascade Locks. Also, the

tribes worked with federal legislators to ensure that any new Indian gaming law would not unfairly block the Cascade Locks proposal.

And the tribes are part way through the necessary environmental impact study of the development proposal. Clearly, the list of accomplishments is long.

Still, there is a feeling among some members that the project is taking a long time.

"We hear that sometimes at our community meetings and family meetings,"

said Margie Tuckta, special projects director for the gorge casino.

"But for the most part," she added, "The people do understand that this is going to take time, that we're just following the process and continuing to move forward."

One reason why the gorge casino is taking awhile is the federal process of bringing the off-reservation site into trust ownership. "It is an onerous and cumbersome process," said Louie Pitt, director of tribal government affairs. "So we've called in the experts to ex-

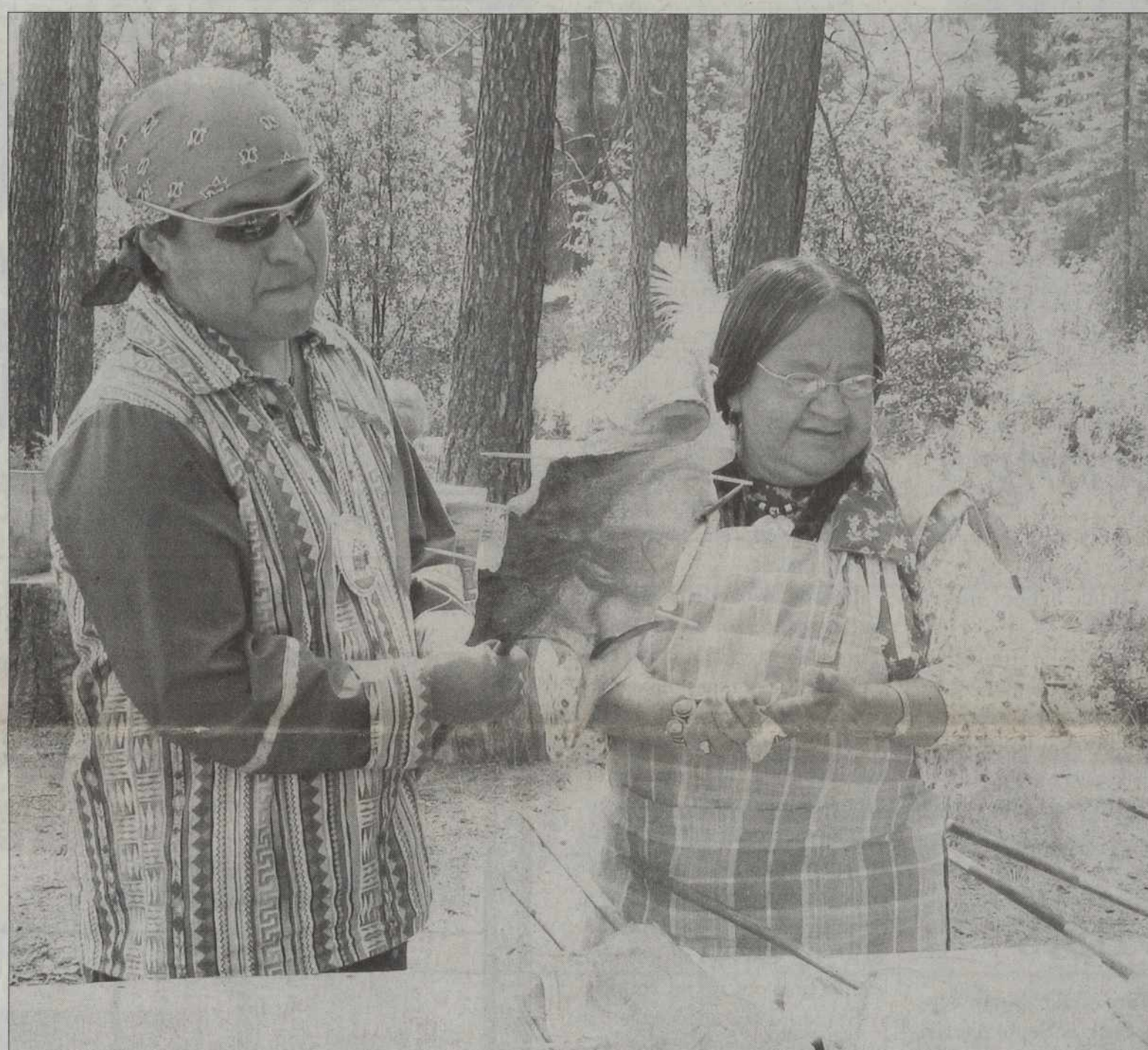
plain it to us."

At the request of Tribal Council, representatives of the Bureau of Indian Affairs were planning to meet this week with the membership to discuss the fee-to-trust process.

The meeting was set for Tuesday evening (past the deadline for this paper) at the Agency Longhouse.

"Council wanted to inform the tribal public about why this is taking so long," said Gerald Hendrickson, regional water rights specialist with the BIA.

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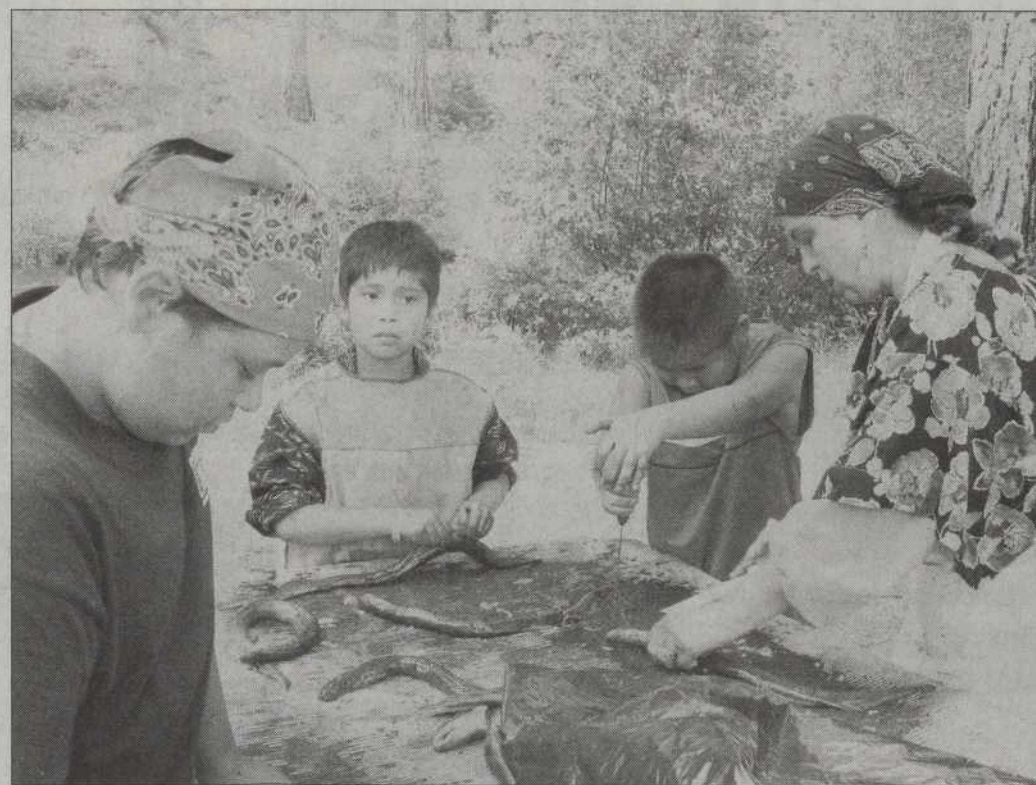


Leslie Mitts/Spilyay

This year's Huckleberry Feast at HeHe on August 6 paired traditions and culture to create a memorable occasion. Kate Jackson organized the event. Another feast was held at the Agency Longhouse in July.

Suzie Slockish and Anthony Culps Sr. (above) ready salmon for baking. Colby Hall, Eli Culps and Junior Culps (photo at right) lend their helping hands with preparing the eels.

For more photos of the Huckleberry Feast, see page 14.



Difficult task preserving the tribal languages

By Leslie Mitts
Spilyay Tymo

Val Switzler heard "happy birthday" sung to her four times, and each time it was sung in a different language.

That's not uncommon with the tribes' language program, where Switzler and many other employees are working to revive languages that are slipping away from tribes—some more quickly than others.

With the death of Madeline McInturff, at age 91, only two fluent speakers of Kiksht (the Wasco language) remain: Gladys Thompson, of Warm Springs, and a man on the Yakama reservation.

In comparison, there are 25 fluent speakers of Ichishkin, or Sahaptin (the

Warm Springs language).

Numu, the language spoken by the Paiute tribe, is only spoken by five fluent speakers remaining in Warm Springs, but there are other speakers in different parts of the country.

Switzler, as program manager for the language program, is one of several people working to educate young people about the languages before it is too late.

Dallas Winishut is an instructor who has been teaching Ichishkin since June of 1995, though he admits he isn't fluent.

"I don't have that fluency, but I'm working on it," he said.

Another aspect of the languages that Winishut strives to conquer is writing

the language—something he said he struggles with.

According to Winishut, he wants to be as fluent as those in charge of teaching the languages, but it's difficult without being exposed to the language all the time.

For instance, he said, he teaches classes for children ages three through five years old, and believes that "If it were more of an immersion their fluency would be better."

All of the classes for children are taught through Early Childhood Education, but Winishut said there have been community classes in the past, but with far fewer students.

Susie Slockish, for example, has been teaching community classes in

Simnasho. Winishut said there have been adult classes with as little as three or four students.

According to Winishut, it doesn't matter the age of the student as long as they want to learn. "I like working with anybody, whether they're children, teenagers, adults," he said.

Last year the program began teaching classes in the high school, and Winishut said he believes that will continue this year.

As part of a Native American history class, teachers were able to teach languages every Friday for an hour. Teachers of each of the three languages rotated, ensuring that students were exposed to as much of the languages as possible.

As for the question of languages eventually dying off, Winishut said, "That's a hard question to answer."

He, along with many others, would like to see an increase in the number of speakers.

In Winishut's opinion, "I'd like to see more of the speakers that are out there in the community. I'd like to see them gather sometime and just speak the language."

"I still crave to be a fluent speaker," he said.

There's one thing that no one disagrees on: the importance of bringing back the languages of the past.

"That's who we are," Winishut said.