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Referendum next month

In the U.S. there are close to 50 tribally-owned cannabis retail business enterprises in eight states, mostly in California, Nevada and Washington state. This is a growing industry, as seen most recently in North Carolina, where the East Band of Cherokee are looking to open a cannabis retail store next month.

The membership of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs will decide in a less than a month, on Wednesday, April 3, whether the tribes should also enter the business. The proposal is by Warm Springs Economic Development and the CP Enterprise, who requested the referendum, and approved at Tribal Council. Referendum approval of the retail proposal could help carry out the tribal 2015 cannabis referendum. The specific question on April 3 reads:

“Shall the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation authorize the Tribal Council to: Allow, license, regulate and operate a tribally-owned retail sales facility to be located on-reservation and/or on trust land for sales of marijuana and related products for the legal possession and use of small quantities of marijuana by adults 21 years of age or older on-reservation.”

Warm Springs artists featured in new show

Tananáwit:: A Community of Artists is a new exhibit opening at the Art Adventure Gallery in Madras. The show opens this Thursday, March 7 and will be on display through April 27.

The Tananáwit Shop and Gallery is located at the Indian Head Casino plaza, suites 4 and 5.

Tananáwit—Artistic creativity from Tananáwit artists—is partnering with the Art Adventure Gallery is presenting the upcoming Madras show. Another partner is the Jefferson County Arts Association.

Spring Break Powwow & Drummerz Jam

The Spring Break Social Powwow—‘Easter is upon us’—and Drummerz Jam are coming up on Monday, March 25. Hosted by Warm Springs Recreation, the Social Powwow will be at the Community Center gymnasium starting at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a dish if you would like, because there will also be a potluck at 5:30 p.m. The Master of Ceremonies will be Councilman Captain Moody. For more information call 541-553-3243.

Miss Warm Springs Pageant in March

The Miss Warm Springs Pageant is coming up on Friday evening, March 22 at the Agency Longhouse. The 2024 Pageant will carry on the tradition that began 55 years ago, in 1969, when Dorothy ‘Pebbles’ George was chosen Miss Warm Springs. Fourteen years earlier, in 1955, a Treaty Centennial Queen was

chosen to mark the anniversary of the Treaty of 1855. Kathleen Heath was the Centennial Queen.

To date, forty women have served as Miss Warm Springs. Miss Warm Springs is honored as a cultural ambassador of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and as a role model for the community.

The Pageant showcases the can-

didates knowledge of the history of the tribes, culture and lanuate, traditional foods and ceremonies. Once crowned, Miss Warm Springs is the cultural ambassador for the Confederated Tribes, attending and speaking at public functions in the community, regionally and nationally.

Additionally, Miss Warm Springs attends local events like Lincoln’s

Day and Pi-Ume-Sha powwows, Museum at Warm Springs functions, other tribal enterprise gatherings, as well as regional and national conferences.

If you have questions, stop by the Tribal Council office and speak with Sandra or Minnie; or email: minnie.yahtain@wstribes.org sandra.danzuka@wstribes.org

Future of region’s water at issue in lawsuit

The Confederated Tribes by the Treaty of 1855 have the right to harvest fish in the usual and accustomed locations, including the Deschutes River basin. As the federal treaty is the supreme law of the land, the state of Oregon is obligated on its part to help ensure a harvestable fish population.

The groundwater of the Deschutes basin is a basic source of water for the Deschutes River, allowing a stable stream water flow. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs holds the most senior right to water in the river, dating back to treaty.

Meanwhile for decades now, the ground water level in the basin has been declining. In some places, such as parts of Deschutes County, the declines are a foot or more each year. This clearly is a concern for the future.

A planned new destination resort, the Thornburgh project in Deschutes County, calls for close to 1,000 new homes



Aerial view of the proposed development site.



Location of the site outside of Redmond.

around a golf course and man-made lake, and the project would rely on groundwater.

The Deschutes County Board of Commissioners approved this project, which has been challenged by various parties for the past 17 years.

The tribes took the case to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, which earlier this year approved the county decision.

In protection of the treaty rights and the water resource itself, the Confederated Tribes are now appealing the case to the Oregon Court of Appeals.

A key issue is the Thornburgh

resort Fish and Wildlife Mitigation plan. The tribes contend the plan failed to consider the fishing clause of the 1855 Treaty.

“The Deschutes River and its tributaries are in our homelands, and we have lived and fished on these waters since time immemorial,” said Robert Brunoe, Secretary-Treasurer of the Confederated Tribes.

“The land and water impacted by the 2022 Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Plan lie within our ceded territory where we retain treaty-protected rights to take fish and to have fish to take.

“Our Tribal knowledge—both

scientific and cultural—is essential to deliver a healthy fishery for our people. The Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners, and then the Land Use Board of Appeals, clearly overlooked that our expertise, voice and knowledge isn’t optional in their decision-making processes.

“We’re asking the State Court to correct those unfortunate decisions in order to respect our treaty rights, co-management responsibilities, and sovereign interests when it comes to the fish resources of the Deschutes Basin.”

Tribal, state and federal agreement on salmon

Leaders of the four treaty tribes of the Columbia River, and the governors of Oregon and Washington gathered recently in Washington, D.C. to sign a long-term agreement regarding the future of Northwest fisheries.

Among the provisions of the agreement is a federal funding commitment of up to \$1 billion for fisheries projects. The parties also agreed to pause litigation over the management of the river system, in particular regarding the Columbia system dam operations.

The agreement is between the federal government on the one side, and ‘six sovereigns’ on the other, the six sovereigns being the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Yakama, Umatilla and Nez Perce; and Oregon and Washington.

A notable aspect of the new approach, as embodied in the agreement, is that tribes will have more say over the spill times and rates at the Columbia dams, as operated by the



Tribal Council Chairman Jonathan Smith signs the agreement on behalf of the Confederated Tribes, at a February gathering in the Treaty Room of the Eisenhower executive office by the White House.

Bonneville Power Administration. Another aspect is that tribal treaty rights are treated as a priority among the guiding principles in reaching a consensus, commented Austin Smith Jr., general manager of the Confederated Tribes’ Branch of Natural Resources.

Litigation over the fisheries situation of the Columbia basin could have taken years or more, while the

situation is already dire. The parties came to an agreement in late 2023 after years of negotiation among tribes, the states, environmental groups and federal agencies.

The tribal leaders, governors and federal administration officials met in February in Washington, D.C. for the signing ceremony; though the deal has been in effect since the parties signed a memorandum

of agreement in December.

By the Treaty of 1855, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs ceded ten million acres of tribal homeland to the federal government, commented Jonathan W. Smith Sr., Council chairman. At the same time, Chairman Smith said, the treaty promised indefinite fishing rights, and that fish would always be available in the tribe’s traditional areas.

“It is an unfortunate truth that development in the Pacific Northwest, including in the energy sector, proceeded without, and in many cases hostile to, consideration for the treaty rights, traditional knowledge, and cultural identity of the treaty tribes,” Councilman Smith said.

“Living up to past promises, and using our indigenous knowledge is crucial to advancing an equitable and just future in the Columbia Basin. I would like to thank the administration for its leadership in recognizing the need to depart from business as usual, and work towards effective lasting change,” he said.



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*Total cash & prizes in March.

