

Tribe joins 17-party Carmen-Smith Hydroelectric Project plan

Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy signs agreement for Grand Ronde on Oct. 21

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde was among 16 parties that signed an agreement with the Eugene Water & Electric Board on Oct. 21 that outlines environmental, recreational and other improvements the board will undertake to relicense its Carmen-Smith Hydroelectric Project on the upper McKenzie River.

The project is in the Tribe's ceded lands and Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy signed the agreement for the Tribe.

Tribal Council voted 6-0 on Oct. 8 to adopt a resolution approving the settlement agreement.

"We have a special interest in what happens to the natural and cultural resources in that area and want to preserve our Tribal members' rights to utilize the resources in the area," said Tribal Environmental Resource Specialist Brandy Humphreys.

"Also because, as a Tribe, we have a different perspective on resources and how to manage them that agencies and other organizations do not bring to the table."

Among other requirements, the agreement calls for the Eugene Water & Electric Board to construct an upstream fish ladder and a downstream fish passage system at Trail Bridge Dam, increase year-round stream flows in portions of the McKenzie River and the Smith and Carmen bypass reaches above Trail Bridge Reservoir, improve fisher-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy adds her signature to the Carmen-Smith Hydroelectric Project relicensing agreement during a ceremony at the Eugene Water & Electric Board office in Eugene on Tuesday, Oct. 21.

ies spawning and rearing habitat throughout the project area, and protect important cultural and historical resources.

The agreement also calls on the Eugene Water & Electric Board to protect and document all known historic sites and protect and enhance plant species that are culturally important to Native Americans. In addition, the board will make improvements that increase accessibility to those plant species by Tribal Elders and others with

limited physical abilities.

In all, the agreement calls for \$135.5 million in improvements the utility promises to make on the cluster of dams and reservoirs on the river, which provides about 9 percent of Eugene's electricity. Construction probably will begin in 2012 on the agreed upon projects.

The Carmen-Smith Hydroelectric Project is 71 miles east of Eugene and was completed in 1963. The board is seeking a 50-year renewal of its current operating license,

which expires at the end of November, from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

To avoid potential legal challenges to the new license, the board negotiated with federal and state natural resource agencies, three Tribes and environmental and recreation groups.

In addition to the Grand Ronde Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs also signed the agreement.

Among the most significant changes will be modifications at the Trail Bridge Dam that will screen fish away from the turbines and cost \$44 million. The fish ladder will cost another \$15 million.

"The Tribe helped negotiate the entire settlement, from fish passage at Trail Bridge Dam, especially the specification to make the fish ladder passage-friendly for lamprey, to wildlife habitat enhancement to working on a plan for the Tribe to direct management of culturally significant plants for use of Tribal members," Humphreys said.

Board spokesman Lance Robertson said allowing Chinook salmon, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, to move upstream of the dam will give them an additional 1.5 miles of access on the McKenzie River and six miles of Smith River and Sweetwater Creek access.

The improvements also will help threatened bull trout, Robertson said. ■

Spirit Mountain hosting Nov. 8 'Between Friends' concert

Spirit Mountain Casino will host a benefit concert in its new state-of-the-art Events Center in Grand Ronde on Saturday, Nov. 8, to help combat growing local hunger issues.

In conjunction with Share of Vancouver and local artists, the casino will host "Between Friends" featuring well-known local female rhythm-and-blues, blues and jazz artists Linda Hornbuckle, Ellen Whyte, Lady Kat, Duffy Bishop, LaRhonda Steele, Janice Scroggins, Karen Therese and Native American performer Myrtle Brown.

The concert starts at 8 p.m. with doors opening at 7. Tickets, which are general admission for \$30 each, are on sale through Tickets Oregon at www.ticketsoregon.com.

Proceeds will benefit Share's Children's Hunger Initiative and Hot Meals programs. The first 550 people to purchase tickets will receive a free compact disc from the artists and a gift from Spirit Mountain Casino.

Currently, Share feeds 500 people daily with its Hot Meals Program, 150 children weekly with its Backpack Program and 250 children with its Summer Lunch Program. The concert's goal is to raise enough money to double those numbers.

"The concert features a fabulous lineup of local artists, which will truly be a wonderful event for the community," said Diane Christie, Share's executive director. "We'd like to thank all of the sponsors and artists, especially Spirit Mountain Casino, for the contributions this event will bring to our Children's Hunger Initiative."

"We are excited to be a part of this year's Between Friends concert with Share," said Tribal member and Spirit Mountain Casino Public Relations Manager James Buxman. "Supporting the efforts to help feed the hungry during their time of need makes a sponsorship like this special to the Spirit Mountain family." ■

Tribal youth headed to Japan

Tribal youth Savannah Ingram, 13, of Gresham was chosen as one of eight students from Gordon Russell Middle School to travel to Gresham's sister city of Ebetsu, Japan, between Feb. 5-15, 2009, as a representative of the city.

She learned she was going to Japan on Oct. 15 after being called to the principal's office.

In her congratulation letter, Ebetsu Exchange Coordinator/Chaperone and teacher Tina Hargaden wrote: "What became clear to us is that you are a very high quality student with a great number of skills and talents. Clearly, you applied because you are a leader amongst your peers and have a desire to experience new things. That alone says a great deal about you."

As part of the exchange program, Savannah and the other seven students will participate in weekly Japanese culture classes and learn to speak Japanese and create a formal introduction in the language. They also will learn how to act and proper Japanese manners.

In addition, her family will house a student from Ebetsu when they visit Gresham from Dec. 5-11.

"I'm so excited to go to Japan so that I can learn about the culture, but also share my Native American culture with my host family," Savannah said. ■



Savannah Ingram