



## **Leading National Conservation Organizations Endorse Klamath Settlement Agreements**

***American Rivers and Trout Unlimited reaffirm support***

***Agreements would help restore third largest salmon run on the west coast***

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American Rivers and Trout Unlimited today reaffirmed their unwavering support for the Klamath River restoration agreements, which they will sign at an upcoming ceremony in Salem, Oregon, on February 18th. Both organizations have played a lead role in the decade-long negotiations that have resulted in the Klamath Basin Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA) and Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA).

The Klamath agreements will restore salmon to more than 350 miles of historic habitat in the Upper Basin; restore thousands of acres of wetlands; improve river flows and water quality; provide greater security to the farming community; assure water supplies for the National Wildlife Refuges; remove four obsolete dams on the Klamath River; save PacifiCorp customers money; and, restore part of the Klamath Tribes' homeland, among other things.

"The agreements to restore the Klamath are the result of years of hard work by basin farmers, fishermen, conservationists, tribes, and federal, state and local governments," said Steve Rothert, California Director for American Rivers. "Our organizations count the agreements to remove four dams and restore this great river system as a major achievement."

Jack Williams, Senior Scientist at Trout Unlimited concurred with the analysis of options: "We know there is some risk and uncertainty for fish restoration with these agreements; but after taking a hard look at all the provisions, we find far more risk and uncertainty with the status quo."

While there have been criticisms of some components of the Agreements – in particular that dam removal is not absolutely "guaranteed" - both groups noted that the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement was meticulously

negotiated to provide the most expedient, science-based and practical route to dam removal. Chuck Bonham, Senior Attorney at Trout Unlimited noted, “Our combined legal team has devoted literally thousands of hours to negotiate and analyze the proposed hydro agreement. While there are scenarios under which removal would not occur, those scenarios have been minimized and address practical considerations like safety for downstream Tribal and other communities.”

The organizations noted that, together, they have more experience in hydro relicensing issues than any other conservation groups in the country. But they are also quick to underscore that any settlement must be about more than just dams. “To effectively restore the Basin’s fisheries we need dam removal, better river flows for fish, and cooperative habitat restoration up and down the river. With the two agreements working in concert, we get the change we need for a more sustainable future,” emphasized Steve Rotherth.

American Rivers has been the leading organization standing up for healthy rivers for the benefit of natural and human communities for 37 years. It has over 70,000 supporters nationwide and offices in 12 locations across the country, including Washington, DC. Trout Unlimited celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year as the nation’s oldest and largest coldwater fish conservation group. It has over 150,000 members nationwide organized into about 400 chapters and 35 state councils. Together, the two organizations are founding members of the national Hydropower Reform Coalition; have participated in hundreds of hydropower dam relicensings; and, have successfully negotiated some of the biggest dam removal agreements ever, including the landmark removal of Edwards Dam, a mammoth effort on the Penobscot River in Maine, and for PacifiCorp’s Condit Dam on the White Salmon River, in Washington state

Details about the location of a signing ceremony between all negotiating parties are expected within the next few days.

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For more information see:

<http://www.americanrivers.org/our-work/restoring-rivers/dams/projects/restoring-klamath-river.html>

<http://www.tu.org/>

<http://www.klamathrestoration.org>