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Huckleberry memories

Traditional task of gathering continues today

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Staff

Emily Waheneka, like many other tribal elders, first went huckleberry picking a good number of years ago.

"I was just a child when my grandparents and mother first took me to pick berries," Waheneka was saying recently, during a trip to High Rock, where in some years the berries are quite plentiful.

Waheneka said that years ago people from the reservation would travel by wagon and on horseback to the berry-picking areas. They would go to the Welches area, Saddle Mountain, Zigzag, places in Washington, among many other locations.

"People were hard-working back then," Waheneka said. The people worked especially hard in the summer because they had to store food for winter, Waheneka said.

Judy Kalama, a couple of generations younger than Waheneka, remembers that as a young girl she would pick and can large quantities of huckleberries.

She and others would camp during late summer in the higher elevation areas,



The old campsites are located up and down both sides of the Warm Springs River at He He. The frame of an old sweat lodge is still standing, as are some of the small wooden buildings that were interspersed among the camping areas.

During the feast, there were dozens of families that camped at HeHe. Louis Scott, who works in Cultural Resources, earlier this week was driving with Waheneka through the old camping areas.

Waheneka would point out the sites

where all of the different families used to camp.

People don't camp much at HeHe anymore during the huckleberry feast, because many young people have lost interest, said Waheneka.

Louis Scott remembered that, in earlier years, the hillside by HeHe would be covered with children playing.

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Photo by Dave McMechan

Judy Kalama searches for huckleberries during a gathering trip early this week.

Weather helps firefighters rein in Olallie blazes

Hundreds of firefighters this week continued the effort to extinguish a series of wildfires that have been burning for several days in the western area of the reservation.

Favorable weather conditions in recent days have helped the fire-fighting effort. Clay Penhollow, information officer at Fire Management, said that a tentative containment date for the fires had been set for Sunday, Aug. 26.

The Olallie Fire Complex began Aug. 12, when a thunderstorm passed over the region. During the storm, lightning strikes ignited 17 fires on the reservation and in the adjacent Mt. Hood National Forest.

As of Wednesday, the fires had burned across 2,500 acres. The largest fire in the series has been the Olallie/Monan Lake (Dark Lake) Fire, which consumed 2,000 acres.

The Olallie/Monan Lake Fire grew from five separate lightning strikes that happened on the reservation south of Olallie Butte near the Long, Dark and Island lakes. One strike hit east of Monan Lake, west of the reservation boundary.

Following the Aug. 12 storm, seven



Photo by Dave McMechan

Vernon Tias and Jason Schjoll of Warm Springs Fire Management discuss blazes.

smaller fires were also reported on the reservation. Two were located east of Olallie Butte, two north of Lake Sarah near Rock Cone, one near Campbell Butte, one

north of Papoose Lake and northwest of Lake Hilda, and one northwest of Fort Butte.

Close to 600 fire-fighting personnel re-

sponded to these fires, and other fires located on nearby national forest land. The personnel included inter-agency and Warm Springs hot shots. Along with those from the Northwest region, fire crews arrived from Arizona, New Mexico, North Carolina and Oklahoma.

Two Blackhawk helicopters from the Oregon National Guard were employed early in battling the Olallie Fire Complex. Sometime later, a larger twin-rotor helicopter also arrived on the scene. Other equipment included 16 engines, three dozers and five water tenders.

Total cost of fighting the blazes was estimated at over \$2.4 million, payment of which comes from a federal fund.

Fire crews worked to protect endangered species habitat, commercial timber, traditional food-gathering areas and anadromous fish habitats. On the Mt. Hood National Forest side of the fire, the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office ordered an evacuation of all non-fire-fighting people.

On the reservation side, Trout Lake Campground was closed. The trails in the Trout Lake area were also closed.

Museum board hopes for interview

Board members of The Museum at Warm Springs are hoping next month to begin interviewing candidates for the position of museum director.

The museum has been under interim directorship since February, when former director Mary Ellen Conaway resigned. She was director for 13 months, and quite in a mutual agreement with the board.

Since that time, Ed Manion has been serving as interim museum director. Over the past several weeks a recruiting firm, Opportunity Resources, Inc., based in New York, has been contacting potential candidates to fill the directorship position.

The museum board used the Opportunity Resources firm in hiring former director Michael Hammond, who was director from 1991, before the museum opened, until 1999.

Museum officials are taking the time necessary to find the right candidate to in hiring a new director, said Ken Smith, museum board chairman.

"Everyone feels that this is a great museum, and that it will take a special person to manage it. We need to search for the right person with the right background," Smith said.

Under the best circumstances, the museum board could begin interviewing candidates in September, Smith said. If the process goes as hoped, then a hiring decision could happen in October, he said.

An ideal candidate, Smith said, would be a person with a strong education background, museum management experience, including museum fund raising. "Our hope is to find someone with that background, and the hope is always that we will find a Native American with the right background," he said.

Meanwhile, the museum is operating smoothly, said Smith. Interim director Ed Manion "would be the first to say that he is not a museum director, but he is a good manager," Smith said.

"He's making sure the museum continues running, and we think he's doing a great job."

Tribal mill undergoes big changes, expects more

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Staff

A visitor to the Warm Springs Forest Products Industries Mill comes away with the impression that the people who work there like their jobs.

The work is not easy, and many of the positions require expert skill and concentration, but above the noise of the machinery the workers can often be heard joking and kidding with one another. This makes the workday pass in a more agreeable way, said John Katchia, production coordinator at the mill.

The WSFPI mill employs 148 people. The workers include the operators of the various saws, the lumber graders, millwrights, electricians and operators of the forklifts and other heavy machinery. The administration part of the mill includes the purchasing, personnel and support staff.

Seventy-five percent of the mill work-

ers are tribal members or married into the tribes. The mill operates 40 hours a week, from about 6 in the morning until 2:30 in the afternoon, Monday through Friday.

The powerhouse at the mill runs 24 hours a day, seven days week. Twelve full-time people are responsible for keeping the power facility in operation. The powerhouse is fueled by logging slash and wood by-products of the mill operation.

Electricity from the powerhouse is sold. Also, the lumber-drying kiln at the mill is powered by steam from the power plant.

The mill produces lumber of the 2-by-4 to 2-by-12 inch dimensions. Other products include industrial grade moldings and shop lumber. The industrial grade product is sold to another manufacturer that makes windows and doors.

Until early this year, the mill employed about 210 people. Then in February, one of two shifts at the mill was cut.

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Warm Springs Forest Product Industries has seen many changes recently.