

# Straub environmental lectures are a real deal

*Spirit Mountain Community Fund sponsors free presentations in Salem*

**Editor's note:** This is the sixth in a monthly series of stories in 2008 by *Smoke Signals* that will showcase the real-life effects of Spirit Mountain Community Fund donations. Since its inception in 1997, the Community Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, has donated more than \$40 million to groups in 11 western Oregon counties. These stories focus on the good work those generous Tribal dollars do within nearby communities and the effect they have on people and programs.

**By Ron Karten**

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

Since 2005, Spirit Mountain Community Fund has underwritten environmental presentations produced by the Salem-based Friends of the Straub Environmental Learning Center.

The presentations, featuring esteemed speakers, are usually held at the Salem Public Library, though the group partners with Willamette University so that larger audiences can be seated at its facilities.

Among presenters in 2008 are Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, author and professor William Dietrich, who used the word "determination," rather than "hope," to describe what's needed for the future of today's forests.

Dietrich's talk balanced the current prognosis if business continues as usual with a future in which "given a wake-up call, people respond."

"Cheap oil has held us back," Dietrich said. With oil prices rising as fast as they have, "Discoveries (for better use of oil and for creating energy alternatives) now will explode."

The hallmark of the Learning Center lectures is their nonpartisan, strictly scientific nature.

While pollution is a giant issue in today's discussion, Dietrich reminded the audience that the peak of pollution in America was 50 years ago and that the U.S. population is leveling off. He sees a future where the average age of Americans will be 44 in 2100, while it was 26 in 2000.

With population centers growing larger and older, and cities growing old, too, "We'll be more like Europe," he said.

The lectures work well together

because the subjects often interrelate.

Last year, Pennsylvania State University professor Dr. Michael Mann provided statistical backup for climate change conclusions being drawn today. Mann is director of Penn State's Earth System Science Center.

"We need an understanding of the past to understand the climate future," he said.

The earth's current carbon dioxide level, for example, a cause of global warming as its concentration rises, "is well outside the range of variability" for the last 700,000 years, he said.

"You have to go back 10 million years to find this concentration of CO2 and other markers of global warming," Mann said.

Mann described how these measurements are made. Ice cores, lake sediments and historical documents all provide clues, but these discoveries still only represent "circumstantial evidence" because they can't tie human behavior to the changes.

However, in 1996, a United Nations panel on climate change saw "discernable human influence on global climate." In 2001, that same panel found "stronger evidence that new warming over the last 50 years is due to human activity." And in 2007, that same panel found that "most observable increases in global warming since the mid-20th century are very likely due to increased greenhouse gas concentrations."

"The warming," Mann said, "is very consistent with rising sea levels."

To date, global warming has meant a one degree rise in global temper-

atures, Mann said. If we continue with business as usual, the temperature will rise five degrees by 2100, "with still more warming in the pipeline."

Some believe that western U.S. summer droughts herald the start of global warming, he said. Higher temperatures increase evaporation leading to drier summers.

Mann's statistical barrage shown with slides helped visualize the problem.

In 2005, Dr. Jane Lubchenco, a marine ecologist at Oregon State University, talked about the impacts of what we know and don't know, our options to reduce these impacts, and the role of science in the discussion.

The series began in 2004, when Dr. Morris Johnson, retired professor emeritus, Western Oregon University, discussed ethnobotany, the study of how the indigenous people of our region made use of plants for food, shelter, medicine, clothing, hunting and religious ceremonies.

Also that year, Oregon naturalist Jerry Igo discussed wildflowers and other native plants that Lewis and Clark studied and described on their expedition. The pair discovered some 200 plants new to them, though long known by Native Americans.

The presentations are underwritten by Friends of Straub often in partnership with other local environmental groups, including the Pringle Creek Watershed Council, the National Plant Society of Oregon and many others.

Gov. Bob and Pat Straub were the inspirations for the Friends of the Straub Environmental Learning Center, a nonprofit organization



Photo courtesy of Greg Rico

**Pennsylvania State University  
professor Dr. Michael Mann**

dedicated to environmental education. The Straubs are still known for their love of Oregon and efforts to preserve its natural beauty.

"The Friends seeks to promote that spirit by fostering public awareness of the beauty and cultural history of the Willamette Valley," according to the center's Web site.

Spirit Mountain Community Fund provided the group with \$9,000 in 2005 and \$2,500 in 2007. As a result of sponsorships, all lectures are free.

For future lectures, or to sign up for the free Forest Discovery Summer Day Camp serving fifth- through eighth-graders, visit the nonprofit's Web site, [www.fselc.org](http://www.fselc.org). For those interested, act quickly because camp is almost filled for this summer.

The group's mailing list of 1,700 has almost doubled in the last two years, said Cassandra Cooper, an AmeriCorps volunteer and the group's coordinator.

Selected lectures are now available at the Tribal Library. ■

## Community Fund starts new grant program to aid Oregon Tribes

**By Dean Rhodes**

*Smoke Signals editor*

Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, has started a new funding program to help the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.

The Oregon Tribal Grant Program has a budget of \$300,000 and can grant up to \$75,000 per grant to Tribes in Oregon.

The program is designed to support innovative programs or program enhancement within Oregon Tribes, which include the Burns Paiute, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw, Coquille, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua, Klamath, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla and

Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon.

Eligible projects include program support or capital improvements. If the grant request is for a construction project, all pre-planning and permitting must be accomplished and a firm construction estimate established.

In addition, if the grant request is for a construction project and the applying Tribe has not secured all of the necessary funding, Spirit Mountain Community Fund may designate the grant as a challenge grant, giving the applicant Tribe 12 months to raise at least 90 percent of the project budget before the Community Fund will release funding.

The Oregon Tribal Grant Program is seeking to fund:

- ◆ New initiatives on reservations or serving a Tribe's members;

- ◆ Projects that are either meaningful one-time efforts or new sustainable projects that the Tribe has some ability to fund in the future;

- ◆ Projects that will, during the grant cycle or immediately thereafter, leverage additional funding to provide ongoing services;

- ◆ Enhance or change an existing program that can be financially supported by the Tribe;

- ◆ And projects that can be replicated on other Oregon Tribal reservations.

Funding decisions will give preference to Oregon Tribes that have less discretionary funds.

Grant projects must start after Aug. 31, 2008, and Spirit Mountain Community Fund grants will be for a 12-month period; the Community Fund will not make multi-year grants.

The deadline to apply for Oregon

Tribal Grant Program funds is 5 p.m. Friday, June 27, with grant notification scheduled for Aug. 28, 2008. Application materials can be found at [www.thecommunityfund.com/applicationdocuments/](http://www.thecommunityfund.com/applicationdocuments/).

"Grand Ronde has invested over \$40 million to our neighbors and friends in the Willamette Valley," said Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy. "It is an honor to extend our funding support to the nine federally recognized Oregon Tribes to ensure that they have the programs and services to meet the ongoing needs of their Tribal membership."

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