

Tribal Council signs on to Falls sea lion agreement

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved an agreement to establish a State-Tribes Committee with the state and three other Oregon Tribes to control sea lion predation of threatened winter steelhead runs at Willamette Falls on Wednesday, March 20.

Tribal Attorney Rob Greene said during the Tuesday, March 19, Legislative Action Committee meeting that the agreement, spurred by the Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act signed into law in December, states the Warm Springs, Umatilla, Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes in conjunction with Oregon are tasked with identifying sea lions preying on winter steelhead for removal at Willamette Falls.

The Grand Ronde Tribe has identified sea lion predation as a threat to the fishery on the Grand Ronde Reservation.

Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen said that any sea lion above Clackamas River on the Willamette River is presumed to be preying on salmon at the falls and eligible to be culled from the population.

Dirksen said sea lions are eating between 20 percent and 25 percent of already depressed winter steelhead runs. He added that only seven winter steelhead returned to Agency Creek in 2018.

"Our run is in trouble," Dirksen said. "All of the run in the entire Willamette Basin is in trouble."

When sea lions were previously removed from Willamette Falls and transported to Newport Bay and released, it only took some of the sea lions three days to return to the falls, Dirksen added.

"This is the most immediate threat to the species right now," Dirksen said.

Tribal Council member Kathleen

George said the agreement is "completely necessary" to control the sea lion population at Willamette Falls' horseshoe.

"If predation at the falls isn't controlled and reduced, both our staff and ODF&W agree that it is highly unlikely Willamette Valley steelhead will survive," George said. "If it isn't addressed, our fish don't stand a chance."

To permanently remove sea lions from the Willamette Falls area, the state must apply for a permit to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The suspected sea lions must be identified by the Willamette Committee, which includes the Tribal and state representatives, according to the federal legislation.

So far, Dirksen said, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife has captured and euthanized nine sea lions at Willamette Falls.

Tribal Council also approved the agenda for the 11 a.m. Sunday, April 7, General Council meeting that will be held at the Lane Community College Longhouse in Eugene. Social Services will present the program report and a Community Input meeting seeking topics for advisory votes for the September Tribal Council election ballot will be held following lunch.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved a \$277,030 pharmacy software purchase called Enterprise Rx with McKesson Pharmacy Systems of Livonia, Mich., that also will include an \$81,000 annual support package. Pharmacy Director Lincoln Wright said during the March 12 Legislative Action Committee meeting that the system is "top-notch" and that Pharmacy staff visited hospitals in Nashville, Tenn., and outside New York City to see it in use.
- "This will also remedy many of

the common concerns the Tribal membership has regarding filling prescriptions in an efficient, timely and straightforward manner," stated the executive summary regarding the purchase.

- Appointed Sarah Ross to the Culture Committee with a term expiring in March 2020;
- Appointed Tribal Council members Kathleen George and Jack Giffen Jr. to serve on the Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board of Directors with terms expiring in September 2022 or until they are no longer Tribal Council members;
- Extended the contract with Tribal Court Chief Judge David Shaw for one month through April 2019. Shaw has served as the Tribal Court chief judge since February 2015;
- Approved Portland Harbor habitat restoration projects for the 33-acre Rinearson Natural Area and 27-acre Linnton Mill area;
- Approved an agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to include the conservation property Rattlesnake Butte into the service's Partners Program, which works with landowners to conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife, and their habitats. The Tribe acquired the 97-acre Rattlesnake Butte property northwest of Junction City through the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program;
- Appointed Oregon Sen. Arnie Roblan and Rep. Karin Power to the Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees with terms expiring in September 2020;

- Approved the 2019 Tribal Strategic Plan;
- Approved an application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for funding that would support a five-year project to combat underage drinking;
- And approved the enrollment of two infants into the Tribe because they meet the requirements outlined in the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance.

Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson gave the cultural presentation to open the meeting. He discussed Tribal springtime activities, such as harvesting hazel patches and the awakening of Tribal canoes.

Also included in the March 20 Tribal Council packet were approved authorizations to proceed that nominated Tribal Council member Denise Harvey for the Office of Violence Against Women Task Force on Research on Violence Against Native American Indian and Alaska Native Women, transferred \$41,035 from general contingency to the Tribal Council budget to complete the "Visionaries" statue of Restoration figures Marvin Kimsey, Margaret Provost and Merle Holmes, and approved a letter to the Oregon Department of State Lands accepting the director's offer of government-to-government consultation on the Jordan Cove permit application.

A video of the meeting can be viewed in its entirety at the Tribal government's website, www.grandronde.org, by clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

Family Fun Run/Walk event in the Tribal gym following the egg hunt

**EASTER continued
from front page**

of eggs."

This is one Tribal event that requires extreme promptness on the part of parents and prospective Easter egg hunters, lest they miss out on the various treats.

There are four hunt categories for children ages 1 to 2, 3 to 4, 5 to 8 and 9 to 12. Egg hunters are advised to bring their own Easter basket to put their eggs in. Typically, there are approximately 200 participants.

Parents are reminded to bring their own camera and Tribal Elder Steve Bobb Sr. is slated to be this year's Easter Bunny again as he has in past years. He will be posing for pictures with children before and after the hunt.

Members of the Tribe's Housing Department, Community Health employees and other volunteers stuff about 2,000 plastic eggs with candy during the week before the

event. Tribal Council sponsors the hunt and pays for the candy.

"Housing's maintenance staff is usually very helpful in this process," Kroeker said.

She has been involved with the egg hunt since it was re-started in 2006, and said although it can be a tiring event for organizers, seeing the children's smiles makes the effort worth it.

"The participation of the community in the preparation and events of the day and, of course, watching the kids with the Easter Bunny are my favorite parts of this," Kroeker said.

All attendees are encouraged to attend a Family Fun Run/Walk event in the Tribal gym following the hunt in honor of April being Child Abuse Prevention Month. The event is hosted by the Tribe's Children & Family Services Department, and will begin at 10:15 a.m. and end at noon. Activities include the run/walk, bouncy house, lunch, prizes and a raffle. ■



ANNUAL SALMON EVENT

FISH CEREMONY

ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN

SATURDAY MAY 18TH

EVENT BEGINS AT 1PM

EVENT INCLUDES Tribal and local organization information tables, a demonstration salmon pit, speakers, and community ceremony.

WILLAMETTE PARK, WEST LINN, OREGON

