

The tribes, the river, fish and the dams

Federal report details impact of Columbia, Snake River dams on tribes, fish

The construction of dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers has harmed the river treaty tribes and the traditional resources, the federal government is now admitting for the first time.

“It’s a landmark report,” said Tribal Council Chairman Jonathan Smith Sr. “I think this report strengthens our sovereignty, and prioritizes the federal trust responsibilities.”

That the Columbia basin dams have harmed fish, other river resources and the tribes and tribal communities is a fact the tribes have known for decades, since the construction of the first large-scale dams in the 1930s. Federal court cases in the past have also made findings with the same conclusion. This new report—the “Tribal Circumstances Analysis,” published by the U.S. Department of the Interior—is the first time these facts are stated as a basis of policy. Carrying out this policy, “Starts with the restoration of treaty resources throughout our traditional lands,” Chairman Smith said.

The 73-page Tribal Circumstances Analysis reviews the historic, ongoing, and cumulative impacts of federal Columbia River dams on Columbia River Basin Tribes, and provides recommendations for how the federal government can uphold



Courtesy Oregon Historical Society

its trust responsibilities to the tribes by acknowledging and addressing these impacts with future actions. “This is not just about us but all the tribes and communities of the basin,” Chairman Smith said.

The report describes the Columbia River tribes relationship with the river, from time immemorial to the present; a history of the construction of the dams, and the effect on the tribes and the river quality itself, fish and other aquatic life.

The final chapter is a series of three overall recommendations, starting with: ‘Prioritize the United States’ treaty and trust responsibilities by protecting and enhancing the

resources the tribes depend on for survival.’ A second recommendation is to acknowledge and integrate the facts into the National Environmental Protection Act analyses of proposed federal actions.

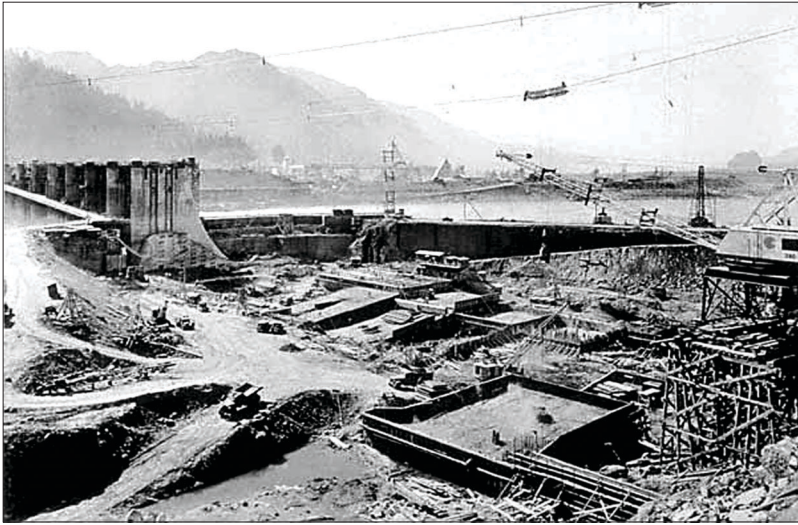
And a final recommendation is to ‘Support actions that strengthen tribal sovereignty and achieve healthy and abundant populations of salmon, other aquatic species and wildlife.’

The tribes worked with the Interior Department this year, meeting with officials at the Columbia, so they could see first-hand the importance of the river to tribal people. “They actually got to experience it

rather just read about it,” Smith said. In its conclusion the report reads:

“For over a century, the Columbia River Basin Tribes have fought to protect their people, culture, lands, and resources from the myriad threats they face. Understanding, documenting and better analyzing that history, much of which continues today, is only one part of the work that needs to be done. The next step is using this understanding to advance results on the ground..., but the perilous state of salmon and other species require impactful immediate next steps... In close collaboration with the tribes, the government should build on the progress made and work to prioritize near-term tangible actions that address and seek to better the circumstances described in this report.”

— Dave McMechan



Tribal fishing (top photo) at Celilo Falls; and construction site in 1936 at Bonnaville dam.

Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort & Spa set to reopen in mid July

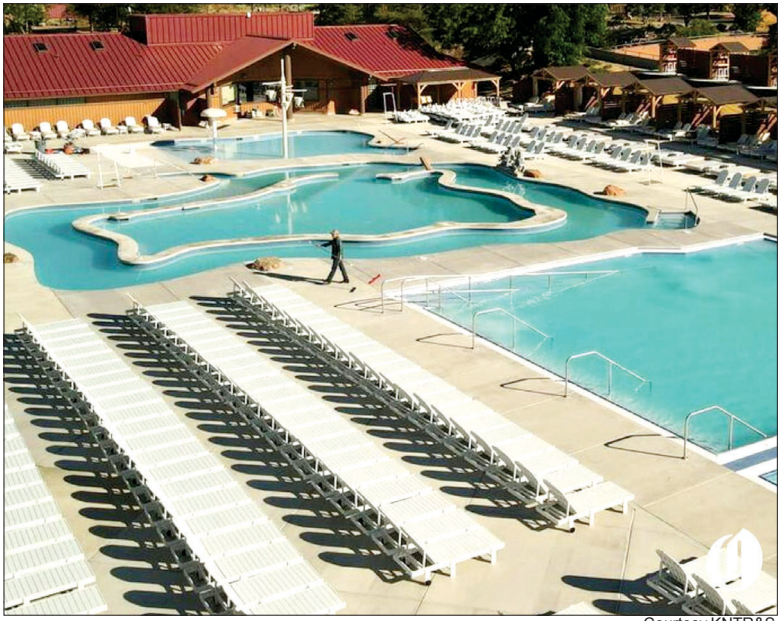
The Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort team announced this month a resort reopening day of mid July. “Join us in mid-July for the revitalized experience of a lifetime!” as the announcement reads.

In recent months, Kah-Nee-Ta has shared photos and renovation updates, including the new pools and private soaking tubs, remodeled hotel rooms and hand-painted teepees, among the other new features.

Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs, having first opened in the early 1960s, was very popular for decades. Then the hot springs and pool had to close five and a half years ago, when the Kah-Nee-Ta Lodge itself also closed.

Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort is now completely remodeled and rebuilt to top level resort standards. The tribes are working with partner SkiBowl on the reopening.

The resort team has been recruiting for the many new job positions at the resort. For information on an employment opportunity, stop by the Indian Head Casino Human Resources office at the Plaza by the casino.



Courtesy KNTR&S

A preview of some of the pool and deck work at the Resort & Spa.

As background, the Tribal Council in 2022 approved funding to expand and bring Kah-Nee-Ta back to life. This allowed the partnership with SkiBowl.

The new Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort will include a total of seven pools, as well as 15 VIP pool- and river side cabanas. The larger main pools include a children’s spray pool, a sports pool,

a lazy river and soaking pools. There will also be three wellness soaking pools, ranging from 92 to 103 degrees.

The resort is fully handicap accessible, including with the most convenient access into the pools.

The employment positions at Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort are full- and part-time with flexible hours and great pay.

Lil’ Miss Warm Springs



Courtesy Lil’ Miss Warm Springs/Recreation

At the 2024 Lil’ Miss Warm Springs Pageant this month, Ashlyn Wolfe was chosen as Senior Lill’ Miss Warm Springs (second from left by Miss Warm Springs Kahmussa Green); Lil’ Miss Warm Springs is Zariah Medina-Wallulatam; and Junior Miss Warm Springs Alisha Yallup. Warm Springs Recreation hosted the Pageant. Every contestant served a traditional meal, gave a presentation on themselves, showed a talent, Traditionally danced, and answered questions from the judges. *Congratulations to all of the contestants and their families on an amazing pageant!*

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