

# Kah-Nee-Ta: 2024 summer opening

(from page 1)

Skibowl soon took off, with major improvements and expanding in many innovative ways. “I’ve had a great team around me,” Kirk says. More recently, his resort interests have come to Central Oregon, as he owns and operates nearby Lake Simustus Resort & Marina.

Kirk and Derek have made an effort for years to help celebrate and share with guests the connection of the Confederated Tribes to the area of Skibowl, part of the tribes’ ceded lands.

Regarding Kah-Nee-Ta, since they were young and growing up, the Hannas visited the resort when it was among the most successful attractions in the region. And like many people in recent years, they don’t like seeing Kah-Nee-Ta in disuse and disrepair.

For these reasons, joining the tribes and WSED on the Kah-Nee-Ta renovation was natural.

In 2022 with the original renovation plan, Tribal Council agreed to provide \$4.5 million for the improvements to the whole Village area; and \$1.5 million for the infrastructure of the lagoons that serve the Village and community.

Tribal Utilities has now completed the lagoon upgrade, as renovation work on the Village will continue into the first part of next year. An issue that the Kah-Nee-Ta team and Tribal Council have addressed recently is the addition of new funding to finish the job in order to reopen.

As Kirk Hanna mentioned above, renovating a 60-plus year old property will bring unforeseen challenges. As it turned out, a big problem at Kah-Nee-Ta was the underground infrastructure of water lines, especially for the large area of the pools. The original water lines from the early 1960s had

to be wholly replaced; and the pump house was also unsalvageable, Mr. Souers said. These were among the unforeseen expenses amounting to close to \$3 million.

Moving forward now, the team could have taken out a bank loan, and they had a potential agreement though the terms were expensive, as often happens with on-reservation outside lending. They talked again with Tribal Council, who instead agreed to loan the project \$2.9 million.

“I am so thankful that our leadership made the decision support us so we can finish the resort as a first class destination,” Souers said. The tribes will now receive the loan interest payments, instead of the outside bank; and the renovation project saves because the repayment terms are better.

## Hiring 100 employees

The best projection at this time is that the Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort will open in the summer of 2024. Looking toward this, Derek Hanna says the team will be looking to hire 100 employees.

Kah-Nee-Ta is committed to hiring locally among the tribal community. “Our main reason for really getting into this was to help the Warm Springs people, and the biggest way to do that is to help the youth and others who need employment,” Derek said.

“We’re going to do what we need to do to hire locally. Obviously we need to train, and we need to educate, and that’s what Skibowl brings to the table—Kirk Hanna Owned Companies with its 500 employees, with over 100 department managers, with seven restaurants, with our mountain managers, with everything we have. They’re all part of our

team and they’re all going to help in making Kah-Nee-Ta successful.”

## The new Village

A brief overview of some of the features at the renovated Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort:

- The Natural Hot Springs water, a star feature of the Village, will for the first time feed three large soaking pools of varying temperatures from 92 to 102 degrees F; and one clover shaped youth soaking pool.

- The four soaking pools will include the largest in Oregon; and importantly, the pools include handicap accessible accommodations. The largest pool will have an accessibility ramp for waterproof wheelchairs.

- The recreational pools will include a lazy river-like pool with a flowing current surrounding an inner pool. There will also be a children’s zero depth entrance play

pool.

Some other new features will include twenty semi-private Natural Hot Springs four- to six-person soaking tubs overlooking the Warm Springs River. Also, in the pool area there will be 15 shade cabanas each with a mini-refrigerator, sofa and personal device power source. The greatly expanded lounging area around the pools is also new and will include 30 smaller two-person shade cabanas.

The tribal member only bath house will be updated and expanded by replacing the one indoor soaking tub with two four- to six-person Natural Hot Springs soaking tubs, and adding two more of those tubs in a semi-private outdoor area.

- The resort entrance area is being expanded to include a courtyard that will feature a large shade tent, with space for 200 people, also available to host special events. Nearby is the performance stage, permanent salmon bake area and recreational activities such as miniature golf, play area, and the basketball and pickle ball court.

For further accommodation there is the 30-room motel, 20 teepees and 50 RV sites, including an RV Recreation Center, new restaurant and pool side snack bars. The RV clubhouse and recreational center has restrooms, showers, and self-service laundry facility.

A new activity at the Village will be the Warm Springs River 3-mile tube river float with shuttle pick up.

The motel is being fully renovated, and is now in the final stages of completion. The rooms range from three bedroom suites that can accommodate up to 12 guests; or individual rooms that can accommodate four guests.

At the Teepee Village, there will be 20 new authentic teepees, with two designed specifically for disability access and parking. The teepees are 30 feet tall and 27 feet in diameter.

*These are to just some of the resort’s many features, as discussed further in the next Spilyay Tymoo.*

— Dave McMechan


**Warm Springs Recreation Department Presents:**

## Christmas Ndn Night out

### MC: Ray "Captain" Moody

Open to all  
Dancers for Exhibitions

Raffle for Prizes-  
Need to be present


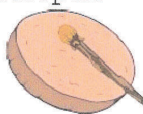


Open to all  
Drum Groups

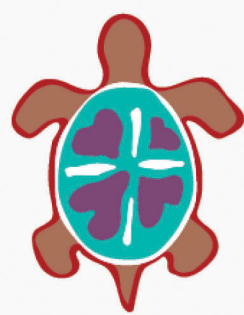
Family Fun Games

Monday December 18, 2023  
Community Center Gym  
Bring your favorite dish for everyone to enjoy at the  
5:15pm potluck  
Social Dance and Drummers Jam at 6:00pm.

## Bring your own hand drum

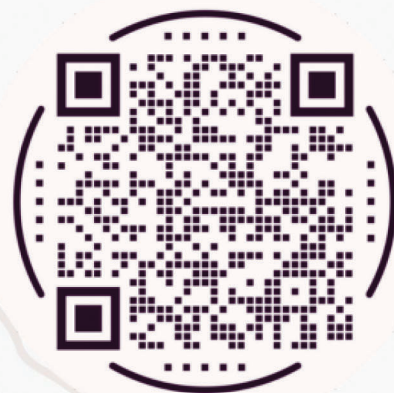



For more info contact recreation dept. at 541-553-3243/3244.



## STRONGHEARTS Native Helpline

24/7 safe, confidential and anonymous domestic and sexual violence helpline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, offering culturally-appropriate support and advocacy.



**Call, Chat, or Text 24/7**  
**strongheartshelpline.org**  
**1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)**

