

Second Annual Report Highlights Klamath Agreement Accomplishments

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KLAMATH BASIN-- Amidst the uncertainty of another dry water year in the Klamath Basin, the Klamath Basin Coordinating Council (KBCC) today released its second annual report highlighting accomplishments since the Klamath Agreements were signed in 2010. The KBCC noted that when these agreements are implemented, local irrigators and fisheries would have greater certainty for obtaining the water needed in dry years.

The Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA) and the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA) were forged by Klamath Basin stakeholder groups including Basin irrigators, fishermen, tribes and conservation groups, the dam owner PacifiCorp, agencies within the states of California and Oregon, Federal agencies, Humboldt County, California, and Klamath County, Oregon. Forty-five organizations have signed the Klamath Basin Agreements.

The Klamath Agreements are designed to create economic stability, provide reliable water supplies and energy, and restore important fisheries for all the Basin's diverse communities. Over the past two years, parties to the Klamath Basin Agreements have implemented the following near-term actions:

Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement

- The KBCC has reviewed and updated the cost estimates to implement the KBRA. This process reduced the seven-year cost estimates by 38 percent and the 15-year cost estimates by 18 percent.
- The Klamath Water and Power Agency is developing the On-Project Plan to align water supply and demand for irrigation in the Klamath Reclamation Project in light of limitations on diversions of water that will arise under the Restoration Agreement. With these limitations, the availability of water from Upper Klamath Lake and the Klamath River for irrigation would be approximately 100,000 acre feet less than current demand in the driest years, with irrigation water availability increasing on a sliding scale with increasingly wet conditions.
- The Drought Plan Lead Entity has completed the Drought Plan and it is under review by the Department of the Interior. When the Drought Plan and other provisions of the Restoration Agreement are implemented it would provide more water for fishery resources in very low-water years and more certainty for irrigators than current conditions.
- Reclamation has made progress on studies of addition water storage in the Klamath Basin that could benefit agriculture and fish resources.

Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement

- The Department of the Interior has issued a draft of a report summarizing information on whether removal of four hydroelectric dams owned by PacifiCorp is in the public interest (the draft Klamath Dam Removal Overview Report) and a peer review panel has completed its review of the draft.

- The Department of the Interior and the California Department of Fish and Game have released a draft Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report evaluating environmental impacts of removal of the four PacifiCorp dams under consideration for removal.
- The public utility commissions in California and Oregon have approved the collection of funds to pay for decommissioning the dams. As of the end of January 2012, the combined balance of the Oregon and California dam removal trust accounts was \$28,336,773.78.
- The interim measures to improve environmental conditions within the Klamath Hydroelectric Project to benefit aquatic habitat and listed species, improve water quality, and improve hatchery operations are being implemented on the schedule called for in the KHSA.

Implementation of a number of programs has been delayed until Congress passes legislation and funding is available. Measures that have been delayed include:

- Preparation and implementation of the Fisheries Restoration and Monitoring Plan;
- Work on the Off-Project Water Settlement;
- Implementation of the elements of the Power for Water Management Program, including the Interim Power and Conservation and Renewable Resources Programs;
- Implementation of the Drought Plan; and
- The Secretary of the Interior’s decision on the four Klamath River dams is also delayed until Congress passes the authorizing legislation.

Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber said, “Oregon remains fully committed to implementing the Klamath Basin Agreements, and I’m pleased that substantial progress has been made. I was governor during the water crisis in 2001 and 2002, and I remember well the devastating effect the drought had on communities in the Basin. Following through on these agreements, and passing the Congressional legislation, will help us have different and better outcomes when we face low-water seasons.”

“California is pleased with the progress over the last two years,” said California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird. “California has worked closely with the federal agencies on the environmental studies. We look forward to working with Oregon and the Congressional delegation to pass the federal legislation needed to fully implement these agreements.”

“We are encouraged by the progress that has been made” said Greg Addington, executive director of the Klamath Water Users Association. “Unfortunately, we are heading into another very uncertain water year. The communications and trust that has developed among the parties to the agreement have been very helpful, but we need Congress to act to pass the Klamath legislation so we can get more certainty about our water supplies.”

Leaf Hillman, Director of Karuk Natural Resources Department, agreed: “The fish managers have made progress, but we can’t truly solve the Klamath Crisis until Congress acts on this bi-partisan agreement.”

Copies of the Annual Report, the Klamath Settlement Agreements, along with summaries, reports, and meeting notices can be found at www.klamathcouncil.org.

To learn more about the studies related to the four Klamath River dams visit www.klamathrestoration.gov

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