

# FAQ on Klamath Dam Removal

## What Dams?

The Klamath River spans the California/Oregon border and is historically the third greatest salmon producing river system in North America.

A complex of six hydropower dams built during the 20<sup>th</sup> century are owned today by PacifiCorp, a subsidiary of Berkshire Energy. The lower four dams are proposed for removal, three in CA; one in OR. None of the dams proposed for removal provide irrigation diversions, drinking diversions, or flood control. Removal of the lower four Klamath Dams represents the largest dam removal and salmon restoration effort in US history.

## Why Remove the Lower Four Klamath River Dams?

Environment: the Klamath dams deny salmon access to hundreds of miles of spawning and rearing habitat, harming salmon populations. In addition, the reservoirs behind dams erupt with massive blooms of toxic blue-green algae each summer leading to health warnings along the river. The dams also prevent the transport of sand and gravel along the river channel which allows the river channel to become excellent habitat for fish disease causing parasites.

Affordable Power: PacifiCorp/Berkshire Energy and the Public Utility Commissions of CA and OR agree that the Klamath dam removal proposal will result in lower power rates than the alternative of relicensing the dams with necessary upgrades. This is mostly due to the fact that the dams make very little electricity relative to their environmental impacts.

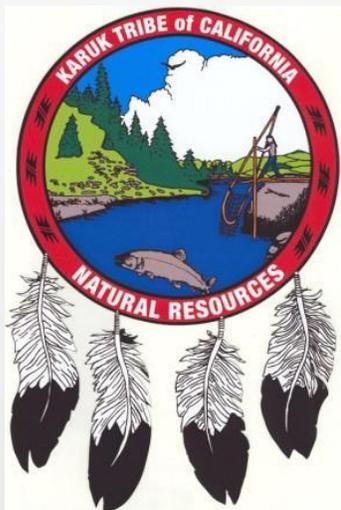
Local Communities: The Klamath is home to three of California's largest Tribes (Karuk, Yurok, and Hoopa Valley) and Oregon's largest Tribe (Klamath Tribes). Fisheries play a key role in the cultural identities, subsistence lifestyles, and economic well-being of Tribal members. Local communities along the river and the West Coast depend on salmon to sustain local tourism as well as a multi-billion dollar commercial salmon industry.

## 2017 Fishery Closures and the Klamath Dams

The period between 2011 and 2014 was the driest in California history. The environmental impacts of the drought were greatly exacerbated by the dams.

In 2014 and 2015, 80-90% of juvenile salmon sampled were infected with the parasite *Ceratomyxa shasta* which is lethal. This year, the adults that survived are scheduled to return to the Klamath; however, because of the high disease rates, this year is worst year for Klamath salmon ever recorded.

In order to protect future runs and maximize harvest opportunities over the



*Karuk is the second largest federally recognized Tribe in California with over 8,000 enrolled members and descendants.*

*The mission of the Karuk Tribal Council is to promote the general welfare of all Karuk people, to establish equality and justice for our tribe, to restore and preserve Tribal traditions, customs, language and ancestral rights, and to secure to ourselves and our descendants the power to exercise the inherent rights of self-governance.*

### For more information contact:

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long-term, scientists have found that optimally, 40,700 Klamath salmon should spawn in the river. This year, if all fishing were prohibited, they predict only 12,000 fish would make it to spawn. This means that the National Marine Fisheries Service will likely enact a total or near total closure for all commercial, sport, and tribal salmon fisheries this year. This will affect fishing in the Klamath River, but because Klamath fish intermingle with fish from other watersheds in the ocean, salmon fishing will be severely restricted along most of the California and Oregon coasts – costing thousands of jobs and millions in lost revenue for coastal communities.

### **Dam Removal Proposed to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

PacifiCorp/Berkshire Energy's dam surrender application to FERC stems from the amended Klamath Hydropower Settlement Agreement (KHSA). The KHSA was originally part of a series of broader agreements aimed at restoring Klamath fisheries in a manner that would provide regulatory assurances and water security for irrigators. That package of Agreements terminated in 2015 after Congress failed to approve them. In early 2016, PacifiCorp/Berkshire Energy, CA, OR, Federal Agencies, Karuk, and Yurok along with conservation groups and other stakeholders amended the KHSA to be a stand-alone document which seeks dam removal through the traditional FERC process.

### **Is Dam Removal a Sure Thing?**

No. The final decision on whether or not to remove the dams will be made by FERC. The newly formed Klamath River Renewal Corporation and PacifiCorp/Berkshire Energy proposed dam removal to FERC in September 2016. CA and OR are currently processing Clean Water Act permits that are required before FERC can act. FERC will hold a public comment period, do an environmental review, and likely make a decision in 2019. If FERC approves the plan, dam removal will occur in 2020.

### **What is the Role of the Klamath River Renewal Corporation?**

The Klamath River Renewal Corporation is a 501(c) 3 non-profit formed by the Parties to take ownership of the dams and manage all aspects of dam removal, including permitting and liability management.

### **Who Pays and How Much?**

The 2012 Environmental Impact Statement estimates the cost of dam removal at \$292 million (in 2020 dollars), which includes full removal of all four dams. The estimate includes all aspects of dam removal including planning, permitting, insurance, site restoration, contract management, and contingencies for unexpected costs. The first \$200 million in dam removal costs will come from PacifiCorp/Berkshire Energy. These funds are currently being collected as part of a Public Utility Commission approved rate surcharge on power bills. It's important to note that that the customer surcharge is cheaper than the alternative of paying the costs associated with obtaining a new dam license and operating the dams. Up to an additional \$250 million in dam removal costs will be funded by California's Prop. 1, a water bond approved by voters in 2014. *No federal dollars will be used to remove the dams.*

### **What Role does Congress have to play in Klamath Dam Removal?**

None; however, many outstanding disputes remain in the Klamath since Congress failed to act on the larger Klamath settlement package. Parties to the KHSA remain committed to restoring fish habitat, balancing water use, and creating water security for Upper Klamath Basin irrigators as well as fisheries. Solving these issues will likely require new federal funding and new congressional authorities.