



Spilyay Tymoo

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Tribes' wind farm plan taking shape

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprise in 2009 plans to take significant steps toward development of a wind farm on the reservation.

The Power and Water Enterprise board in the new year will consider the details of the wind power project. Details to consider include:

What road improvements will be required for a wind project development?

What is the best high voltage transmission access?

What are the environmental consequences?

Power and Water Enterprise in 2009 is planning to construct a preliminary wind turbine model, said Jim Manion, Power and Water manager.

Finance details also need to be worked out, although information so far shows that the project would be profitable to the tribes, said Manion.

The wind turbines would be located in the Mutton Mountains, where the

wind is strong.

Power and Water has been working on the wind power generation project for the past several years. In 2002 the tribes received a U.S. Department of Energy grant to evaluate the potential benefits and costs of wind generation on the reservation.

Through the grant, Power and Water Enterprise acquired wind monitoring equipment that was placed across the reservation.

Four areas were studied: Handley Ridge, the Mutton Mountains, Eagle Butte, and the Island Ridge area.

Data was collected at these sites up to 2005. Through the study, Power and Water determined that the only area with potential for commercial wind development was the Mutton Mountains.

In 2005 the wind towers were removed from Handley Ridge, Eagle Butte, and Island Ridge, and moved to the Mutton Mountains.

Five towers total were placed in the area, and Power and Water began a 12-month wind monitoring project.

During the 12-month study, re-



Photo courtesy of W.S. Power & Water Enterprise

Trees in the Mutton Mountains provide evidence of the strong winds that blow across that area of the reservation.

searchers from the Oregon State University Energy Resources Research Laboratory used a computer modeling program to build a potential project layout of a wind farm.

Two models were identified: One

model involving 49 to 100 of the smaller 1.5 megawatt turbines; and a second model involving 28 to 60 of the larger 2.4 megawatt turbines.

The study found that the Mutton Mountains have annual winds averaging about 15 miles per hour, which is acceptable for commercial development of a wind farm, said Manion.

The study also involved an environmental assessment, including possible impact on birds, and a study of how the wind power station would connect to the main power grid.

Last year Power and Water finalized a final report of the wind power resource assessment, and applied for another grant for phase two of the study.

Power and Water received the Department of Energy grant and began the phase 2 evaluation, which includes questions such as the necessary road work, access to the grid, detailed environmental consequences, among other questions.

Members hear enterprise updates

By Leslie Mitts
Spilyay Tymoo

Tribal members heard reports from various tribal enterprises at a recent general council meeting at the Agency Longhouse.

Housing, Warm Springs Forest Product Industries, Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino, and Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprise all delivered reports on their business during 2008.

Housing Director Jeff Sanders spoke about several ongoing projects within the Housing Department, including a senior citizen home repair project and the Bear Drive Project.

The Housing Department has also been involved with the West Hills beautification project and efforts to install bulletproof streetlights in conjunction with I.H.S.

In the future, Sanders said, they hope to do a housing survey of the entire reservation in order to examine the housing plan for the next 25 years.

Accounts receivable is one area of concern for the Housing Department, and Sanders said the amount of money due totals nearly a million dollars.

"A lot has to do with the economy," Sanders added.

Currently the department is looking for ways to reduce the housing shortage as well as hoping to preserve as many existing homes as possible.

General Manager Ralph Minnick spoke about the current status of Warm Springs Forest Product Industries, and said declining lumber prices have made the industry challenging.

Because the mill was unable to compete in the lumber market, Minnick said, Tribal Council made the decision to lease the business to Vanport International of Boring, Ore., in July 2008.

The cost of the lease includes items like lumber, logging costs, road maintenance and more, Minnick said, and Vanport's involvement led to the rehiring of workers who had been laid off previously. Vanport typically follows the tribal hiring practice, Minnick added.

"They basically took the employment from 50 back to 118," Minnick explained.

The lease will end in July 2009, Minnick said, and currently they are looking into whether it is possible to extend the lease agreement.

Several tribal members expressed concern about the loss of money involved with the current situation, and Tribal Council Vice-Chairwoman Aurolyn Stwyer-Pinkham said they aimed to make sure people were employed.

"It's a real hard balance," she said. "It's just a national reality that we're dealing with here at home."

Deepak Sehgal, chairman of the Kah-Nee-Ta Board of Directors, presented the annual report along with General Manager Harry Taylor.

Taylor was appointed as general manager during 2008 and has many years of experience in the Indian casino industry, Sehgal said.

Other changes included appointments and resignations on the board of directors, as well as the appointment of Alan Post as the new Chief Financial Officer of Kah-Nee-Ta.

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Leslie Mitts/Spilyay

Students at warm Springs Elementary School got in the holiday spirit recently as the school hosted the annual winter program. Music Teacher Karen Lee led the kindergarten, first grade and second grade students as they sang several festive songs.

Fish accords, casino hearings top news of 2008

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Decades of divisiveness over salmon recovery in the Columbia River basin came to an end for tribes and federal agencies in 2008.

The magnitude of the Columbia River Basin Fish Accords makes the agreement the single most significant news event of 2008 for the Confederated Tribes.

"These fish accords respect the sovereignty of the tribes," said Ron Suppah, Tribal Council Chairman.

"They break from the history of federal agencies developing a plan them-

selves, then telling the tribes what they would or could provide for salmon."

The earlier approach did not work, said Suppah: "Misunderstandings, hard feelings and litigation are what we produced."

The Columbia River Basin Fish Accords are a 10-year agreement, focusing tribal and federal resources on improving fish habitat instead of on costly and prolonged litigation. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, along with three other tribes, federal agencies and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, signed the historic agreement in May of this year at Columbia Hills State Park.

Casino hearings

The BIA in 2008 conducted the long-awaited hearings on the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Bridge of the Gods Casino.

The series of five hearings was another top news event for the tribes, because of the eventual longterm potential benefits to the tribes of a new casino. At the hearing in Hood River, Councilman Austin Greene spoke of the need for the project:

"Our people are in poverty, even while they work," he said. "There are too many sub-standard homes housing multiple families. There are health problems without adequate care."

Many other tribal members, and many people living at Cascade Locks, spoke in favor of the EIS findings.

Fish passage at dam

The Confederated Tribes and Portland General Electric made significant construction progress in 2008 on the tower at Round Butte dam that will address the migrating fish passage problem on the Deschutes. The 273-foot tall selective water withdrawal tower, with an estimated cost of \$90 million, could reopen 226 upstream miles to salmon and steelhead migration.

