

Tribal Council Candidate Forum Held, 15 Show

By Peta Tinda

There was no shortage of tough questions for the 15 Tribal Council candidates at the annual candidate's forum, a chance for Tribal members to ask the candidates about issues facing the Grand Ronde Tribe.

The event was held on July 6 at the Community Center. Coffee was served, and the annual candidate forum got under way.

Each of the candidates stood up and addressed the Tribe, called out their roll number and gave his or her reasons for wanting to be on the Tribal Council.

Then the questioning began. Many Tribal members wanted to know what exactly each candidate was going to do, should they get elected. They also had many questions for the Tribal Council members seeking re-election.

The questions being asked reflected the concerns facing many Tribal members today. The questions were about sovereignty, enrollment, benefits, and other issues that are of importance to Tribal members.

**Election Day
September 7
Community Center**

**Election
Board Office
503-879-2271**



New View — A new, elevated viewing area for Tribal Elders was put up at the Tribe's pow-wow grounds in Grand Ronde. Maintenance Techs Duke Olson and Lenny Logan are shown here working on the platforms. The platforms will be handicapped accessible and provide shade from the sun and a good view of the events.



Photos by Peta Tinda

Natives Sell Summer Catch To Public On Columbia River

Catch continued from front page

lic land at the river's edge, which is reserved for Native fishing.

"We can be here as long as we're fishing but then they run us off. I don't even know who governs these sites," he said.

Indians have treaty rights to fish all year around for subsistence, and can always sell their catch to other Indians. When it comes to selling to the general public, however, they are beholden to the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, run by four Columbia River Basin Tribes — Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Nez Perce. The arbitrary nature of these seasons contributes to the difficulties in making them pay.

"The week before the season started," said Sutterliet, "we had to check the nets every thirty minutes, and they'd be filled with ten or so fish."

In the middle of the commercial season on Saturday (July 6), after two hours of non-stop customers, Sutterliet's son took a run down to the platform net but now the net held only two fish, a sock-eye and a lonely steelhead.

Sutterliet sounded, nevertheless, like a man building a business. He asked his customers, many of whom he said are repeats, to "order in advance," for the second summer season slated for later in July.

"We're going to have three flavors of smoked salmon," he said.

To make the most of the unpredictable situation, Sutterliet had arrangements with other fishers along the river to sell him fish wholesale to keep his own outlet stocked for the public.

The public, like the fish, came

in waves. They were a mixed bag of diehards like Steve Orgel, a database manager for a Portland utility, who said he drives out for all of the Natives' commercial seasons. He usually buys between 25-50 pounds of fish for fillets and for smoking. And then there were the family guys like Erik Nilson, also of Portland, who said, "It's just fun for the kids. We're also going to the Bonneville Dam."

With authorized commercial seasons as sporadic as fish runs, Indi-



Photos by Ron Karter

Business Unusual — Native American fishermen have the treaty right to fish on the Columbia River, but irregular seasons and tricky fishing conditions make earning a living hard. This summer, for the first time in two generations, Native fishermen, like Frank Sutterliet and his son Willard were allowed to sell their Summer Chinook catch to the public. Willard, 14, is shown here pulling a fish and loading up a customer's bag at Fort Rains on the Washington side of the Columbia River.

ans serving this public divide their time between the fishing, cleaning, smoking, and selling. On the Oregon side of the river, Nathan Dick, a Umatilla Indian, said he rose at sunrise each morning to make the weekend pay. He was just about all in by noon on Saturday. His fin-

gers shook as he repaired the netting he had been using on the platform. He had no more fish to sell.

Early in the morning, when the dams were open, the fish were more plentiful.

"Every time I pulled up my net," he said, "I got five or six. I bring 'em back and sell them right out. After about nine (in the morning), I can't keep up with it anymore."

Likewise said Sutterliet around noontime.

"I never get ahead of the knife.



We've been here since sunrise and nobody's had anything to eat or even a pop."

Tom Nelson, now retired, also played a part in this brief commercial season. He cleaned fish for the Sutterliets for free, he said, in trade for the entrails that fueled another

enterprise. Bonneville Power Administration pays for Northern Pike Minnows, a predator of baby salmon, as a secondary way to strengthen decimated salmon runs. Nelson uses the salmon entrails to catch the minnows, which last year was worth about \$9,000 to him.

"It's a good second income," he said.

Sutterliet grew up fishing on platforms alongside his uncles. A few years ago, he learned to fillet a fish to provide better service to his customers.

That better service can be seen not only in terms of all the coolers lined up to keep the catch for the hour or so they last while customers pick and choose, but also in the way he chewed the fat with customers while filleting their fish. He talked about his knives and answered questions about where he got them, which was best for cutting what, and how much he paid for them.

Sutterliet's top front teeth are gone. Maybe that was more noticeable when he talked about the bones he broke awhile back, and the \$300 the Fish Commission fined him recently for "giving away a fish."

When he moved on to the subject of the heart and strength of fish, you might have thought he was talking about himself and his heritage as well.

"I never seen nothing tougher than these," he said. "You see a steelhead with its head bashed or its tail broken and they'll still be going."

A second commercial season is scheduled for July 19-31. ■