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Tribes plan for summer total eclipse

The morning on August 21 of this year, a Monday, will bring a solar eclipse across parts the U.S. including Oregon. The Warm Springs Reservation is in direct line to see the total eclipse.

Expect many visitors, as more populous areas—Portland and Eugene, for instance—are not in direct line to see the total eclipse.

This is an economic opportunity for the tribes, but one that also requires careful planning: August is the height of fire season, and vehicle traffic on the reservation could become an issue.

Meanwhile, plans are coming together for celebration and education events on the day of the eclipse, and during the weekend

leading up to it.

Kah-Nee-Ta is already booked for that weekend, with a student group traveling to the resort from Japan.

Indian Head Casino is planning to feature Native entertainers on the days leading up to the eclipse. "We're looking at having national level, and regional Native entertainers," said Belinda Chavez, marketing director at the casino.

Indian Head is also planning to provide transportation for customers to exclusive viewing areas on the reservation.

Working with the casino, the Museum at Warm Springs has plans for a gathering on the museum grounds featuring tribal ven-

dors and dance demonstrations.

NASA project

Warm Springs Ventures is partnering with NASA on a unique science experience for students.

These will be local students, joined by middle and high school students from elsewhere in Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho.

Ventures in the past has partnered with the NASA Washington Space Grant Consortium. The partners launched a rocket at the Academy last summer as a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) exercise.

The NASA-tribal eclipse event could prove to be even more impressive: The plan is to launch he-

lium balloons that will travel as far as the edge of outer space, said Aurolyn Stwyer, Ventures business and marketing director.

The balloons will be equipped with cameras that will be aimed at the earth, capturing images as the shadow of the moon passes across the state.

Visiting students can camp overnight in teepees. The balloon launch site will be at the Ventures Wolfe Point unmanned aerial vehicle launch area. The NASA Consortium explains:

(See **ECLIPSE** on 10)

Response to weather events

This winter brought extraordinary snowfall, followed this week by warmer temperatures, raising the possibility of flooding. The tribes have responded to the conditions with safety measures and caution.

In regard to the flooding prospect, the tribes have received shipments of hundreds of pre-filled sandbags, plus additional empty bags that were then filled, said tribal Emergency manager Dan Martinez.

Emergency Operations also keeps a list of potential flood sites, based on past experience, Martinez said.

Meanwhile, the tribal organization was closed on Monday of this week, so Utilities could inspect the roofing conditions of tribal buildings. And the organization was either closed, or on delayed opening every day last week.

Students missed a total of eight school days due to the snow. There are options as to how to make up these days (see the district statement page 3).

The regional snow level for January—already almost four feet, the most in the past 20 years—created the flooding concern this week as temperatures were expected in the 40s. The forecast says the snow could return later in the week or over the weekend.

Twenty-one years ago, during the flood of 1996, the Kah-Nee-Ta Village was completely inundated when the Warm Springs River overflowed its banks. After the '96 flood, the tribes rebuilt the Village, and added a protective berm between the river and the Village.

So the threat to the Village, at least, has been mitigated.

Youth Art show at museum

The Museum at Warm Springs in January will host the Twenty-Fourth Annual Tribal Youth Art Exhibit. A theme of the exhibit this year is the solar system, reflecting the summer eclipse event.

Students are invited to submit artwork through this Friday, January 20. The opening reception for the Youth Art Exhibit is set for Thursday, January 26. The exhibit will then be on display in the Changing Exhibits room through April 8.

The Youth Art Exhibit features original works by young people of the community from toddlers through high school. Talk to Natalie Kirk at the museum if you need more information, 541-553-3331. This summer the museum feature an exhibit *Celestial Visions*, June 22 through September 9.

River Restored

After gold was discovered in the Middle Fork John Day River in the 1860s, the waterway and the ecosystem it supports endured over a century of damage, degradation, and destruction.

The greatest damage came from the dredge mining of a two-mile stretch of the river from 1939 to 1943.

"After dredging, what was left on the floodplain was no topsoil, no vegetation, no trees for shade," said Pat McDowell, Geography and Environmental Studies professor at the University of Oregon.

In total, around two hundred acres of floodplain were impacted, with soil and vegetation loss, straightened stream channels, and tailing piles that affected water quality.

"It was a moonscape of mine tailings," remembers Brian Cochran, the Oxbow Restoration project manager for Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Fisheries.



Sign at the Oxbow Restoration Site.

Courtesy CRITFC

Historical Damage

Up until the early 1900s, gold mining efforts in remote locations throughout the West were limited to panning or sluice mining that required sand and gravel to be dug up by hand.

While still damaging, the effects tended to be limited, and at a level that the ecosystem could usually recover from.

This changed with the invention of mechanized means of gold mining that suddenly opened up a whole new scale of environmental impacts that overwhelmed

the resilience of the environment to accommodate.

Bucket dredging was an early steam-powered method that was used on the Middle Fork John Day River. A bucket dredger uses a rotating belt or wheel equipped with buckets to scoop up material from the riverbed for processing.

The scouring of the riverbed at this scale destroys aquatic ecosystems that take thousands of years to develop naturally. Additionally, the dredge spoils that are carried to the riverbanks alters the waterway and can contain mercury

(used in gold mining), other heavy metals, and toxic chemicals that leach into the water.

Today the Clean Water Act forbids the discharge of any dredged materials into the waters of the U.S. unless authorized by a permit. This has effectively stopped bucket dredging for gold; however, the West is now faced with the effects of this mining legacy:

Billions of dollars of remediation and restoration work to repair the damage that has already been done in places like the Middle Fork John Day River.

In need of help

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Branch of Natural Resources recognized that the river needed help.

"We knew there was a problem out here, and it wasn't anything that was going to recover itself except over thousands of years," Brian Cochran says.

The thinking was that by speeding up the river's recovery, the summer steelhead, spring chinook salmon, Pacific lamprey, and bull trout that depended on the river would reap the benefits.

(See **RESTORATION** on 3)

General Council meeting on KNT loan

Kah-Nee-Ta Resort is getting ready to resume full operation next week. There has been a partial closure of the resort during non-weekend days.

Full service can be expected to resume on Monday, said resort general manager Jim Bankson.

Meanwhile, Tribal Council has set Monday, January 30, for a General Council meeting. This meeting is required as part of the 2017 supplemental budget process.

Council gave preliminary approval of a loan to the resort in the amount of \$400,000. This is funded through the tribes' gas tax rebate,



Village pool in the snow.

Courtesy KNT

through the Business Investment Revolving Fund.

As the 2017 budget was already

set, the supplemental budget process is required.

The General Council meeting

had been scheduled for earlier this month but was cancelled because of the weather.

The January 30 meeting will be at the Agency Longhouse.

The gas tax refund is intended by Council resolution for economic development projects. Helping Kah-Nee-Ta become a viable enterprise would clearly meet this goal.

The management and board are considering the possibility of bringing in a partner, one with resources to help the resort compete with others in the region.

\$135,000*

FORD WINTERFEST

Blazin Blazer Ticket Giveaways
Every Friday 6pm-10pm, Win a set of Blazer Basketball Tickets. Earn entries all month long.

WINTERFEST WEEKEND Drawings
Cash and Bonus Slot Play Drawings every Saturday from 4-9pm AND every Sunday from 1-5pm in January. Earn entries all month long.

FORD WINTERFEST TRUCK GIVEAWAY
2017 FORD F-250 SUPER DUTY | FEBRUARY 26TH | 4PM
Earn entries now thru February 26th.