

P R E S S R E L E A S E

**Karuk Tribe • Klamath Tribes of Oregon • American Rivers
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Trout Unlimited • Institute for Fisheries Resources • California Trout
Klamath Riverkeeper • Salmon River Restoration Council
Northern California Council of the Federation of Flyfishers
Upper Klamath Water Users' Association**

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Klamath Stakeholders Seize Momentum on Heels of Salazar Comments, Study Results

– Restoration plans jumpstarts major economic benefits adding 4600 jobs to regional economy

– Farmers, ranchers, fishermen, tribes, and conservationists urge Congress to support local solutions

Sacramento, CA – Today, a diverse group of organizations working to balance water use in the Klamath River basin reacted to the positive findings in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released by the Department of Interior, and to comments made earlier this week by Interior Secretary Salazar. The Secretary will use this DEIS to make his final determination in March of 2012 as to whether or not removal of four Klamath River dams in accordance with the Klamath Restoration Agreements are in the public interest.

“This news comes on top of recent official findings by both the Oregon and California Public Utility Commissions (PUCs) that dam removal under the Klamath Settlement Agreement is not only in the public interest but far less costly for utility customers than relicensing. Implementing the Settlement Agreement is the obvious next step in building a sound recovery for both the Klamath agricultural and fisheries based economies and restoring thousands of regional jobs,” said Glen Spain of Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA).

In a thorough review comparing the impacts of river restoration to current conditions, the DEIS shows that implementation of the Agreements would provide significant economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits to Northern California and Southern Oregon.

One of the key findings stakeholders applauded is that the projected cost of removing four dams on the Klamath River falls well within the range of the budget agreed to by Tribes, irrigators, fishermen, and dam owner PacifiCorp.

”It’s important to understand that this is about more than dam removal. This effort will restore fisheries while creating and protecting thousands of jobs in both fishing and agricultural communities. We have the diverse grassroots support that should spur congress to act,” said Jeff Mitchell, Councilman for the Klamath Tribes.

The Klamath Agreements were signed in February 2010 by over 40 stakeholder organizations from a broad-based coalition that includes irrigators, Tribes, fishermen, conservation groups, state and local governments – all groups seek to get beyond the endless litigation and fighting that preceded the Settlement Agreements.

Key features of the Agreements include reintroducing salmon to over 400 miles of historic habitat, increasing water storage and flood control by expanding Upper Klamath Lake, and improved water security for 1400 farm families on the Klamath Irrigation Project.

”What interests us most is that Basin agriculture will receive increased certainty of water deliveries, which helps protect an industry that is vital to all of the local communities in the Klamath Basin, “ said Klamath basin farmer Steve Kandra. “We believe that implementing these Agreements will benefit agriculture even more than the federal studies indicate. Our research shows that agricultural production in Klamath County and Tulelake Irrigation District contributes more than \$600 million to the Klamath economy annually and 4,890 direct and indirect jobs are supported each year in Oregon and California. These jobs will be at risk if the Agreements fall through.”

The DEIS makes several key findings that proponents of the Agreements hope will prompt Congress to pass the legislation necessary for implementation. Stakeholders emphasize the economic and health benefits, cost savings, and jobs creation that the restoration plan includes:

- The most probable estimate for dam removal and associated mitigations is \$290 million (in 2020 dollars). Partial removal would cost \$247 million, this assumes leaving some structures in place such as old powerhouses and selected abutment structures. Note that \$200 million would come from ratepayers (who would otherwise foot the \$500 million plus price tag for dam relicensing) and the balance would come from California.
- The one-year dam removal project is estimated to result in 1,400 jobs during the year of construction.
- Commercial fishing jobs were estimated in five Management Zones. Estimated jobs stemming from improved fishing conditions range from 11 average annual jobs in the KMZ-OR Management Area to 218 average annual jobs in the San Francisco Management Area.

- Dam removal would immediately alleviate massive blooms of toxic algae that plague the river each summer and pose health risks
- Salmon dependent Tribes would benefit from increased abundance of salmon and improved water quality.
- Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges would receive additional water and for the first time in more than 100 years, receive a certainty of water delivery. This water supply could improve hunting and wildlife viewing, which could attract more visitors to the refuges. There would be an estimated additional 193,830 fall waterfowl and 3,634 hunting trips over the 50-year period of analysis.

Combined, the Settlement Agreements invest over \$700 million in the Klamath Basin over the next 15 years, and proponents stress that the restoration plan protects and enhance a regional natural resources economy that is worth over \$750 million each year when healthy.

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Editor's note:

For more on the most recent federal and state dam removal environmental analysis and federal and state decision-making process, see: www.klamathrestoration.gov

All the four Klamath hydropower dams combined have generated only a very small amount of power – only about 82 Megawatts (MW) on average over the past fifty years. According to estimates by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the federal agency that licenses dams, after expensive retrofitting to meet modern standards, these dams would then only generate about 62 MW of power on average, or about 27% less than they do today. FERC itself estimated in its 2007 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on relicensing that even if fully FERC relicensed, the required retrofitting would be so expensive that these dams would then operate at more than a \$20 million/year *net loss* (see FERC FEIS, Table 4-3 on pg. 4-2). The November 2007 FERC Final EIS is available online at:

http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/File_list.asp?document_id=13555784

It can also be found by a FERC docket search at www.ferc.gov through their eLibrary, Docket No. P-2082-027 posted November 16, 2007, Doc. No. 20071116-4001.