

Bonnie Holt-Morehouse

Soap Lake, a saline (alkaline) Lake with the potential to continually stay saline and to stay as a mineral producer is an absolute wonder in this world. It has the ability to have saline (ph 9.5) water and it lies in a shale bed that is highly reactive to salinity. This combination produces chemical bonding of the minerals (ie) $na\ cl = salt$ active ingredients in dried salts read from the Thorson's Soap Lake Bath Salts box include Aluminum and Iron Oxide; Calcium Sulphate; Calcium Carbonate Magnesium Sulphate; Sodium Chloride; Sodium Carbonate; Potassium Carbonate; Lithium Sulphate; Sodium Sulphate;.. Read from a pre 1980's salts box. These were some of the compounds involved in the healing process of people from all over the world .

The total emersion of humanity began with the First People. Their migration time into this land is a part of their ancient history. The Tsincayuse tribe migrated thru a year long cycle including Grant and Douglas County and Chief Moses was the last chieftain who lead The People thru this cycle that included caves and shelter at the ancient fresh water Lakes in the Lower Grand Coulee and south to Soap Lake. It was the first of these ancient Lakes created by the Ice Age Floods; and it was the only one that became highly saline and loaded with minerals; plus the black creamy mud used for poltices. The combination of the mineralized shale rock and a chemical reaction with the saline water is the creation of the mineral compounds that create the ability to heal the human body. That is the unique and very rare gift utilized during the times before inventions of antibiotics; the Sulfa drugs; and Penicillin; plus the anti inflammatory and circulatory drugs used today.

The activity of the town occurred 1905; the county was already settling ; anywhere humans could find fresh water to farm with. The Lower Grand Coulee ancient Lakes were out of limits for farming because of their location deep in the Coulee rock walls. But humans persisted with wells deep into the aquifers. The Federal Government recognized the value of the water in the Lakes and the springs so the ancient tribes of the Big Bend of the great Columbia River were all relocated to North of the Columbia in Okanogan County 1880's.

Soap Lake Sanitariums evolved from the shoreline of Soap Lake. 1905 to 1930;s Without running water; no electricity; coal used for heat; no phones; dirt streets the town of 'Cottage City' began to evolve as its workers cared for the sick and disabled. The accomplishment without help from the State was HEROIC. The town became Incorporated 1919 and called itself Soap Lake in honor of the Lake that could heal people.

McKay Hospital became the rescue 1936 for the 30 years of human effort that had occurred. This was era #2, the time of advanced Medical Science. But Grand Coulee Dam and increased electrical power; then WWII and the town was still put on the waiting list. Finally by 1950 era #3 evolved. Senators Bankers Newspaper Giants began plotting the course of The Columbia Basin and Irrigation. Soap Lake had grown to a town boasting 50 separate housing developments; hotels, motels, cabins, apartments; private room rentals. ten service stations ; restaurants; grocery stores; new schools . The Columbia Basin Irrigation project was complete by 1952 and the population began to stabilize; workers and families moved on; and still the 'Healing Waters' was in demand. Since the 50;s 'taking the waters' has continued to be the main source of human need and interest and industrial drive.

The waters have been controlled by the Bureau; utilized as a mineral water reservoir by the town water delivery; buildings encroached on its basin; and caring for the Lake meant personal gain. No testing; no public awareness except what alarmed news reporters would note. And still the water draws the people. The beaches are full during the summer. The Northern Europeans who were moved here after Chernobyl treated their cancers and skin burns with the water and their descendants still utilize the water today. Is it the water; or the water and the sunshine; or the chance to rest and relax; It still works.

The Soap Lake Conservancy formed 1999; and guided a -1-Saline Lakes Conference-1- from 2002 to 2005 and development of many scientists including NASA, to become involved. They retested the concentrations of the water; studied the microbes Their resulting reports and discoveries are in print and available. We continue on gathering information within the Conservancy; and our involvement with City Council has moved A PDF of the news articles of that Saline Lakes Conference will be forward to you soon.

Due to the influx of population this millennium the increase of risk for the Lake to have degradation is always prevalent . Thankfully the national -1-Clean Water Act-1- has reached into Washington and with the help of the professionals manning the Department of Ecology we will stabilize this Natural and National Wonder for future generations. After over 120 years of constant giving this Healing Water Lake can rest and regenerate will all public organizations on the alert. Thank you
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