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Plan to restore fisheries was work of tribes

A federal plan that may in time require the breaching of the four dams on the Lower Snake River came about because of planning and work led by the four Columbia River treaty tribes: The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and the Nez Perce Tribe.

In a series of commitments announced a few weeks ago, the federal government agreed to fund green energy projects led by the four Columbia River Native nations intended to replace the energy generated by the four dams in the Lower Snake River.

The plan may set the stage for the breaching of the dams in the next decade, or the timespan of about two generations of salmon. This is the latest development in a long-running lawsuit filed more than two decades ago over government operations of federal dams, which have pushed salmon and steelhead to the brink of extinction. Dams are the main problem preventing recovery for 10 of the 16 salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia River Basin, according to a 2022 report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

This year, the four Columbia River treaty tribes—Warm Springs, Yakama, Umatilla and Nez Perce—developed the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative. This was a response to a prolonged attempt at mediation, where online meetings often included more than 200 representatives with dramatically differing views, struggling to make progress toward a viable plan. Then the tribes took the lead on inviting federal involvement in the plan they had created.

The tribes' restoration initiative, and the federal response to it, became the U.S. Government Commitments document filed in the case in mid December 2023.

If approved by the court, the plan outlined in that document would build on recommendations from Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty Murray, calling for the breaching of the dams as a crucial part of salmon recovery. In their recommendations, Inslee and Murray noted that the energy generated by the dams, along with other services they provide, would need to be replaced before the breaching could actually occur. A viable plan to replace what the dams provide is also key to persuading Congress to approve breaching.

The December court filings provide just such a plan.

For the four Columbia River treaty tribes, the agreement has additional meaning. "It honors the federal government's promise to us in the treaty of 1855," said Corinne Sams, chair of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and Umatilla tribes board member.

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A count of those who need a home

Helping to address a need for the people and the community

Of course, everyone needs a home, yet there are some who go without this basic need, here on the reservation as everywhere. The number of homeless people can be surprising: The 2023 Point in Time Count found that among the tribal community of the reservation, at least 70 people were living 'unsheltered.'

The Point-in-Time Count is a count of the sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. This Count is held nationally as well as locally by the Confederated Tribes' Health and Human Services Branch. Dayle Tufti is the Health Data Coordinator of the branch, and is coordinating the event with several tribal programs, IHS programs, Indian Head Casino, Thrive of Central Oregon, Neighbor-Impact and the Homeless Leadership Coalition.

The 2024 Point in Time Count will happen on Tuesday, January 23 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the school gym of the former Warm Springs elementary school. A meal catered by Indian Head Casino's Cottonwood Restaurant will be served throughout the day. There will be health and resource information booths. If possible, flu vaccines as well as covid boosters will be available. Blood pressure and blood sugar checks, as well as rapid testing for syphilis will also be available. (There has been a nationwide surge in the number of syphilis cases. Fortunately, our local numbers are not rising as quickly.)

Because Warm Springs is such a tight-knit community and we are all family, homelessness

A new approach at Housing

The Warm Springs Housing Authority this spring is planning to finish construction work on the Permanent Supportive Housing project. Designed to help the chronically homeless members of the community, the project is unique in a number of ways.

For instance, this is the first time that Housing has received a state grant for the work, said Danielle Wood, Housing Authority executive director. The Permanent Supportive Housing project is also the first time that Housing is formally partnering with another department of the tribes, in this case Behavioral Health.

Housing is taking care of the construction aspect of the units, and will also do the long-term maintenance. The Behavioral Health team will be working with the individuals who in time will



D. McMechan/Spilyay

The work should be finishing up within a few months at the new Permanent Supportive Housing units.

be living there.

Housing and Behavioral Health will work together to determine the process for approving the tenant applicants, as there are requirements in meeting the grant conditions, Danielle said. The first condition in order to receive the grant, for instance, was that Housing partner with a professional care service such as Behavioral Health.

Ten of the Permanent Supportive Housing units, each 600 square feet in size, are located in the Trailer Court neighborhood at the Dips. These units are one-bed-

room, designed for one or two people. The project also includes a duplex on Wasco Street on campus that is for chronic homeless families with children. This building is currently being wholly renovated.

The five-acre area with the 10 units will also include a Service Center, available to the Behavioral Health team for counseling services for the tenants.

Along with the state grant, the Indian Health Service has funded the infrastructure work, and the BIA the road work.

is a community-wide issue; and is especially dangerous for the homeless themselves, Dayle said. "Living out in the elements, people are at a high risk of crime and violence, illness and death," she said. "The lifespan of a homeless person is nearly 18 years shorter than the average."

In addition to the individual suffering at night in the cold, he or she may also be struggling with addiction or a mental illness. In the worst cases at times, families are homeless.

Some hopeful news is that help is available through many services of the tribes, for those who wish to change. To get a better idea of the situation at the present time, tribal Health and Human Services and their partners will conduct the 2024 Point-In-Time Homeless Count,

January 23.

The homeless count is to estimate the number of individuals or families who are living without permanent shelter, those who are sleeping in a vehicle or RV without a hookup, a tent, bus stop shelter, doorway, park, overnight shelter, etc. The Point-In-Time Count workers also want to estimate the number of people in the community who are living in imminent threat of becoming unsheltered.

The team in addition seeks to assess the number of people in the community who are living in sheltered locations, though in a situation that is not desirable. This can include, for instance: In homes of friends or relatives, or with a succession of friends or relatives; or

long-term homeless shelters. There are several multi-family homes on the reservation. The individuals and families who complete the survey can help give an idea of the need for additional housing units, whether apartments, duplexes or single-family homes.

The Warm Springs Housing Authority is currently preparing a Community Survey to assess the housing needs. One of their staff will be on hand to share information with the community.

The count also helps raise awareness of the problem, and identifies gaps in services, capturing the extent of the homeless issue, while recording the key data for funding opportunities and planning.

Point-in-Time *continues on 10*

Tribes well represented among art fellowship winners

Four Oregon artists, including Scott Kalama of the Confederated Tribes, this week received Fields Artist Fellowships, among the largest artistic fellowship awards in the country.

Along with Scott, film director LaRonn Katchia, also of the tribes, was among the eight finalists for the 2024 fellowships.

Mr. Kalama leads drum-making classes and music workshops for youth, and performs as Blue Flamez. He is a Native American Music Award winner for music and video productions. Scott works at Warm Springs Prevention.

LaRonn is a documentary filmmaker, director and cinematographer, based in Portland.

The Fields Artist Fellowships are sponsored by the Oregon Humanities in partnership with



Oregon Humanities

Two sides of musician and drum-making teacher Scott Kalama.

Oregon Community Foundation. The fellowships are for individuals whose work cultivates social change in their communities. To help fund

and further their work, the fellowship recipients receive \$150,000 each over the course of two years. The additional eight finalists re-

ceive a one-time award of \$10,000.

The 2024 fellowships represent an investment in individual artists and their communities, and a significant commitment to Oregon's arts in a time when many artists and arts organizations are facing financial challenges.

"Like Oregon Humanities, Oregon Community Foundation believes that meaningful creativity and cultural expression are essential cornerstones for vibrant and healthy communities," said Lisa Mensah, president of the Oregon Community Foundation.

"We are thrilled to support the Fields Artist Fellowship program and the creative potential of these talented Oregonians who are bridging divides in their communities every day through art and inclusion. These artists help inspire joy, spur economic growth and strengthen our communities."



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