

Karuk Tribe of California

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

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Buffet Buying Trouble

Billionaire Businessman buys PacifiCorp, trouble with Tribes

Happy Camp, CA – Klamath Basin Indian Tribes reacted with surprise and disappointment yesterday at Scottish Power’s sale of PacifiCorp to billionaire investor Warren Buffet. The Tribes, along with allies in the fishing and environmental community, have been working with the energy giant’s subsidiary, PacifiCorp, to find a way to remove Klamath river dams in order to restore dwindling salmon runs.

The Klamath River was once the third most productive salmon river in America, returning as many as 1.2 million adult salmon annually. After nearly a century of dam building, diversions, and logging in the watershed, only 1/10 that number return today.

The PacifiCorp owned Klamath hydropower complex is currently undergoing relicensing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which will decide on the terms of a new operational license next year. According to Troy Fletcher of the Yurok Tribe, “the relicensing creates a rare opportunity to fix the problems created by the dams. We won’t get another chance like this for 50 years. By then, there may not be any salmon left to fight over.”

Last year, representatives from the four Klamath Basin tribes (Karuk, Yurok, Hoopa, and Klamath Tribes) traveled to Scotland to protest at Scottish Power’s annual shareholder meeting. There they met with CEO Ian Russell. “Mr. Russell told us last year that we could trust him to resolve the issue fairly. Is this his idea of fair? He is now attempting to evade the issue and put it off on someone else. Mr. Russell has let us down.” Hillman went on to note, “it’s not the first time the Tribes have been treated this way.”

The Tribes do not plan to give up their struggle. As Karuk Tribal fishermen Ron Reed noted, “we will continue to fight to bring the salmon home, it doesn’t matter who owns the dams.”

At this point the Tribes and their allies are looking to make contact with representatives from Buffet’s Berkshire Inc. Leaf Hillman said, “Right now, we don’t know if Mr. Buffet cares about salmon or Native Tribes, but we plan to find out soon. We are also asking Scottish Power shareholders to do everything they can to block the sale of the company until the Klamath issue is resolved. At the same time, we need to let investors in Berkshire know what they’re getting into.”

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