

The Klamath River



Klamath Hydropower Project Facts

Year built: 1918 and later

Capacity: 160 megawatts

Generation provided: 1% of PacifiCorp demand

Flood protection provided: none

Water supply provided: none

Miles of habitat blocked: 350

Fish species affected: coho, chinook, steelhead, lamprey

Cost of removal: \$90 million

Klamath Hydropower Project Consists of:

Keno Dam, a 24-ft non-hydro dam that smooths return flows from the Bureau's Klamath Irrigation Project.

JC Boyle Dam, a 60-ft high dam and 90 MW powerhouse that dewater 4.3 miles of river.

Copco 1 Dam, a 120 ft-high dam and 20 MW powerhouse.

Copco 2 Dam, a 25 ft-high dam and 27 MW powerhouse that dewater 1.4 miles of river.

Iron Gate Dam, a 162 ft dam and 18 MW powerhouse.

Fall Creek Dam, a small diversion dam and 2.2 MW powerhouse on a tributary to the Klamath.

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Restoring the Klamath River for people and salmon

The Klamath Basin *can* once again have thriving fishing and farming communities

The Klamath River once supported the third-largest salmon run on the West Coast. Today, salmon and steelhead runs are a fraction of their historic abundance, with some near extinction.

The removal of four dams on the Klamath would put the river's legendary salmon and steelhead runs on the road to recovery, and would help end decades-long disputes over river management in the basin.

Removing the dams can be done in a way that not only protects, but enhances, fishing and farming communities in the basin.



Courtesy of US Forest Service

The River

The Klamath River begins in a high arid basin ringed by the volcanic peaks of the Cascade Range in Oregon and flows for over 250 miles to the Pacific south of Crescent City in California.

Much of the wetland habitat of the Upper Klamath Basin was converted to irrigated agriculture, but remaining habitat in National Wildlife Refuges still attracts a majority of migrating birds on the Pacific Flyway.

Downstream of the Upper Klamath Lake, the river plunges into a canyon where PacifiCorp operates five mainstem dams, two in Oregon and three in California. In between two of these dams is a Wild and Scenic stretch that is well-known for its fishing and whitewater rafting.

Since the first dam was constructed in 1918, salmon and steelhead have been prevented from reaching more than 350 miles of historic spawning and rearing habitat in the upper basin.



Courtesy of Steve Rothert

Salmon populations have plummeted to less than 10 percent of historic numbers, and the commercial salmon fishing industry was virtually shutdown along 700 miles of coastline in California and Oregon in 2006 to protect Klamath salmon stocks. The fishery closure caused more than \$100 million damage to California and Oregon economies, and harmed numerous fishing communities.

Native American tribes throughout the Klamath basin have treaty rights to fish salmon, but lower basin tribes have had to drastically reduce their catch to protect the salmon runs, and upper basin tribes have not seen salmon in their waters for nearly 100 years.

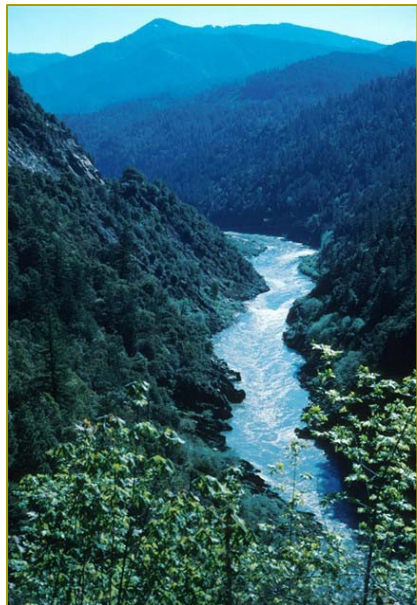
The reservoirs increase water temperatures, decrease dissolved oxygen downstream and support thick mats of algae that release toxins into the water that can harm animals and people.

Because there are so many competing demands on water in the Klamath River, farmers in the upper basin cannot count on having adequate and reliable irrigation supplies. This uncertainty causes economic losses and loads additional stress on farming families.

A River Reborn

The degraded state of the Klamath is caused by several factors, including PacifiCorp's dams, poor water quality and low flows. Full recovery of the basin will require that all threats are addressed.

However, the hydro project represents the largest single obstacle to recovery of Klamath salmon. Dam removal will create unhindered access for threatened coho and chinook salmon, steelhead and lamprey from the Pacific Ocean to the eastern slopes of the Cascades some 300 miles inland. While the river is already popular for sport fishing, it is bound to improve as salmon and steelhead runs are restored to higher numbers. Each fish caught on the Klamath River is estimated to produce \$200 in economic activity to local communities.



Courtesy of US F & WS

If the dams are removed, the Klamath Tribes of the upper basin would be able to welcome salmon home for the first time in nearly 100 years. The Karuk, Yurok and Hoopa tribes in the lower basin would enjoy a restored fishery that they depend on for sustenance, livelihoods and cultural and spiritual practices. Even though the dams do not supply water to farmers or other users, dam removal could be done in a way that increases water supply security for the basin's farming families.

Finally, dam removal makes sense for ratepayers. The draft Environmental Impact Statement issued by FERC in September 2006 shows that removing the dams and replacing the power they produce would cost PacifiCorp customers \$28 million less each year than bringing the project into compliance with current environmental law and safety standards.

Timeline

2001 – PacifiCorp begins relicensing process for the Klamath Hydropower Project

April 2005 – Studies funded by American Rivers and California Coastal Conservancy show dam removal is feasible and affordable

June 2005 – PacifiCorp submits license application that proposes no fish passage

March 2006 – National Marine Fisheries Service and Fish and Wildlife Service issue preliminary prescriptions that require PacifiCorp to install fish passage facilities on all of its dams.

September 2006 – Administrative Law Judge rules in favor of agencies in support of their prescriptions.

September 2006 – FERC issues draft EIS showing it is cheaper for PacifiCorp ratepayers to remove the dams and replace the power than to bring the hydro project into compliance with current laws.

December 2007 – FERC scheduled to make relicensing decision.

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