

Bee movement

Tribal employee helping to save threatened hives

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Honeybees are dying, and nobody is sure why.

With the honeybee crisis looming as the agricultural buzz of the day, Tribal employee Joanne Carr has become our resident beekeeper. She is the example of a personal contribution to the effort that also includes work being done at Oregon State and other universities to bring back bees.

Carr is Adult Education Program coordinator for the Tribe, but as of earlier this year, she also wears another hat — "a bee veil."

"I'm so involved in the environment and the mess that we've made," Carr said.

Coincidentally working in cooperation with Carr are Oregon's regional libraries, where the summer theme is "Catch the Reading Bug."

Each week at the Tribe, the library offers books, readings and displays "related to bugs and things having to do with bugs," said Tribal member and Tribal Librarian Marion Mercier.

During the week of June 20, bees and honeybees hit the top of the agenda. Come July, Mercier and Carr found an audience among preschoolers for the beleaguered bees, and Carr dressed for the occasion.

The bee veil is an apparatus with netting and a stiff plastic top with elastic at the bottom of the mesh to keep the bees out. It is a daunting enough piece of apparatus that not just anybody in the Early Childhood classes was willing to try it on.

Tribal member Nakai Rock, 5, however, was willing, and the lesson of the bees got under way on the morning of July 7 at the Tribal Library.

Carr's involvement has long gone beyond bees, however.

"I believe in sustainability," she

said. "I have a huge garden to grow my own food and plant as many native plants in my pastures as I can because they don't need much water and attract birds and wildlife important to our habitat."

Through burning, replanting and using Corsican hair sheep to keep the weeds grazed, she cleared more than three acres of invasive plants on her 15-acre farm in Silverton. She also has about 35 free range chickens and sells eggs locally.

Carr also has been director of Zone 5 of the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District since spring 2006. The group orchestrates numerous programs, including the doling out of \$1,000 a month to groups sending children on outdoors adventures.

Also, the districts sponsor a statewide competition based on environmental knowledge. Called Envirothon, the winners among high school students receive college scholarships. Most counties have Soil and Water Conservation districts, Carr said, including Yamhill, which holds an annual native plant sale every February.

The mysterious collapse of bee colonies all over the country convinced Carr that it was time to help. She enrolled in a Chemeketa Community College course "where about 50 of us showed up to learn about having a hive," she said. She then purchased an Italian hive of some 2,000 worker bees and a queen.

"Italian bees make better honey," Carr said.

Here in America, it has been two years since uncountable numbers of bees vanished from their hives.

"It's been getting worse and worse," Carr said.

Experts studying the problem "feel that the bees are very stressed. It may be pesticides. It may be mites that have come into the country, possibly from Asia. It might even be the result of beekeepers



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Joanne Carr, left, Adult Education Program coordinator for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, shows Tribal member Nakai Rock, 5, a hat and veil that beekeepers wear when working with bees before Rock gets to try it on during a talk that Carr gave to students at the Tribal Library on Monday, July 7. Carr is a beekeeper and has a hive at her home.

taking tens of thousands of bees for hundreds of miles on flatbed trucks to serve monoculture farmers. It's certainly stressful traveling back and forth," Carr said.

"We wanted her to bring her bee stuff in and talk about bees," Mercier said. "There's a lot of real positive information for people to know about bees, and our display allows that information to be shared a little bit."

Mercier passed out real bees wax to the pre-schoolers. Carr showed how the hive works, and why the bees do some of the things they do.

The pair created a display with honeycombs, a bee hive box, a beekeeper suit and even a straight-to-DVD presentation about Carr's new work with bees. Carr produced, ad-libbed and starred in the DVD.

Mercier set up shelves with bug-themed contests to enter and prizes for children reading the most books.

Among little known facts outside of beekeeping circles, Carr passed on the following tidbits:

- ◆ Smoke makes bees go back into the hive and gorge themselves on honey, which calms them down so the beekeeper can pull out the hives. Bees eat honey to bulk up for the anticipated flight, and when they eat a lot, they get drowsy (like the rest of us). "You gotta take a deep breath, and be quiet and calm," she said.
 - ◆ Don't wear dark clothing, and don't stand in front of a hive or bees will think you are a bear trying to steal the honey, and will come out to defend the hive.
 - ◆ You can't save all the bee-like varieties in the hopes of ending up with more honeybees, because wasps, hornets and yellow jackets kill honeybees.
- "Bees are so important to our valuable food sources and a lot of the beauty in our surroundings," said Mercier. ■

Tribe largest contributor to reward fund

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large part, because of our Tribe's prosecution of anyone who violates rules and guidelines established by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Tribe to the fullest extent of the law.

"This reward will emphasize our partnership with ODFW and the Oregon Hunters Association in ensuring that the law in this matter is upheld. It will bring the reward fund to \$17,500 and will assist in the apprehension and prosecution of violators."

The \$4,500 donation makes the Tribe the largest contributor to the reward fund. The Oregon Hunters Association State Board has donated \$4,000, the Josephine County OHA chapter added \$500 and a combined \$8,500 was raised

by Roseburg-area land owners, businesses, elk hunters and other OHA chapters statewide.

"I think it's awesome," said Ty Stubblefield, field administrator for the Oregon Hunters Association, about the Grand Ronde donation. "It's getting really ridiculous and out of control, and it's going to take money to make someone talk. I didn't expect the Tribe to get involved and I never thought to ask them. I think it's great."

All seven elk were shot near roads in an area within about a three-mile radius near Glendale, which is between Roseburg and Grants Pass west of Interstate 5 in southwestern Oregon. Three of the elk were killed in less than 10 minutes on the morning of July 10.

"They're all part of that little herd, actually several herds, that sort of hang around in that area,"

said Sgt. Dean Perske of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Division office in Roseburg in the July 16 Salem *Statesman-Journal*. "They just frequent that area a lot."

The shootings began in October 2007 when a trophy 7-by-7-point bull was killed and left to rot. Three more elk were killed between October and April of this year and then a lull occurred until the triple shooting on July 10.

"These aren't even poachers," Perske said in the *Statesman-Journal*. "This is just people going out to kill things. Poachers usually at least cut off the horns or take the backstraps out or something."

Only one of the seven bulls was salvageable. Its meat was recovered and donated to a food pantry in the Roseburg area.

Perske speculated in the Salem

newspaper that whoever is killing the elk is upset because they cannot get access to the animals during legal hunting seasons.

People with tips or who want to add to the reward fund should call the Roseburg Oregon State Police office at 541-440-3334, ext. 3417. To remain anonymous and still be eligible for the reward, people can call the Hunters Turn In Poachers line at 800-472-7888.

The Roseburg area is part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's ceded lands, which stretch from the northern California border, up through the Willamette Valley, out to the Pacific coast on the west and to the Cascade Mountains and slopes of Mount Hood on the east, and along both sides of the Columbia River up to North Bonneville and the Cascade Locks area. ■