

~ 2020 Review ~ (Continued)

September

The massive Lionshead fire—at nearly 200,000 acres burned—is unlike anything seen for many decades on the reservation.

For 40 years Robert Brunoe has worked in the fire suppression and resource protection fields for the tribes. “I’ve not seen anything like it,” Mr. Brunoe was saying. And he explains:

A perfect storm of weather events—prolonged drought, and a sudden highly unusual wind event—fueled the fire. Regarding the drought conditions:

At a meeting before Tribal Council, Mr. Brunoe, Natural Resources general manager, held up an ordinary piece of writing paper. “This paper,” he said, “contains more moisture than the average fuel on the forest floor.”

The Lionshead fire began with a summer lightning strike in Lion’s Head Canyon on the reservation.

Summer lightning fires are common on the reservation, and crews often contain them quickly through the high standard of wildland fire response. What happened next at Lion’s Head, though, was very unusual.

The wind in Central Oregon in the summer should blow from west to east, and at a reasonable velocity. Yet on September 9—as the crews were working to manage Lionshead and some smaller fires—the region experienced an east-west wind event.

“That is rare,” Mr. Brunoe said. And the wind gusts were at 50 miles per hour—with some reports of gusting at 70 miles per hour. Spotting was happening two miles away—also rare for the region.

Like wearing a mask during the pandemic, completing the 2020 United States Census is for the common good.

The tribes do not want to be under counted in the census for the reason that the tribes do not want to lose:

The tribes do not want to lose representation; nor do the tribes wish to lose tax payer dollars that otherwise will go elsewhere and for other purposes.

The solution is simple: Every tribal household should complete the 2020 Census, or the tribes will lose valuable resources. And now the day is nearly upon us—Sep-

tember 30—to answer the census questions that take no more than 10 minutes. And the census takers by phone are very pleasant and easy to work with.

The Museum at Warm Springs received a \$140,147 grant as compensation for losses due to Covid-19.

Another \$53,736 went to other cultural programs of the Confederated Tribes, such as Education.

The pandemic forced the museum to close for many weeks, and the essential fundraisers have not possible during the pandemic.

Nearly one month into the 2020-21 school year, students are using the online platforms in pursuing their education. While clearly less than ideal, “Overall this is going well,” said Ken Parshall, 509-J district superintendent.

Teachers and staff over the summer went through intensive training in the best use of Google Classroom and other interactive software. Meanwhile, students are studying and working their regular school schedules from home. “Having that normality in the day—students knowing what to expect from class—is helpful to everyone,” Mr. Parshall said.

October

The ‘treaty of 1865’ document is officially a thing of the past—now just a relique of attempted fraud upon the Confederated Tribes.

Earlier this year Congress passed “A law to nullify the supplemental treaty between the United States of America and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Indians of Middle Oregon, concluded on November 15, 1865.”

This legislation then became on Tuesday, October 20.

Official nullification had been a goal of Tribal Council and leadership for decades. The 1865 document was never enforced or recognized by the tribes or federal government. Nor has the state relied on its provisions, which appeared to relinquish tribal Ceded Lands off-reservation hunting, fishing and gathering rights.

In 1865 there was no compensation to the tribes in exchange for

the alleged transaction; and the few signatures on the document were suspect.

The recent law disavowing this document reinforces tribal sovereignty, and the government-to-government agreement of the Treaty of 1855.

Control of the Lionshead fire is divided among three local units: The Warm Springs Agency, the Willamette National Forest and the Mt. Hood National Forest.

On the reservation the fire burned roughly 97,000 acres, and another 107,000 acres off reservation. The fire broke out during a lightning storm on August 16.

November

Treasures of the Tribal Member Art Show went on display this month in the Changing Exhibits Gallery of the Museum at Warm Springs. This year the Judges Choice Awards went to Reina Estimo for her beaded medallion, and Brutis Baez for his mixed media creation.

Edward Heath won Honorable Mention, as did Pat Courtney Gold and Marjorie Kalama. All of these items and many more will be on display through early January.

With so much else going on it may be easy to forget the critical domestic water situation on the reservation, in particular the entire Agency area where most of the tribal population lives. Some good news is that many people, within the tribes and from outside, are working to resolve this pending matter.

The federal and state governments recognize the need and obligation. And the same is true in the charitable private sector: The Chúush Fund—project of the MRG Foundation—is a great example.

Through this fund the MRG Foundation accepts donations on behalf the tribes, then contributes 100 percent directly to the tribes for immediate work on the water system. This ongoing partnership began last year following the 76-day Agency water crisis.

At the time the people at the MRG Foundation heard about this, and worked with Tribal Council and management in establishing the Chúush Fund.



Crew on the Lionshead fire, September 2020.



This scene became familiar in 2020 at the Warm Springs Academy: Chef Juanita Kalama (left) and lead chef Beverly Gallimore serve the breakfast, lunches and Academy assignments to students and families at the school drive-by area.



In early October the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, the Peacekeeper Society of Yakima; Warm Springs Emergency Response and partners distribute supplies to households of the reservation. Quanh Spencer, tribal relations director with BNSF, coordinated the event with the Dan Martinez, director of tribal Emergency Response. As many as 600 tribal households showed up for the drive-through distribution.



Old Skool Bear in the New School World, multi media art by Brutis Baez—Judges Choice Award—Contemporary, Twenty-Seventh Tribal Member Art Show, November 2020, the Museum at Warm Springs.

Fisheries updates around Northwest Indian Country

In Idaho

After two decades of litigation, mitigation and field preparation, the sockeye salmon showed a promising return this year to Idaho’s Pettit Lake near Stanley, Idaho.

The thing is, a lot of people have given up on the Snake River sockeye. The challenges are enormous. Sockeye travel the farthest of all Idaho salmon, a journey of more than 900 miles and climbing more than 6,500 feet in elevation before they reach the Sawtooth Valley.

In 1999, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes filed a petition

with the National Marine Fisheries Service to list the sockeye as an endangered species in order to launch a recovery plan. The tribes have actively worked since then on that restoration.

In Washington State

Months after dam removal, Pilchuck River is showing signs of recovery

As water rushes along the Pilchuck River, it’s almost too loud to hear Brett Shattuck, a restoration ecologist with the Tulalip Tribes, ask his team whether they’ve spotted any fish.

They’re working their way

across the river to get a better glimpse of the location where a dam stood for more than 100 years. The tribe, along with roughly a dozen partner agencies, removed the dam for good in mid-August.

A little more than three months later, it’s hard to tell anything was ever there aside from a few chunks of concrete that remain near the riverbank. Last August, Shattuck said there was at best 50 salmon spotted above the dam. This year they’ve already spotted hundreds of coho in recent spawning surveys above the area where the dam once stood. A handful of chinook have been spotted too.

509-J teacher allegedly yelled at covid shutdown protestors

Last week the Jefferson County School District 509-J took disciplinary action against a teacher in the for yelling at protestors in downtown Bend. The incident allegedly happened over the previous weekend.

The teacher allegedly yelled at people who were rallying against the governor’s covid lockdown. Video of the teacher garnered a million and a half views on Twitter soon after it was posted. It showed her screaming to the protestors from

her car, giving them the finger, claiming the families of her students are dying and telling the protestors they should kill themselves.

The district would did not reveal the teacher’s name.

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