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Recent incidence of covid in the community

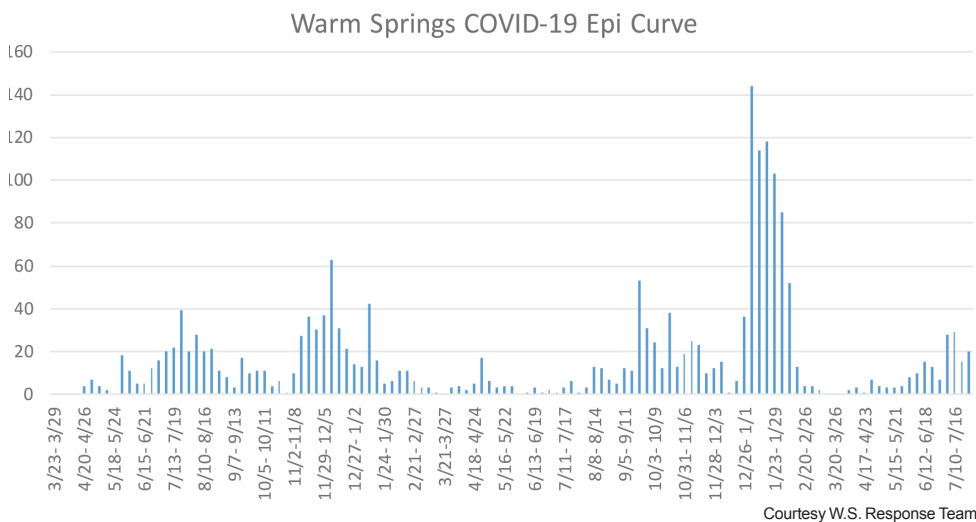


Chart showing incidence of Covid-19 in the tribal community since the pandemic began in March 2020. As shown, there has been a recent increase in known positive cases, as the tribes must continue the safety precautions.

Around Indian Country

Northwest tribes against Columbia energy project

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have joined other Northwest tribes in opposing an energy project at the Columbia River.

Most of the federally recognized tribes in Washington—now joined by Warm Springs, the Umatilla and Nez Perce—are pushing the Washington state government to deny permits to a developer, because its project along the Columbia River would mean the unavoidable destruction or damage to sites sacred to the area’s tribal nations.

Although the tribe sup-

ports developing more clean and renewable energy projects, tribal leaders have pledged to withhold support from a project “if it’s going to impact what we hold dear,” Yakama Nation Tribal Council member Jeremy Takala said.

Councilman Takala added this isn’t the only clean energy project—including other pumped storage proposals—on or slated for Yakama treaty lands that has raised concerns for the tribe.

“The tribe has said loud and clear that we do support green energy, but not at the cost of the destruction of

irreplaceable sites, especially if they have food, gathering or medicine uses,” Councilman Takala said.

The Yakama Nation has opposed the proposal from the beginning. And the three other tribes who have also traditionally used the land for ceremonial and resource purposes—the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Nez Perce Tribe—have said that the project would likely destroy or have serious consequences for sites and areas they also consider sacred.

Tribes: Agency is contributing to salmon decline

Damming the powerful waters of the Columbia River was a boon for cheap, clean electricity. But the fish that swam those waters are dying out. And the agency in charge isn’t stopping that.

Jeremy Takala, a biologist and member of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council, said the tribe has shovel-ready salmon habitat restoration projects waiting for funding.

“It’s really frustrating,” Takala said in a recent speech at a save-the-salmon rally in Portland. “BPA basically managing our funding source, it just does not make sense. It’s a really, really huge conflict that frustrates the tribes.”

Bonneville and its spending have factored heavily into

negotiations between salmon advocates and the Biden administration.

Jim McKenna, an adviser to Oregon Gov. Kate Brown who is involved in the negotiations, said Oregon, tribal nations and salmon advocates are asking the administration to greatly increase funding for fish hatcheries and habitat restoration, and to put tribes and other local fish and wildlife biologists directly in charge of how to spend the money.

“The bucket of money is woefully inadequate,” McKenna said. “And, Bonneville is not the agency that should be managing those funds.”

Ultimately, that funding is paramount to whether the government will honor the treaty, signed over 150 years ago, that assured the Yakama tribe of its right to take fish where they always had “at all usual and accustomed places.”

Bill Bosch, who has spent decades working for the Yakama Nation’s fisheries program, said the federal government must fully fund tribes’ hatcheries and habitat efforts, unless it intends to spend the money itself on removing dams and restoring the natural river.

“If you’re not willing to fund one or the other of those,” Bosch said, “then are you basically saying you’re going to abrogate the treaty?”

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