

## Shoulder Work



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Construction finished up a second part of the Highway 26 work by Indian Head Casino. While this work was going on, workers from Natural Resources cleaned up the trees and bushes along the highway by the Museum at Warm Springs.

## Sen. says Crooked River law would not drop reservoir level

(AP) - U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley said legislation he is sponsoring that aims to divide the water from the Crooked River among stakeholders would not be expected to significantly decrease the water level in Prineville Reservoir.

The bill, supported by Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, would allocate more water for the city of Prineville, allow for a hydroelectric project below the reservoir, and guarantee water supplies for irrigators.

Sen. Merkley spoke last week to more than 50 Crook County residents. Many of them were worried that the senator's bill would drain the popular boating and fishing lake.

Besides the tribes, the bill has the support of environ-

mental groups, irrigators, the city of Prineville and Crook County officials.

The bill is co-sponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden. The house in June passed a similar bill sponsored by Rep. Greg Walden.

Merkley's bill calls for the Bureau of Reclamation, the tribes and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to decide how much water—and when—is sent downriver from the reservoir to benefit fish.

It's in the best interests of water managers to keep the lake full, Merkley said. If the reservoir is drawn down one year to benefit fish there could be insufficient water for the fish the following year, he said.

## More News from Indian Country

### Burial ground developed as historical park

FAIRBANKS, Ind. (AP) - The whirring sound of saws filled the air, but underneath, one could hear the beating of a drum.

Minimum-security offenders from the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility were cutting wood, deep along the back roads of rural Fairbanks where the Sullivan County American Indian Council Inc. has established a heritage site now referred to as Waapaahsiki Siipiwi.

Hugh Oxendine, a member of the council and of Lumbee Indian ancestry himself, was out helping clear the wooded site, excited about future developments there which include a museum, council headquarters and youth campgrounds. The group hopes to have those up and ready by next spring.

"There's a lot of really neat things happening out here," he said near the mulched trails leading toward an ancient mound.

#### 1,500 years ago

Last April, archaeologists from Indiana University visited the mound in conjunction with the council, performing a dig at the site now believed to have been a Kickapoo Indian burial ground in use 1,500 years ago.

The archaeological team found nearly 600 artifacts while there last year.

Sen. John Waterman, R-Shelburn, walked through the woods wearing bibbed overalls, as he has since the project got under way a year and a half ago.

Of European ancestry himself, Waterman said similarities between the spiritual traditions of Native Americans and Christians seem quite apparent to him.

In fact, during the tenure of President Thomas Jefferson, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were commissioned to find evidence linking Native Americans to the "Lost Tribe of Israel," he noted. Today, some evidence suggests a DNA link between Hebrews and Native Americans, he said, expressing his appreciation for the stories and lore of both.

Among the artifacts dis-

covered at the site were a Colt revolver from 1860, deer antlers with carvings, and pottery which carbon-dated back 1,500 years. It's believed the Kickapoo Indians built the mound for ceremonial purposes, and other groups have used it since.

"Long before Terre Haute was even a dream in someone's head," he said.

In homage to those traditions, the 10-acre site is being worked into a historical park. Entering the camp site from the road, one approaches a hand-made overpass leading to the mound. The trail is covered with woodchips, lined by railroad ties donated by Indiana Rail Road. And along the path, beneath a canopy of trees, the "7 Grandfather Teachings" are carved into signs: truth, humility, honesty, bravery, respect, love and wisdom.

#### Medicine Wheel

But it isn't until one gets to the giant mound that becomes visible the "Medicine Wheel" built by council volunteers and inmates from the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility. The circle, 70 feet in diameter, contains a cross dividing it into four equal parts.

"It's basically a spiritual instrument to guide their lives," Waterman said, explaining the symbolism of seasons, elements and faith. "These old medicine people are very interesting people."

Ceremonies have been conducted there recently and more are planned, he said. During "the grandfather drum" ceremony, the vibrations of hundreds of drums lining the circle draws the attention of eagles, he noted.

"There were three eagles the last time we did it," he said.

Working on the grounds provides him a sense of calm he finds comparable to that

*During "the grandfather drum" ceremony, the vibrations of hundreds of drums lining the circle draws the attention of eagles...*

of leaving church. Similarities abound between Judeo-Christian traditions and those of the Native Americans, he said.

Oxendine said his Lumbee ancestry comes from his father's side of the family, stretching back to North Carolina. Today, about 35,000 people belong to that tribe, he said. The owner of Cherokee Development Builders in Terre Haute has helped access equipment for the work being done at the site.

"I'm kind of new to the group," he said, explaining he's been active less than two years. "I'm an infant in learning about my ancestry."

As a state senator, Waterman carried the Native American Commission bill through the Indiana Legislature, a feat he recalled taking three years to achieve.

Now defunct from "political issues," he said it still exists at the state level and could prove valuable if properly used. To access health care per federal guidelines, members of Native American tribes must return to their reservation, he said, adding some 60,000 tribe members reside in Indiana. With a functioning Native American Commission, those individuals could establish health care facilities or programs here in Indiana, keeping those dollars local, he explained.

In addition to money and jobs, history too is at stake.

Legal Aid Services of Oregon provides free assistance to low-income Oregonians in many civil cases.

Speak with an attorney during drop-in hours 1 to 4 p.m. on the first Monday of the month at the Warm Springs Community Action Team building, 1136 Paiute Ave, Warm Springs. Or call 385-6944 Monday through Thursday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. (at lunch from noon-1 p.m.)

"Indiana means 'Land of the Indians,'" he said, pointing out the educational benefits of working to maintain that legacy.

And for the last year-and-a-half, substantial work has been under way.

The property was a thick tangle of woods last April as archaeologists dug into the mound. But with the help of inmates from the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, more than 500 trees have been cleared, trails blazed, rails built and gates erected. Resulting firewood has been donated to area families in need.

"It's all volunteers and donations. Where there's a will, there's a way," Waterman said. "If it wasn't for the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, this wouldn't have happened."

Facility personnel Jacque Mize and Jeff Hancock had eight inmates on a recent Sunday, wearing safety equipment as they mowed, chopped and raked. With six to 10 inmates each weekend since last April, Hancock said the total work hours donated add up to 19,968.

"They've cleared this woods by hand," he said. Shovels, rakes and axes were the primary tools of choice as men loaded dirt in wheelbarrows and rolled it away. "They really enjoy the hospitality of the people coming out here," he said.

Council member Susan

Petoskey said funds raised at the ninth annual Pow Wow in Shakamak State Park will go toward Waapaahsiki Siipiwi.

The site's name comes from the Miami Indians' spelling of what locals now call the "Wabash River," she said, explaining the substitution of "p" for "b" revolves around pronunciation.

Waterman said the annual powwow regularly draws more than 3,500 people into the state park. Aside from gate fees there, the event is free to the public and is scheduled for Sept. 15-16.

Petoskey noted that the Sullivan County American Indiana Council Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax deductible.

While considerable progress has been made since last April, the group still has more work to do and hopes to have the museum and educational programming up by next April. In addition to 15 Native American vendors and visitors from the tri-state area, a family of Aztec heritage will perform "fire dancing."

"It's just a wonderful family event," she said.

The council has leased the property now known as Waapaahsiki Siipiwi from Indiana-American Power since November 2007 and recently signed an extension good through 2022, she said, meaning future generations will be able to share in the culture of those long past.

### Tribes get \$1 million in DOJ grants

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - The Department of Justice has awarded more than \$1 million to four Native American tribes in the Dakotas to enhance sex offender registration and notification programs.

The North Dakota congressional delegation announced last week that the grants have been awarded to the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe.

The congressional delegates say in a news release that the tribes will use the money to help implement and comply with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act of 2006, which seeks to close gaps and loopholes in sex offender registration and notification programs.

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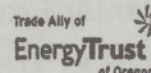
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