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Community update

The incidence of Covid-19 among the tribal community has been increasing in recent weeks, though fortunately the tribes have not seen a significant increase in hospitalizations and serious illness from the recent spike in cases. Still, the potential for spread of the virus remains a risk, said Caroline Cruz, general manager of Health and Human Services.

There are various means of tracking the incidence of covid in a community. Positive cases, for instance, are reported to the clinic. Additionally, a health organization—the OSU Covid-19 Wastewater Surveillance Team—provides covid spread estimates based on samples taken from community wastewater.

A recent report from the team, provided to Warm Springs IHS, Community Health and the tribes' Response Team, showed covid concentrations in wastewater samples of the Sunnyside and Warm Springs Agency lagoons as "some of the highest numbers we have had in a Warm Springs sampling since this form of testing began last summer."

The sample levels are rated as Low, Moderate, Strong and Very Strong. The samples from late July into August were in the Very Strong category. This requires the tribes to continue the precautions of masking in public tribal buildings, social distancing, sanitation of work places, testing, vaccine boosters, etc.

There were 30 known active cases among the tribal community as of mid last week, according to the recent report from the tribes' Covid-19 Response Team, IHS and Health and Human Services. This number brought the total confirmed cases in the community to 2,355 since the pandemic began in early spring 2020. Fortunately, no community member was hospitalized with covid, as of last week. Total hospitalizations since the pandemic began is at 130; and deaths, 36. See page 5 for more details.

Statement of the tribes

The following remains the policy of the Confederated Tribes within the reservation jurisdiction:

Everyone is encouraged to continue to take precautions to reduce the possible spread of covid.

Continue to avoid crowded spaces especially indoors, and consider wearing a facemask around large groups. Facemasks are required in tribal buildings. Use a home test kit for testing; and if it's positive, call Health and Wellness, 541-553-1196. There are treatments that can help, if administered shortly after contracting the virus.

Every home is eligible to order a free at-home covid test kits.

You can order online at covid.gov/tests

Or call 1-800-232-0233. Locally, you can pick up a home covid test kit at Emergency Management located at the former elementary school. And during evenings and on weekends, test kits are available at the Warm Springs Fire and Safety station on campus.

Tribes welcome new S-T, committees

Tribal Council has named Robert 'Bobby' Brunoe as Secretary-Treasurer of the Confederated Tribes. His first day on the job will be next Monday.

Mr. Brunoe has been the general manager of the Branch of Natural Resources since 1998. In all, he has worked for the tribal organization for 31 years.

"I want to help the tribes, and was asked to consider the position," Bobby says of his interest in taking on the responsibilities of S-T/CEO.

At Natural Resources the general manager, for now as interim, will be Austin Smith Jr., Wildlife biologist and Range and Agriculture manager.

Mr. Brunoe is taking over the tribes' S-T/CEO responsibilities from Glendon Smith, who has served in the role since July of last year.



Robert Brunoe, new S-T/CEO.

Committee appointments

The tribes also welcomed new committee and board members during a swearing in ceremony last week at the Agency Longhouse. Many members, including Tribal Council were on hand for the swearing-in occasion.

Council Chairman Jonathan Smith opened the meeting, welcoming the new committee members.



Culture and Heritage Committee members take the oath of office.

Councilmen Alvis Smith III, Jim Manion and Lincoln Jay Suppah also gave words of encouragement: "I want to thank you for stepping up," Councilman Suppah said to the new committee and board members.

The Twenty-Ninth Tribal Council weighed the applications of many great candidates for the eight committees plus the Gaming and Credit boards, Councilman Manion said.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Agency superintendent Brenda Bremner then administered the oath of office to the new members. The eight tribal committees are Culture and Heritage, Education, On-Reservation Fish and Wildlife, Off-Reservation Fish and Wildlife, Health and Welfare, Land Use Planning, Range, Irrigation and Agriculture, and the Timber Committee.

COMMITTEES continues on 5

Whitewater journey for tribal youth

In the sport of whitewater kayaking 'first descents' are major milestones: The term 'first descent' refers to being the first person or team to successfully kayak down a wild river—clearly a rare milestone for any kayaker. Two young kayakers of the Confederated Tribes—Julia Wolfe and Kiahna Allen—are training to make their unique first descents.

Julia and Kiahna are part of the Paddle Tribal Waters team, preparing to lead the first descent—perhaps in this case 'rescent'—of the Klamath River.

The girls are members of the 12-person indigenous youth team now taking intensive whitewater kayak training, in anticipation of



Kiahna Allen kayaking whitewater during recent training.

the removal of dams that are blocking the Klamath River.

Four dams on the river are set for removal by 2024. In the meantime, Kiahna, Julia and the others with the Paddle Tribal Waters team are honing their skills for the first descent of the undammed river.

Kiahna and Julia and Paddle Tribal Waters traveled recently to the Klamath basin in Northern California for kayak training. With the Warm Springs girls were tribal mem-

bers form the Yurok, Karuk, Hoopa Valley and Quartz Valley tribes, all of Northern California; as well as youth of the Klamath Tribes. To join the team all of them had to show good grades, letters of reference and well-written essays.

The groups Maqlaqs Paddle and Rios to Rivers organized the two-and-a-half-week training.

First, the team was greeted by the Yurok Tribal Council, who presented them with gifts courtesy of

Yurok Economic Development. For the training sessions themselves, Paddle Tribal Waters provided the team members with the diversity of skills required to safely run the river in a kayak.

The acclaimed World Class Kayak Academy and local Otter Bar Lodge Kayak School taught the teens every aspect of swift-water boating. This included how to identify risks and maneuver through large rapids.

The group also learned self-rescue techniques, how to read the water and much more. During the skill-building exercise, the youth worked on developing river advocacy skills too.

Paul Wilson, Rios to Rivers Storyteller, is co-founder of Maqlaqs Paddle, and a Klamath Tribes member. "Paddling has given me a way of experiencing rivers," Mr. Wilson said, "outside of just showing up to fight for rivers' health or for our traditional foods."

KAYAKERS continues on 5

New federal bill includes \$5 million for water

Federal funding to help address the Confederated Tribes water infrastructure is included in a new bill before the U.S. Senate. The Fiscal Year 2023 Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill includes \$5 million for the Confederated Tribes drinking water infrastructure. This is in addition to funding that was already allocated in the federal Bi-Partisan Infrastructure law of November 2021.

Oregon's U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden announced the latest \$5 million addition earlier this month. Both Senators for the past number of years have been advocating for a solution to the tribes' water infrastructure problems. This effort took on added emphasis in

2020, during the first year of the pandemic, when the tribes were contending with covid, along with a protracted water outage and boil water notice. A similar crisis happened again last summer.

Hearing of the proposed new federal legislation, Tribal Council Chairman Jonathan Smith commented, "Once again, Senators Merkley and Wyden have stepped up to help the Warm Springs tribes address our ongoing water crisis."

"This legislation would allow the tribes to dramatically improve reliable access to clean, running water to thousands of people living on the Warm Springs Reservation."

The bill also includes funding to strengthen forest health, protect public lands and the environment,

tackle climate change. As the chair of the U.S. Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, Sen. Merkley drafted the bill, helping ensure the priorities for communities across all of Oregon.

The Interior bill also includes funding to support wildfire management, as well as funding to support efforts to address the water crisis in the Klamath Basin. Some other points of interest in the proposed legislation:

The Columbia River Indian Treaty Fishing Access Sites: The bill provides \$4.5 million for Columbia River In-Lieu Treaty Sites, including \$1.3 million for fishing sites construction, to implement Senator Merkley's Columbia River In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites Improvement Act.

Tribal Programs and Ser-

vices: The bill includes \$11.4 billion in critical funding for tribal communities across the country; and for the first time, \$8 million to establish the Indian Reservation Drinking Water Program.

This program will address other tribal water infrastructure challenges like those facing Warm Springs.

The proposed law also provides an advance appropriation for fiscal year 2024 for the Indian Health Service to protect health care services funded by IHS to over 2.5 million Native Americans from future lapses in funding due to government shutdowns and unpredictable budget years.

The bill would provide \$8 million to expand tribal law enforcement programs to tribes that have historically been excluded from the programs.

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