



SMOKE SIGNALS

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UMPQUA

MOLALLA

ROGUE RIVER

KALAPUYA

CHASTA

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Columbia River Dredging Project Digs Up Concerns

■ What will happen with the spoils of the proposed dredging project and can the sludge really be used in eco-restoration?



Photo by Peta Tinda

As The River Runs — The Interstate Bridge runs across the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington. The Columbia River could be the site of a \$134 million dredging project that would lower the channel to 43 feet deep. Although modern day Tribes may understand the economic reality of the situation, they want the river's ancient cultural sites and salmon populations to be protected along the 106-mile project.

Piestewa Death Again Raises Indian Name Issue

■ Arizona's Squaw Peak could be renamed after soldier killed in Iraq; Oregon still has work to do.

By Ron Karten

Private First Class Lori Piestewa died a hero's death. The first Native American and the first woman to die in the brief war with Iraq, Piestewa's body was returned to her home in Tuba City, Arizona recently for a five-hour memorial service with 5,000 mourners from Tribes across the country in attendance.

One result of her new status
Piestewa continued on page 3



Lori Piestewa

Photo courtesy of AP

By Ron Karten

With a 106-mile Columbia River dredging project in mind, the Portland office of the Army Corps of Engineers approached all recognized Oregon Tribes in the early 1990s, and invited them to participate in formal government-to-government discussions between technical staffs, according to Matt Rabe, Public Affairs Specialist with the Portland Office of the Corps.

With the removal of 1.5 million truck loads of river bottom in store, (enough to fill the Rose Garden 119 times), and political constituencies across two states still to weigh in, Indian concerns about sacred sites along the river, about preserving the fish runs and the delicate economics of what's left of Indian fishing on the river were never going to be more than a small part of the overall picture.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, whose ancestral lands extend to the Columbia River, were notified at the time, according to Cliff Adams, Tribal General Manager but Director of Natural Resources at the time, "but no," he said, "we did not have the staff or enough information about the project at that time to comment." The river Tribes have taken the lead on this issue, but with the project potentially less than a year from beginning, the Grand Ronde Tribe is seeking the counsel of its experts.

"We have concerns," said Pete Wakeland, Manager of the Tribe's Natural Resources Department. "The

short term effects — the impacts to salmon migration, the impacts to juvenile lamprey (they live in the mud) and disposal of the dredging spoils. There's got to be some toxins in there. If we're removing toxic soil from the bottom of the river, we need to know how we're going to dispose of those and mitigate at the disposal site. If you've dredged the bottom of the river, is there going to be continued leaching of toxins into the river? And what about three to five years out, what happens to fish migration patterns? There are a lot of unanswered questions."

Individual members of the Tribe also have opinions on the matter.

"As far as I'm concerned, they're changing the pathways of the fish," said Pat Allen, Chairwoman of the Tribe's Cultural Committee. "When the fish are born, they go down that channel and they go out, and they return the same way, and when it's not like it used to be, they get lost, like anybody else. Why do they go to our main sustenance when we're trying to purify it? When they dredge, it just brings all that sludge up again. It's a disturbance to the plants and that water, it's trying to be healed, and it never gets healed. It's like a scar that's never healed. I'm just totally against it."

The Yakama and Warm Springs Tribes participated in the formal government to government consultations; Nez Perce and Umatilla
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