

NATIVE NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

Community Service for Whaling Protestor Hit by Boat

SEATTLE, WA. (AP) — Erin Abbott was sentenced to perform 120 hours of community service in September for interfering with the Makah whale hunt last April.

Charged with violating the 500-yard moving exclusionary zone around the hunt, Abbott could have faced up to six years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Abbott charged her boat in front of a group of Makah hunters who were attempting to harpoon a whale. Abbott was subsequently run over by a Coast Guard boat that was on the water to protect the hunters.

Abbott had her shoulder broken in the incident, which was broadcast on

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television. Her lawyers said they would file a civil lawsuit against the Coast Guard.

Last June the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ordered the federal government to take another look into the environmental impact of the Makah whale hunt.

It is now up to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to conduct a new assessment of the Makah hunt. The NMFS, along with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce have supported the Makah's right to hunt whale,

secured in the 1855 Treaty of Neah Bay, ever since the Makah expressed their interest in renewing their most ancient traditions.

A new review could take several months, but for the Makah, who waited more than 70 years to begin the hunt after commercial exploitation worldwide decimated the gray whale population, the ruling is not likely to have much of an immediate effect. With the current whaling season ending in less than a month, no new whaling permits had been issued by the Makah Whaling Commission.

For animal rights activists who have long protested the hunt, the ruling was seen as a significant decision in their favor.

Tiny Tribe Can't Catch a Break, Mighty Pacific Ocean Pounds Away

TOKELAND, WA. (AP) — The tiny Shoalwater Bay Tribe, already struggling with a mysteriously high miscarriage rate and tussling with the federal government over slot machines at its casino, is facing a new crisis from the sea.

Erosion is slowly eating away at the Tribe's square mile of land that lies near sea level at the mouth of Willapa Bay in southwest Washington. Dunes that 20 years ago formed a natural jetty as tall as 15 feet now are only 1 or 2 feet high. Washington Highway 105, which runs along the beachfront, often is all that holds the Pacific at bay.

"I call it a dike, because that's essentially what it is," Tribal Chairman Herbert Whitish said of the road.

Winter's high winds and tides could cut farther into the dunes. The ocean could then "come over the road and wash out the reservation or wash out the highway," Whitish said recently.

For the remote reservation, "that road is our lifeline," he said. "It's something that's very much needed

for the existence of this Tribe."

The erosion also threatens tidal mudflats that are home to fish, shellfish and waterfowl.

"It's bad. It really is," said consultant Jay May, a former U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employee hired by the Tribe to help find a long-term fix.

May and Whitish said homes 50 feet from the shoreline could be threatened by a bad storm.

"The one last line of defense has been breached. It's broken through big time," May said.

The corps is preparing to dump 145,000 cubic yards of material from a nearby dredging project into the area of the breached dunes next week, but that's only a stopgap measure.

The State of Washington's congressional delegation is trying to get money for a study by the Army Corps that could produce a long-term solution, but legislation to authorize such an undertaking is stuck in the House.

A corresponding appropriations bill, which would provide money for such a project is further along in the Capi-

itol Hill pipeline and likely will go to the White House without any mention of the \$1.5 million the Corps says it would need to conduct such a study.

Erosion is only the most recent crisis for the Shoalwaters.

The 247-member Tribe is the subject of a Center's for Disease Control and Prevention study of an alarmingly high miscarriage rate over the past several years.

As one of the poorest Tribes in the state, the Shoalwaters had high hopes for employment from the Tribal casino, but that venture has struggled since federal marshals last year seized its 108 slot machines — illegal under state law.

Whitish said he does not believe waterfront erosion was a problem in the past. He believes manmade changes — structures in the harbor and a jetty on the Columbia River to the south — have changed the way sediments are moved around the area, washing out to sea some materials that used to come ashore and maintain the existing geography.

The corps is aware of those concerns, said Larry Scudder in the agency's Seattle office.

Solutions have not yet been determined, but Scudder said possibilities include annual building up of the dunes to deflect storm surges, or construction of a jetty or rock face.

"I don't think there's any question that this is a serious problem," he said.

The measure would authorize the corps to proceed with a two-year study, following appropriation of funds, Scudder said.

At this point, "there are no funds identified at all for this project" in the energy-and-water appropriations bill, Scudder said.

The corps has spent about \$100,000 gathering preliminary data about tides in Willapa Bay. It will need an estimated \$1.5 million over the next two years to complete its analysis of erosion at the reservation.

But without authorizing language, lawmakers will have a tough time getting the money appropriated for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1.

Activist Calls for Boycott of Big Squaw Mountain Ski Resort

PORTLAND, ME. (AP) — An American Indian activist recently called for a boycott of Big Squaw Mountain because the ski resort's owner declined to change the name despite protests that the word "squaw" is offensive.

David "Spirit Bear" Walton, a driving force behind a state law enacted last year that requires new names for places like Big Squaw Township, accused the owner of the Greenville resort of arrogance in his refusal to change the name.

Resort owner Jim Confalone "must be made to realize that he has to forfeit the name or he will forfeit the dollars," Walton said.

Confalone, who maintains that squaw is a term of endearment, not an insult, said he has no plans to change the resort's name because he has received support from Mainers for keeping it the way it is.

"I'm quite fond of Indians. The last

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thing I'd ever want to do is something that would hurt the Indians," said Confalone, whose resort is exempted from the state law because it is a private entity.

Two Tribal representatives to the Maine Legislature said the word squaw translates roughly to "whore."

In all, about two dozen Maine Mountains, waterways and other features bearing the name are affected by the law, which bars the word from the names of public places across the state.

Confalone said state lawmakers

rejected the views of a majority of residents. "A small band of Indians went up there and literally ambushed the Legislature without anyone's input," he said.

In a telephone interview from Miami, he said that he has studied the history of Indians, and that he and others interpret the word squaw to be a term of endearment applied to the female head of household.

Nonetheless, he said he would be willing to meet face-to-face with Walton, whose group is called American Indian Movement, Northeast

Woodlands. Only then, after hearing for himself why the word is offensive, would Confalone begin to consider changing the resort's name.

"Squaw Mountain is part of our history, and before I change the history of Squaw Mountain and the rest of the area, I've got to hear from David "Spirit Bear" Walton and meet him," he said.

Confalone said that based on his observations, he believes 75 percent or more of Mainers support keeping the name.

But he suggested that Confalone was making things harder on himself by his attitude. "Confalone's arrogant stance is contrary to the spirit of the Maine Legislature," he said in a statement.

Big Squaw Mountain Resort consists of about 1,200 acres. The state also owns about 2,000 acres on the southern half of the mountain. Additional land is owned by Plum Creek Timber Co.