

## General Council briefed on Tribal natural resources

### Road management policy consumes most of meeting

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Natural Resources Director Michael Wilson briefed the membership on his department's activities during the two-hour General Council meeting held Dec. 1 at the Tribal Community Center.

Much of Wilson's presentation centered on a concern that was mentioned by Tribal Elder Tom Leno at the November General Council meeting — the gating and barricading of Tribal roads on the Reservation.

Wilson said that of the 95 miles of roads on the Reservation, 12 miles are barricaded and 16 miles are gated.

"Seventy percent is open during the hunting season," Wilson said. "The vast majority of the roads are open. The reservation is open to the membership. Any part of the reservation is open to the membership. It's just there for different experiences and how you want to go out there and enjoy it."

Wilson said the reasons for gating or barricading some roads include saving money on road maintenance for the Tribe, protecting resources from those who would steal Tribal timber or illegally cut firewood, preventing garbage dumping or marijuana or poppy grows on the Reservation, improving elk habitat and trying to reduce the road density.

Working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Marine Fisheries Service, the Tribe is working to reduce the Reservation's road density from 6 miles per square mile to 2.5 miles per square mile to protect steelhead runs from sediment pollution caused by runoff, Wilson said.

"Right now, the reservation is very well roaded," Wilson said. "There's a lot of roads out there."

The current road management policy received support from Tribal Council members.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Natural Resources Department Manager Michael Wilson gives the membership an update on the department's activities during the General Council meeting in the Tribal Community Center held on Sunday, Dec. 1.**

Tribal Council Secretary Toby McClary said he would support looking for ways to accommodate elderly and disabled Tribal members who want to access parts of the Reservation that are gated or blocked off from vehicles.

"Tribal Council, or at least a majority of us, did support those gates," McClary said. "I think there are possibilities that we are all willing to explore."

McClary pointed out that even though a road may be gated, Tribal members can still walk around the gate and enjoy the land; they just can't drive beyond the gate or barricade.

Tribal Council member Cheryle A. Kennedy said Tribal Council was performing its fiduciary responsibility to all of the membership by balancing protection of Tribal resources with maintaining access to the Reservation.

"That's the balance we're trying to achieve," Kennedy said.

Tribal Council member Denise Harvey said she suggested a process where Tribal members sit through a Natural Resources educational tutorial before they were given a key to open gates to access some roads on the Reservation.

Tribal Council member June Sherer said that after many dis-

cussions, the Tribe was not able to come up with a solution better than the one that is in place now for the protection of Tribal resources. She also lamented the fact that people access the Reservation for garbage dumping or illegal drug activities.

Tribal Council Chair Reyn Leno said he did not have a problem with the barricades because they protect valuable Tribal timber and might help the decimated black tail deer population on the Reservation.

"We need to try and do something to turn that around," Leno said about the deer depopulation. "For me, I don't mind some of these roads being blocked off."

Elder Tom Leno, however, was not satisfied, repeatedly referring to the reasons for gating or barricading some Tribal roads as "lame excuses." His appeal for a general membership vote on the issue also did not receive support, with several Tribal members saying they support the current road management policy or do not know enough about the issue to make a decision.

Wilson also discussed the department's new 10-year management plan, which was recently adopted by Tribal Council; the Timber and Roads Program, which is sustainably harvesting 7 million board feet annually off the reservation valued at approximately \$2.5 million a year; and the fish weir, which has seen 414 Coho salmon return to Agency Creek this year as of Nov. 27.

"That's a good year," Wilson said about the Coho return.

Wilson also talked about the creation of forest meadows for elk and deer habitat, recreational opportunities on the Reservation — Big Buck Campground and numerous hiking trails built by the Youth

Crew — and the Fire Program, which has an "excellent" safety record and reviews.

Assistant General Manager Chris Leno presented Wilson with the 2013 Stewardship Award that the Tribe received from the Portland-based Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership in October.

Wilson then presented the award to Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno.

"We have a great staff at Natural Resources," Wilson said. "There's not a lot of awards in the business, so I really appreciate this one from the Lower Columbia group."

In accepting the award, Reyn Leno also thanked Tribal members who serve on the Timber and Fish & Wildlife committees.

"You can't say enough about our Natural Resources Department," Leno said.

In other action, Tribal Land and Culture Department Manager Jan Looking Wolf Reibach gave a brief presentation of his department's ongoing projects.

He said that more than 100 cultural events have been held since March and that culture classes are seeing greater attendance at a lower cost. He said fundraising is continuing for the Tribal museum and cultural center, Chachalu.

He also praised the cross-departmental cooperation that helped create the Atudship Memorial at the Tribal Cemetery without any additional cost to the Tribe.

In other action:

- Louise Coulson, Evelyn Seidel, Linda Brandon, Leonette Galligher, Faye Smith and Richard Ray were nominated for four open seats on the Elders' Committee. Elders can vote during the Dec. 18 birthday meeting, as well as at the next General Council meeting on Jan. 5.
- Tribal Elder Val Grout won the \$100 door prize and Tribal Elders Marcella Selwyn and Duane Wheeler and Tribal member Charles Kneeland won the \$50 door prizes.
- Jewelry made by Tribal Council member Jon A. George and sugar-free jam made by Tribal member Veronica Gaston were raffled off.
- The next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 5, at the Tribal Community Center.
- Tribal members Jade Unger, Reibach, Eric Bernando, George and Debi Anderson drummed and sang during the cultural presentation. ■

## Recreation Department hosts Walking Club

The Tribal Recreation Department is hosting a Walking Club, which is a competitive and social activity to track steps and miles walked per day.

The club focuses on low-level impact exercise for beginners with the goal of transitioning Walking Club participants into other fitness activities that are offered by the Recreation Department.

Levels of participation vary from individual and team steps, as well as individual and team miles. Teams consist of three individuals.

The Recreation Department encourages people to sign up since it will be an ongoing activity. Pedometers are available to new participants one week after they sign up.

At the end of each month, prizes are awarded.

In addition, Weighted Wednesdays are a way for people setting appropriate weight goals to reach their goal by the end of the month. Participants are encouraged to stop by the Youth Education Building to track their weight and body mass index.

Weight is taken privately with only a recreation assistant present and all information is kept confidential. Like the Walking Club, prizes will be awarded each month to those with the most amount of fat percentage lost.

For more information or to sign up, contact Recreation Assistant Kendra Steele at 503-879-1921. ■

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