



US Army Corps
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Portland District

Celilo Village Redevelopment Newsletter

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A newsletter keeping you informed about upcoming meetings and providing updates as the Corps continues Celilo Village redevelopment.

Celilo Falls long served as a trade center, sacred fishing ground and gathering place for the Northwest Indian tribes. When The Dalles Dam was constructed, the falls were flooded. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided a new location near the original falls, where about 50 people live in Celilo Village. Inadequate maintenance, as well as sanitary and water systems, caused public health and safety concerns to village residents.

To resolve these problems, the Tribes requested the Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to rebuild the village under the Columbia River Treaty Fishing Access Sites Project. Congress authorized the reconstruction of the village in March 2004, and the Corps expects construction to be completed by 2009.

Board chair perspective on Celilo

Wy-Am Board chairman Antone Minthorn opened the Sept. 27 Wy-Am Board meeting with his thoughts on “where we’ve been, where we’ve come from and where we are today.” In 1998 the condition of Celilo Village was the topic at a CTUIR tribal meeting, he said. Shortly after that meeting the council came and toured Celilo. Based on what they saw, they decided to try to help improve conditions and assigned the planning department to the subject. CTUIR Planning Director Jim Beard has been with the project since then.

Minthorn said they began by talking with Celilo Village residents and going to their salmon feasts and pow-wows, went to the Yakama and Warm Springs tribal councils, sat down and talked with the Corps. “That is how,” Minthorn said, “we got General Strock interested, and he helped get funding to begin the changes. Today we can see these changes taking place and in time we will achieve the goal of redeveloping Celilo Village.”

It has worked, he said, because all have stayed together, “and we need to continue to stay together. We have lots of challenges ahead before we reach the goal and people are settled in. One of the challenges is management. Celilo Village wants to be as independent as possible, but they must have a government structure.”

Minthorn says helping Celilo is something the Umatilla’s should have done a long time ago, but had to wait until they had an economy that allowed them to hire staff and gain the respect that gave them political capital.



Antone Minthorn

Senator Smith meets with tribes at Celilo

Every year Senator Smith meets with the Oregon tribes. This year he elected to hold the meeting at Celilo Village. The meeting was in the morning of Oct. 11 at the longhouse. Senator Smith sits on the Senate’s Committee on Indian Affairs.

His coming prompted BIA maintenance site manger Don Robertson to say that the longhouse needs cleaning and maintenance before then, but he has no budget to do the work or buy supplies. Beard asked what happened to the \$330,000 the Corps gave the BIA for longhouse maintenance. BIA superintendent Paul Young said he has been unable to access the money, but will pass on the board’s concern to the BIA finance division.

CTSC donates basketball area

CTSC is donating a concrete basketball pad and a hoop to the village, said CTSC project manager Art Harding. “It will be large enough for players to make a three point shot,” he said. Harding plans to put it in so it can be used while families are living in the temporary homes.



Art Harding, right, and Corps quality assurance representative Ed Saldaña talk about where the new basketball area will work best for the many village basketball players.

Governance: law and order



Wy-Am resident Lana Jack talks with CTWS Governmental Affairs Director Louie Pitt about governance.

One facet of governance the village needs is a structure for law enforcement. What must be decided is which of the three tribes' laws apply and which court tries potential cases. To begin the process, Beard asked CTUIR's police chief to head a task force of law officers from the three tribes, Wasco County, and the State of Oregon, Beard said. "One of the problems is that the reservations are all so far from the village and that is a problem when the village needs help right away."

Board representation

The lack of board attendance by the elected representatives has been a concern over the last year for Chairman Minthorn. The Yakama tribal representatives missed so many meetings that Minthorn talked this spring with their chair to explain how important it was to have the Yakama Nation represented at board meetings. Since then representatives have come more regularly.

But at the Sept. meeting a village resident expressed concern over the number of meetings the two village representatives have missed and whether the village is adequately represented at board meetings.

The current board works from the 1976 resolution that created the board and is made up of two representatives each from the Umatilla, Yakama, Warm Springs tribes and from the village. The village representatives were elected in 2004 for five year terms.

"But there are no board bylaws that talk about meeting attendance," Beard said. "The resolution only talks about who is eligible to vote. Maybe there should be more than two representatives. The resolution can be amended by approval of the three tribal councils and the Wy-Am Board."

Wy-Am Board Members

Celilo Village: Bobby Begay, Delilah Heemsah

CTUIR: Antone Minthorn, Leo Stuart

CTWS: Ron Suppah, Reuben Henry

YIN: Ray James, Sam Jim, Sr.

Construction: Phase II

Originally the BIA had listed 14 families eligible for a home at Celilo Village. But this summer the Wy-Am Board asked them to review the status of two additional families that were already living at Celilo Village. The BIA's review determined they were eligible. The Corps then ordered two additional modular units. They arrived in mid-September and the two families moved into them.

On Sept. 27 crews began demolition by razing two of the first old homes.

The contractor and the Corps are still establishing a timeline for the various components of this construction phase. But for the near term, work will be demolishing the old houses and the BIA office-classroom building, constructing utilities and the homes' foundations, said Corps project manager George Miller.

During construction, the board provides a forum where the community and contractors can discuss issues, CTUIR planner Jim Beard said. At the Sept. meeting Yakama TERO representative Kelsey Packineau did just that by bringing the board questions about pay rates.



Kelsey Packineau speaks with Delilah Heemsah

Next Wy-Am Board meeting

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2007, 10 a.m.

Celilo Village Longhouse, Elders Dining Hall

- BIA presents 638 contract
- Law enforcement
- Governance
- Dance shed update

• The Wy-Am Board invites Celilo Village residents to attend meetings, participate in the process and provide comments.

The Celilo Village Redevelopment Newsletter is published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District, to keep residents and other interested members of the public informed of the Celilo Village redevelopment.

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