

Blood quota



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

American Red Cross worker Jim Carrithers looks for a vein on Donnette Spaulding, who works as a dental assistant for the Tribe, as she donates blood during a blood drive on the Tribal campus on Friday, Oct. 24. A total of 22 people gave blood.

Attention Tribal members

Effective Oct. 1, copies of Legislative Action Committee recommendations will be available on the Tribal member side of the Tribal Web site. They will be located with the Legislative Action Committee minutes.

These forms are only a recommendation used by the Legislative Action Committee to move discussion items to a regular Tribal Council meeting for a vote of the Tribal Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Dakota Whitecloud, Tribal Council Relations Coordinator, for more information. You may reach her at 503-879-1309 or 1-800-422-0232, ext. 1309. ■

Flinging the fish



Photo courtesy Natural Resources Department

Tribal Biologist Rebecca McCoun holds up a coho salmon at Eagle Creek National Fish Hatchery near Estacada recently. The Tribe's Natural Resources staff picked up 703 non-food grade coho carcasses, which equals about 7,350 pounds of fish, on Oct. 22-23. Staff then distributed the fish into portions of Agency and Yoncalla creeks on the Reservation. As the carcasses decompose, marine-derived nitrogen and other nutrients are released into the stream and riparian systems, which improves macroinvertebrate productivity, which in turn feeds salmon and other fish in the streams. McCoun said Natural Resources staff returned to Eagle Creek on Oct. 28 to pick up another 400 fish, which also were distributed in Agency and Yoncalla creeks.

Water must be safe to fish from and swim in

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eral, state and Tribal effort to clean up state waterways. Humphreys is the Tribe's Environmental Resource Specialist.

The efforts come out of the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 that set up the framework to allow states to set rules so that all U.S. waterways are clean enough to both fish from and swim in. The formula for rules that will make this happen, the Environmental Protection Agency has said, requires three considerations of water quality — exposure, toxicity and acceptable risk:

- ◆ Acceptable exposure determines the level of contaminants that are safe based on the weight of the consumer and the amount of fish (or water) consumed.
- ◆ Toxicity considers the rate at which carcinogens add more than one death per million to the population eating or drinking from the waterway; and also considers the health effects of non-carcinogens.
- ◆ And acceptable risk asks what percent of fish eaters need to be provided with waterways that will not cause adverse health effects.

The Grand Ronde Tribe asked for a safe level of 389 grams per

day. Other Tribes asked for levels ranging from 175 to 300 grams per day. A compromise was reached at 175 grams per day, specifying that that level would keep 95 percent of fish eaters safe.

Five percent of Indians, according to studies put together for this effort, regularly eat more fish than 175 grams per day, and even under the new rules their health will be at risk.

Although Karnosh calls the EQC decision "a huge victory," he also acknowledges that regulations controlling contaminants are not enough by themselves to get the job done.

"A lot of the contaminants that show up in fish are bio-accumulative," Karnosh said.

PCBs and DDT, for example, have been banned for 30 years, and they still sit at the bottom of many rivers and continue to contaminate fish and people and other animals that eat fish.

"They're still finding DDT in osprey eggs," Karnosh said. "It's still in the food web."

The current level of acceptable contamination takes an average including millions of people in the middle of the country who may eat no fish from month to month.

Indians, on the other hand, as pointed out by the Grand Ronde

Tribe and others, sought a safe concentration of contaminants for people eating 389 grams of fish per day, or one large fish meal daily.

Indians eat no less fish because people in the center of the country eat no fish. The winning Tribal argument, according to Karnosh, said: "We're not going to change our diets so the rivers can stay polluted. They shouldn't be polluted in the first place."

Grand Ronde Tribal member Kathleen Feehan, Water Quality Policy Analyst for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, took the lead for the Tribes, and has spent her career pursuing this kind of improvement in the Clean Water Act. The Grand Ronde Tribe has pursued this improvement since 2004, when the Tribal Council approved the first of three resolutions in support of the Umatilla effort.

A 1994 Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission study became a dominant document in the decision, Karnosh said. The study said that the existing standard was not protective of Native Americans, most of whom eat more fish than current standards protect.

The recommendation will now go through the standard public hearing period with a target for completion late in 2009. The play-

ers anticipate final state review and approval of the new 175 grams per day fish consumption rate in fall of 2009, followed by an anticipated approval by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Individuals also will play a big role in reaching this standard of water quality by:

- ◆ Participating in pharmaceutical take-back programs instead of flushing drugs down the toilet;
- ◆ Participating in pesticide take-back programs, instead of dumping chemicals or storing them in containers that can leak.
- ◆ Following manufacturer's recommendations for use on pesticides, fertilizers and other household/yard chemicals. More is not necessarily better, and many of these chemicals don't break down once they are in the groundwater or storm drains, and sometimes can break down into more harmful chemicals.
- ◆ Participating in "E-cycling" and other programs that keep electronics and other harmful materials out of the waste stream.
- ◆ Contacting local Soil & Water Conservation District for more information on these and other water quality measures. A clickable map of Oregon's Conservation Districts can be found at www.oacd.org/districts.html. ■