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Fire season takes off on reservation

Fire crews worked to contain a fire that began on the Warm Springs reservation on July 10. Named the Mill Fire, the blaze burned over 3,000 acres and destroyed one tribal guest home and an outbuilding.

The fire also closed Highway 26 for several hours, and spread across tribal land to federal and private lands nearby.

Additionally, private farm crops were also threatened near Rattlesnake Canyon, between Warm Springs and Madras.

During the fire, several structures were threatened at the Warm Springs mill, and several homes were also threatened.

The fire started near the Warm Spring Forest Products Industry lumber mill on the reservation. It then moved quickly north, away from the mill, east toward the Deschutes River and west towards tribal Highway 3 near Warm Springs.



Fire crews gather at the Rainbow Market by the reservation, preparing the response to the nearby fire.

The blaze then crossed from the west side to the east side of the Deschutes River near Mecca Flat onto

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands and other lands owned by the Confederated Tribes of

the Warm Springs. From there the fire spread north and south along the Deschutes River.

It eventually spread throughout the Deschutes River canyon to the east and south onto private lands protected by Jefferson County Fire District 1.

The BLM initially evacuated and closed the Mecca Flat Campground, and officials were urging boaters to temporarily avoid the Warm Springs boat launch as a put-in area for rafting the lower Deschutes River. Those restrictions were later lifted.

Approximately 200 personnel worked to contain the fire that was fought using 14 engines, three IHC crews (Prineville, Redmond and Warm Springs), four other Type 2 crews and one helicopter.

Investigators are still trying to determine the cause.

Update

Return of the Condor

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

A special recovery biologist from the Oregon Zoo was in Central Oregon last week. Biologist David Moen visited the region and the reservation, as part of the on-going program to re-introduce California condors to Oregon.

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Wasco Chief Nelson Wallulatum in particular, have been supporters of the Oregon Zoo condor program. Moen was in Central Oregon examining potential condor habitat in the region. The birds would build nests in cliff caves, such as ones found along the Deschutes, said Moen.

There is currently no conclusive evidence that condors nested in Oregon. Some biologists think the birds that once lived in the state were migrating from California and other areas, where they had their nests.

Moen said, though, that he is convinced condors did nest in Oregon. Part of his work involves searching for evidence, such as old egg shells in a cliff nest, showing that the birds nested here.

Moen said in the future he hopes to visit the reservation and give a public presentation on the status of reintroducing condors to Oregon. Louie Pitt, tribal Government Affairs director, said such a presentation would be welcome.

The condor carries great cultural significance for the tribes, Wasco Chief Nelson Wallulatum has said. The bird once flourished in Oregon, especially at the Columbia River. The condor went extinct in the state about 100 years ago; and went almost completely extinct by the 1980s. At that time, biologists captured the remaining 22 wild California condors and began a breeding program, eventually releasing several birds back into the wild.

The Oregon Zoo joined the condor breeding program about eight years ago. Chief Nelson named the first condor raised at the Oregon Zoo that was released back into the wild. The bird, Kunwakshun or "thunder and lightning," and was released in California, where wild fires last week were threatening the condors at Big Sur, including, apparently, Kunwakshun.

Living Traditions

The Museum at Warm Springs hosted the first of three live demonstrations by tribal members last weekend.

Eileen Spino demonstrated cornhusk weaving in the museum lobby on Saturday, July 12.

Those involved in the demonstrations complete projects while museum guests have the opportunity to observe. Spino said she has done similar demonstrations before.

As for her weaving skills, Spino estimates that she began weaving about 15 years ago.

"I can't remember when I started," Spino said. "It's not something I keep track of."

On July 19, Antoinette Queahpama-Pamperien will demonstrate cedar root weaving.

Ginger Smith will demonstrate bead tapestry on July 27. The demonstrations are from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.



Eileen Spino demonstrated cornhusk weaving for museum guests recently.

Training program in London helps language preservation

By Leslie Mitts
Spilyay Tymoo

For two women working with the language program, preserving the Kiksht language involved traveling all the way to Europe recently.

Pam Cardenas, a Language Program apprentice, and Nariyo Kono, a former employee of the Language Program still involved in the efforts to preserve Kiksht, traveled to London for 10 days to complete training in documentation of endangered languages.

The Hans Rausing Endangered Language Project with the University of London awarded a grant to the Language Program to help with documentation of native languages and also funded the trip to attend the training in London.

Kono and Cardenas completed the training on documentation as part of the efforts to preserve the Kiksht language.

According Myra Johnson, director

of Culture and Heritage, the efforts to document the Kiksht language are particularly important because of the limited time available to record fluent speakers.

"We have a very small amount of fluent speakers left who can document the language in its true aspect today—the sounds, the structure, the grammar," Johnson said. "As much as we can get of that information is important today."

For all of the native languages, Johnson said, it is important for people to make an effort to continue speaking.

"We just continue to encourage others who have an interest, who have voiced interest at various times, to step forward," Johnson said.

For Cardenas the trip to London was her first time on an airplane—and the flight lasted over nine hours.

During the training they had one day off and went sightseeing to Buckingham Palace and on an underground tour, Cardenas said.

"The language is here for me, and I'm going to be here for the language."

Pam Cardenas

"It was interesting to meet every kind of person there is in the world nationality wise," Cardenas said.

Others attending the training included people from all over the world, Cardenas said, including a person from France who is working with a group in Brazil that communicates by whistling.

The organization that gave them the grant also funds other native groups in the United States, Cardenas added.

Kono said she was prompted to seek out the grant from the Hans Rausing Endangered Language Project after having a conversation with another apprentice, Deenie Johnson.

Johnson asked if they should spend more time documenting the language

or more time learning the language, Kono said, in order to make the most of time spent with fluent speakers.

"The time is so precious," Kono said. "She didn't want to waste the time."

For that reason they began working on a project to be able to do both with help from the grant. Through the master/apprentice program, Kono added, the apprentices are able to learn as much as possible from fluent speakers and will later be able to pass their knowledge on to the community.

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.

For the Kiksht language, Johnson, Cardenas and Valerie Switzler serve as apprentices. They spend time learning from Thompson, 93, who is also Johnson's grandmother.

Because they aim to learn as much as they can while they still have the

opportunity, Johnson said, they are currently striving to document the language in any way possible.

That involves stacks of cds, dvds, videos and written materials in addition to a well-worn white board and a stack of markers.

Preserving the Kiksht language is the common goal of several dedicated employees at the Language Program.

In Johnson's opinion, "I feel we're really at a crucial moment where that's what we need to do."

Johnson is also working to transcribe and translate audio files of Thompson speaking. Thompson is later able to correct her translations.

"It's a lot of work," Johnson said. "I just work the heck out of my grandmother."

Luckily, Johnson said, her grandmother is able to work closely with staff and knows there is a need to save the language while it's still possible.

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