

2015 Year in Review

(Here is a look back at some of the memorable news events of the past year on the reservation.)

January

The year 2015 started with Suzanne McConville winning the **2015 Miss Warm Springs Pageant**. "I was nervous and scared—all emotions mixed in one," Suzanne said after the Pageant.

"But I went after it and chased it, and here I am. You really don't know what you can do until you try."

Suzanne won the 2015 Pageant following a close competition with Jazmine Ike Lopez. Meanwhile in January:

The Confederated Tribes announced the acquisition of a 278.5-acre property, the **Red Hills Conservation Area**, through the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program. The property is located in Yamhill County in the Willamette Valley. Also in January:

Tribal Council in January reviewed the progress on the **carbon sequestration** project. The hope is that this will provide a new source of revenue to the tribes.

Carbon sequestration is the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. Certain forestry practices can be a method of capturing and storing carbon dioxide, and the reservation includes extensive forest land.

Meanwhile in January, Tribal Council endorsed the designation of Highway 26 on the reservation as a **Tribal Veterans Memorial Highway**. The level of service by veterans of the Confederated Tribes is not widely known off the reservation, said Charles Tailfeathers. The memorial highway would help correct this.

At least 499 Warm Springs veterans are listed as having served with honor, dedication and selfless conviction. And this good news in education:

At the start of the school year, the goal of **Warm Springs Roots** was to enroll 30 students in the program.

The goal of 30 students was ambitious, as the previous year only 12 students had enrolled in the Warm Springs alternative education program. As of this month, there were 41 students in the Roots program. In other education news:



Miss Warm Springs 2015 Suzanne McConville

The current **Education Agreement** between the Confederated Tribes and the Jefferson County School District 509-J will end in a year and a half.

The tribes and district finalized the agreement in July of 2011. This is a five-year agreement, so it will expire in July of 2016.

The Tribal Council and the 509-J school board met in January to discuss a new agreement. This was the first Council-school board work session on the 2016 agreement. The Council and board agreed to meet at least quarterly from now on regarding the new agreement. And this:

The Warm Springs Forest Products Industries board and management in January met with Tribal Council, presenting three alternatives for the future of the **WSFPI mill**.

One option is the closure of the sawmill, and the sale of all future tribal timber to mills off the reservation.

The second option would be to downsize the mill from 120 workers to about 80, operating the sawmill at 60 percent of one shift. Meanwhile:

Indian Health Services is in the process of **demolishing** four former residences in the campus area of the reservation.

February

Tribal Council voted in February to open the **smelt fishing season** early this

year, after consulting with the Branch of Natural Resources.

Council voted to open the smelt, or Pacific eulachon, season on the Cowlitz River and tributaries, as the fish were already in the river.

They are expected soon the Sandy River and tributaries as well. Last year tribal members harvested about 2,000 pounds of the smelt. In other February news:

Tribal Council approved the creation of a team to study a **cannabis production project**, as proposed by Warm Springs Ventures. The directive from Tribal Council is for the team to confer with the U.S. Attorney's office regarding cannabis laws.

This is an economic development proposal, with tribal laws remaining in effect in regard to personal possession or sale of cannabis on the reservation.

Medical marijuana is allowed in many states. Meanwhile more states, including Oregon, are legalizing the possession of the drug for recreational purposes. In other economic news:

Tribal Council in February adopted the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance, or **TERO**. This is an important job creation program that applies on the reservation, and within a 60-mile radius of the reservation.

The on-reservation aspect applies to construction projects including work done by the tribal enterprises.

The TERO officer will work with the contractors and subcontractors, ensuring tribal member access to the

employment opportunities.

The TERO program will involve training the local workforce in the kinds of jobs that will become available. And meanwhile this month:

WSFPI presented its downsizing plan to Tribal Council. The plan—reducing the number of employees from about 115 to 85—is a short-term solution, lasting two years. The idea after two years is to transform the mill into a more efficient operation, designed for the timber resources of the reservation.

March

The new **Greeley Heights subdivision** is unique in Indian Country.

The partnerships involved—tribal and private enterprises, state and federal agencies—is the first of its kind.

The project will serve as a model for affordable housing developments on other reservations. The total cost of the 35-unit Greeley Heights subdivision is \$9.7 million.

The project is well under way, with a grand opening planned for this summer. Meanwhile:

The Warm Springs Reservation is **Wild Horse Race Country**. An example this month:

Two generations of Warm Springs horse racers each won Championships at the March competition of the Professional Wild Horse Racers Association.

The Jason Smith Team won the over 18 division. This was to be expected, as the Jason Smith Team is best Wild Horse Racing team, and has been for several years.

The winner of the 13-18 year division was the newly-formed Warm Springs team of Preston Stevens, Cody Florendo and Carlos Estrada.

A Professional Wild Horse Race Team consists of three people, known as the shankman, the mugger and the rider. The equipment used is a lead shank, halter and saddle.

All of the positions are equally difficult, and can be dangerous. On the young Warm Springs team, Cody is the shankman, Carlos is the mugger, and Preston the rider.

The Warm Springs **Wellbriety Program** gives help to people who are in trouble because of an alcohol or drug problem. A person who completes the Wellbriety Program will have his or her criminal charge dismissed by the court.

The Tribal Court and prosecution adopted the Wellbriety Program this year. Other partners are Parole and Probation, and Community Counseling. In fisheries news:

Tribal Council voted to open the tribal **subsistence fishery below the Bonneville dam** in early April. The fishery will remain open at least until an estimated 500 spring chinook are caught from the sites below the dam.



The Travis Bobb art exhibit, *Quiet Strength*, was the feature at the Museum at Warm Springs in April.

The tribes first re-opened the below Bonneville fishery in 2010, and it proved to be popular with hook-and-line subsistence fishermen. Before the 2010 re-opening, the tribes had not had a regular fishery there for some years.

Last year the Fish and Wildlife Committee chose not to open the below Bonneville subsistence fishery. Meanwhile, the 2014 spring chinook run was one of the best in many years, and the commercial fishery was open.

Many saw this as unfair to the subsistence fishermen. So this year the subsistence fishermen urged Tribal Council to re-open the below Bonneville subsistence fishery, and Council unanimously agreed.

April

Miss Warm Springs 2015 Suzanne Slockish McConville was a contestant for the **Miss Indian World** title. The pageant was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, during the Gathering of Nations Powwow.

Suzanne is the daughter of Laura Slockish and Alfred McConville Jr., and is finishing up her first year at Eastern Washington University, studying criminal justice. And this:

Weavers of the Confederated Tribes are spending some time this spring getting ready for the 2015 conference of the Northwest Native American Basket Weavers Association. The 2015 conference is marking its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, and is set for the fall at Kah-Nee-Ta. In other news:

The Sidwalter area may create an **irrigation district** to oversee and improve the delivery of irrigation water to the residents there.

Through an irrigation district, grant funding would be available for improvement to the Sidwalter irrigation headworks and canal.

The irrigation water for Sidwalter comes out of Mill Creek. The headworks could use improvements that would cost about \$100,000. This would help with fisheries in Mill Creek.

The irrigation canal itself could also be improved, mak-

ing for a more efficient use of water. This could leave more water in Mill Creek; and ensure that all the residents who are entitled to the irrigation water actually receive the water. Tribal Council in April heard a summary of the proposal, and took no action.

Later in the month, Council accepted a plan by the **Warm Springs Forest Products Industries enterprise** that will keep the mill in operation. The workforce at the mill will go from 104 to about 85, and there will be cost savings such as salary reductions.

A key part of the plan has to do with timber stumpage payments that are owed to the tribes. The approved plan of operation calls for a 36-month repayment schedule.

May

The weather held out again for another incredible **Warm Springs Honor Seniors Day**. It was cold earlier in the week, and then it rained afterward, but the Friday of Honor Seniors Day was sunny and mild. Meanwhile in May:

Fossil fuel transport through the Columbia River Gorge is of increasing concern to the Confederated Tribes.

There is one specific coal-transport proposal that the tribes are actively opposing, at Coyote Island, Port of Morrow. But there are many other projects in various stages of planning and development.

The tribes are developing a comprehensive approach to deal with this problem, rather than addressing each individual case as it arises.

Tribal Council met with CRITFC staff, discussing the subject in detail.

Ventures is advertising for a TERO director. Ventures meanwhile is also looking for a business development and marketing manager, to oversee the business and financial growth of the economic enterprise.

(The Year in Review will continue in the next edition of the Spilyay Tymoo.)



The Recreation Department hosted an ice-skating trip to Sun River in February. A total of 31 kids and adults enjoyed the day.