

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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### **KLAMATH RIVER TRIBES APPALUD FEDERAL AGENCY EFFORTS TO RESTORE SALMON HABITAT**

#### ***Finally, Salmon's Return to Upper Klamath Basin a Possibility***

*Orleans, CA* - The Karuk and Yurok Tribes of California join the Klamath Tribes of Oregon in supporting recent efforts of the Department of Commerce and Department of the Interior towards restoring the Klamath River. Today, the two federal agencies released mandatory terms and conditions for the issuance of a new license for Klamath Dams operated by PacifiCorp. The action was taken as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's [FERC] re-licensing process.

The antiquated complex of dams currently denies salmon access to over 350 miles of historic habitat. It no longer makes any economic sense to keep the dams, says Leaf Hillman of the Karuk Tribe. "The Klamath dams are poor producers of electricity, they do not provide flood control, they do not provide irrigation or drinking water—all they do is kill fish. This is destroying Tribal cultures as well the California/Oregon fishing economies. It's time to hold PacifiCorp accountable."

"Given that the Department of Interior has a legal responsibility to protect Tribal Trust resources, they have little choice but to do everything in their power to bring our salmon home," says Alan Foreman, chairmen of the Klamath Tribes of Oregon. The Klamath Tribes of Oregon have not fished for salmon since 1917, when the first dam was built. "The agencies do not have the authority to mandate dam removal, but FERC does," adds Foreman.

Agencies such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries do have the authority to demand ladders and increased stream flows in order to protect and restore salmon. But according to many tribal members and experts, the installation of fish ladders does not go far enough. As Yurok Tribal consultant Troy Fletcher notes, "the construction of ladders on these relics will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. That money would be better spent to remove the lower four dams in order to protect our salmon and our local economies."

Susan Corum, a Karuk water quality expert, adds that "ladders would do nothing to address the toxic algae blooms that threaten those of us who live downstream." In the summer of 2005, *Microcystis aeruginosa* blooms in the reservoirs exceeded the World Health Organization standard for moderate risk by over 100 fold.

With recurring large scale fish kills, toxic algal blooms, and fishing closures resulting from weak Klamath runs, many river advocates see dam removal as critical to solving the river's problems. "We cannot restore salmon without improving water quality and providing access to spawning habitat. The only way to do that is by removing those dams," according to Glen Spain of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

Last year and again this year, commercial salmon fishing restrictions cost the region an estimated \$200 million in lost revenue. The restrictions were instituted due to low returns of Klamath Salmon despite strong returns on the Sacramento and Columbia Rivers.

"To obtain resolution in this matter, we will need the political support of our state and federal representatives," says Hillman. "Our aim is to keep the farmers farming and the fishermen fishing."

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