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Spilyay Tymoo

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Paddle to Swinomish 2011

Photo by Steven Lane/The Columbian

The N'Chi Wanapam canoe family en route to Swinomish ,Wash.

The Warm Springs canoe team made their Second Annual Canoe Journey this month.

The N'Chi Wanapam canoe family left Warm Springs on July 9, and arrived earlier this week at Swinomish, Wash.

The Paddle to Swinomish 2011 canoe landing and welcoming ceremonies, lasting through this week, are being hosted by Swinomish Indian Community.

The tribes last year rejoined other tribal canoe families when they took part in the Paddle to Makah.

Council takes up adoption question

By Yvonne Iverson
Spilyay Tymoo

Staff from the Vital Statistics Department have worked hard gathering information, double checking lists, and researching past enrollment practices of the tribes.

Vital Stats presented the information to Tribal Council last week at an enrollments workshop at Kah-Nee-Ta. Staff shared information and numbers of current and past automatic enrollments.

The bulk of the workshop was spent discussing tribal enrollment by adoption, and issues pertaining to this process. Some of the questions presented were:

Should an adoption election be a tribal election or a BIA secretarial election? And what is the difference between the two? Tribal attorney Howie Arnett explained:

"For a Tribal election the voting age would be 21, and more than 50 percent of the eligible voters would need to vote for a valid election. A secretarial election," Arnett said, "requires voters to register with the BIA office prior to the election, and you would only need to be 18 to vote."

The majority of past adoption elections have been tribal elections.

Residency

Another question addressed at the workshop was in regard to residency on the reservation:

If an adoption election were held today, how many adoption candidates would meet the residency requirements? And should there be exceptions to the residency requirements?

There are currently up to 237 people waiting to become members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Of those, 91 would meet the residency requirement.

(See **ADOPTION** on page 7)

Biomass project facing tough challenges

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

The tribes are still considering the possibility of developing a biomass energy plant on the reservation, although now there are some significant challenges facing the project.

Financing, an assurance of sufficient fuel, and time are the main challenges facing this project.

The tribes came to an agreement earlier this year with a company, Oregon Bioenergy, to possibly develop a biomass energy plant.

The plant, producing 37-megawatts of energy, would be located just south of the transfer station-landfill in the Dry Creek area.

The agreement between the tribes and the company was similar to a landlord-tenant agreement, with the tribes as landowner receiving payments from the company, which would build and operate the plant.

The tribes also would agree to provide some fuel for the plant from reservation land. The fuel would be plant and wood material.

The tribes would provide a maximum of 30,000 bone-dry tons of material from the reservation. The biomass plant would need more fuel than that to operate.

The additional material would come from other sources, such as nearby BLM or National Forest land, among other places.

The tribes have been awarded a $5 million federal grant toward this project. Benefits to the tribes of the biomass plant would be revenue and jobs. Removal of some standing dead trees, followed by replanting, could also benefit reservation forest health.

The $5 million grant is through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. According to the act, the biomass plant would have to be operational by Dec. 31, 2013 in order to qualify for the money.

(See **BIOMASS** on page 7)

Study group to report on mill, timber conditions

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

By recommendation of Natural Resources and Warm Springs Forest Products Industries, a small work group will form to draft a preliminary report regarding the allowable cut decision and mill operations.

Tribal Council voted unanimously to approve the formation of the group, which will examine the facts and circumstances of tribal forestland conditions, management assumptions, mill operations and market options.

Tribal attorney John Ogan read the recommendation to form the group.

"In the meantime," he said, "it is our belief that we can preserve all options through the difficult decision points we face. The mill would run on status quo. We have enough material on-hand to operate until the middle of next year."

With 86 people present, many of them employees of WSFPI, Tribal Council Chairman Stanley "Buck" Smith said he understood their overwhelming concern for their jobs.

Mill worker Jason Palmer said, "I remember my dad talked about the future. Now I'm older and the future is right here. You should see some of the young families that I'm working with. They have babies. I'm worried about my brothers, my friends… Do I need to go back off the reservation now?"

Chairman Smith said, "We're between a rock and a hard place. We're trying to create jobs. The bottom line to me? You're worth more to me than a tree. We don't have much time on earth, but trees will come back. I would like to see jobs for all of you here."

The problem, though, is the possibility of overcutting the tribal forest land.

"We want to look at the facts. We're cutting five generations down the road," said Counicl man Raymond Tsumpti.

It's not a question, he said, of whether Tribal Council is going to shut down the mill. The decision, he said, is based on research and the timber resource.

Duran Bobb/Spilyay

Mill and Natural Resource workers attended the meeting last week.

If the resource is not there, "it's not there," he said. "It is limited. If we're cutting five generations into the future, what are we going to leave the children? Is that going to be our legacy for those unborn today? It's not easy to sit here and make these decisions. I have an obligation to preserve and watch out for the future generations, for all time. That's what I was taught."

The approach to the issue should not be seen as "us versus them," Tsumpti said.

Warm Springs Chief Delvis Heath said, "Now we have to decide, Do we leave some for our children? I'm glad this small group will be formed, but it should have been done a few years ago when we were asking for it. Our tribal members are working at the mill. They have loans that need to be paid back. They need to put bread on the table. We have to keep them employed. If we shut down the mill, are we going to provide them with jobs? Or make it easy for them to get their education?"

The goal of the small work group is to have a final report by the end of 2011, providing for Tribal Council decisions in early 2012.

Secretary-Treasurer Jody Calica will lead the development of the reviews and reports. Natural Resources and WSFPI will be assisted by the tribal attorneys.

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