

Tribe's Natural Resources Department Will Protect The Reservation With Gates

■ Seven gates for seven roads will go up this year to protect Reservation forests during Level 4 Fire Hazard days.



Tribal member Daniel Haug on the Rez.

By Ron Karten

It won't happen often, but starting this summer, when a Level 4 fire hazard is registered for Reservation forests, the roads in will be shut down for the duration of the hazard.

"We've got \$180 million plus worth of timber," said Natural Resources Manager Pete Wakeland. "We're putting a lot of our timber resource at risk if we're not closing down during high fire danger."

"From zero to one" is the number of times during any given season that a Level 4 fire hazard is recorded for the Reservation, said Wakeland, and each event "can last a week to a couple of weeks."

During that time, neighbors can park their cars at the gates and bike or hike in to their favorite water hole, or just hike around, said Wakeland. "We're trying to limit the things that might create a spark out there. A vehicle on a road with gravel backfiring and you've got a spark."

Wakeland could only recall two incidents of fire on Reservation forests. Once, in the early 1990s, lightning hit a tree, and thanks to the quick work of Natural Resources staff that ran

out to take care of the fire and limit it to that one tree, no other harm was done. More recently, a piece of equipment started on fire among the logging units. Two acres burned in the process of putting out that fire.

"In general, we've had increasing fire dangers over the last 5-8 years," said Wakeland. Weather and fuels build-up account for it. Even in the Reservation's actively managed forests, anytime there is logging, there is "an accumu-

lation of slash. Until you burn it or pile it, you've got some fire danger," he said.

Fabricated and installed, the seven gates will cost \$35,000. Completion of the project is expected by July.

"The main thing I want people to know," said Wakeland, "is yes, it's a change. It's a first-time thing. But not to over-react to this. It will be a very limited amount of time that there won't be any access to the Rez." ■

U of O Longhouse Groundbreaking

► Tribal Council member Valorie Sheker-Robertson hoists the first shovel full of dirt for the Native American student longhouse with University of Oregon President Dave Frohnmeyer.

▼ Aubry Spencer, 6, and her little sister Katyln 5, of Pendleton, pick flowers at the U of O Longhouse groundbreaking. The long-awaited student meeting place is expected to be complete by fall 2004 and will give Native students a place to visit, study, or just hang out. The 16,000 square foot structure will feature a host of innovative features, including a "living roof" planted with over 3,000 camas bulbs.



Photos by Peta Tinda

Willamina Skate Park

By Peta Tinda

Willamina and Grand Ronde area kids have new a place to skateboard, roller blade or ride scooters now that the first ever skate boarding park in Willamina has opened. Skate boarding has become one of the most popular sports in America today, but there are still relatively few places for kids to skateboard. In an effort to address this need locally, the residents of local communities held fundraisers and bake sales to raise money for the park. With the help of donations by Grand Ronde and Willamina area citizens, as well as several major individual donors, the city was able to put in an 80 foot by 60 foot square foot concrete slab at Oaken Hills Memorial Park in Willamina.

In addition, there are quarter pipes, launches, wedges, spines and grind rails for the kids to use.

The park is equipped with ramps and quarter pipes that are made of durable composite materials. The ramps are also designed to be modular so that the kids can move them around. Ramp Rider, a Minnesota based company, manufactured the pieces, all of which are under a ten-



Sweet Move — Tribal member Gary Guzman gets some air at the Oaken Hills memorial skate park in Willamina, built with funds raised by the local community.

year warranty.

"It's been a community effort," said Willamina City Manager Ken McCune. "For the first few years it was just interested parents and kids who held bake sales. Then people got behind the fundraising and there were major donations both from private individuals and from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Hanson Construction, the City of Willamina, and the Tony Hawk Foundation." The Tony Hawk Foundation is a charitable nonprofit organization set up by professional skateboarder Tony Hawk to help communities set up skate parks.

Much of the credit for organizing the fundraisers goes to local moms Christy Scholten,

Teresa Hibdon and Tribal Council member Valerie Sheker-Robertson.

In previous years, local kids would have to go elsewhere to skate or skate out in the streets or sidewalks, which is illegal within the city limits. It also exposed them to hazardous traffic.

"It was really a safety issue," said McCune. "And now that issue has been addressed."

The kids have used the park since it first opened in November of last year.

In the future the city hopes to add more pieces, possibly even a full size half pipe, to the park.

"The best part about it is now the kids and teenagers have a safe place to gather," said McCune. "Everyone is welcome to use the park."