

Klamath River Renewal Project

A cooperative effort to revitalize the Klamath River

October 2017

Information for Siskiyou County Residents

Who is KRRC?

The Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) is an independent nonprofit organization formed in 2016 as part of the amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA). Signatories of the amended KHSA, including the States of California and Oregon, local governments, Tribal nations, dam owner PacifiCorp, irrigators, and several conservation and fishing groups, appointed KRRC to take ownership and oversee removal of four hydroelectric dams on the river and restoration of formerly inundated lands. KRRC's work is funded by PacifiCorp customer surcharges and California Proposition 1 water bond funds.

How does dam removal affect agriculture in Siskiyou County?

Farms and ranchers in the region will continue to receive the same irrigation benefits they do today. The dams that provide these services - Link River and Keno dams - are not part of the KRRC project. River flows are primarily controlled by flow releases from Upper Klamath Lake at Link River Dam.

How does dam removal help water quality?

Warm water in Copco 1 and Iron Gate reservoirs creates ideal growth conditions for blue-green algae (cyanobacteria). The summer and fall algae blooms in both reservoirs produce toxic microcystin which harms fish and is dangerous to humans. During large blooms, toxic microcystin is also transported to downstream river reaches. Removal of the four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River will improve water quality by restoring more natural river flows. Specifically, algal toxin levels, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, and pH will improve downstream of Iron Gate Dam and throughout the restored river reach. Restoring the natural temperature regime and improving water quality will reduce public health risks and benefit aquatic life throughout the Klamath region.

Are there toxics in the sediments behind the dams?

Accumulated sediment within the reservoir has been tested and no contaminants have been detected in violation of human health or drinking water standards. Of the approximately 15 million cubic yards of sediment behind the four dams, between 5 and 9 million cubic yards will erode downstream soon after dam removal and the remainder will remain behind, effectively becoming soil that would be replanted with native vegetation.

Will my power rates increase after the dams are removed?

PacifiCorp, the owner of the facilities, indicates removal of the dams under the terms of the KHSA, including a customer cost cap, will cost customers less than relicensing the dams to meet required upgrades. The California Public Utilities Commission has also supported the underlying settlement as a better outcome for customers than relicensing the dams.

Why isn't KRRC evaluating dam removal alternatives?

KRRC's job is to take ownership of the dams from PacifiCorp (PacifiCorp will continue to operate them in the interim), and then remove the dams, restore formerly inundated lands, and implement required mitigation measures in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Government permitting agencies will look at a reasonable range of alternatives as part of the permitting process.



Photo Credit: Forest Service, USDA



Iron Gate Dam

How does KRRC plan to address the direct impact to Yreka's water supply pipeline at Iron Gate reservoir?

The removal of the dams will likely expose a pipeline important to the City of Yreka's water supply; thus, some components of the city's water infrastructure will need to be rerouted or rebuilt. KRRC is currently working with the City of Yreka to develop a plan to ensure that the city's water supply infrastructure is secure and functional during and following dam removal.

How will dam removal improve the economy? Will it bring local jobs?

KRRC's direct activities in the Klamath Basin, including dam deconstruction and restoration work, will create a few hundred jobs in the Klamath Basin. KRRC intends to work with local chambers and economic development agencies to ensure local companies are aware of opportunities and have ample time to prepare and train workers. In addition, KRRC's expenditures in the basin are expected to stimulate creation of 1,400 related, or indirect, jobs.

Implementing the KHSAs will reduce public spending on disaster relief and help avoid the economic consequences of fisheries collapse. Over the past decade, hundreds of millions in public dollars have been spent on emergency measures for fishermen, Tribal nations, and farmers to respond to Klamath water crises.

Finally, dam removal under the terms of the KHSAs is in the best interest of PacifiCorp customers. Relicensing the hydroelectric dams would require an estimated \$400 million in upgrades (according to 2010 estimates). Instead, the KHSAs limit PacifiCorp's commitment to \$200 million.

Does the project include any components to promote long-term recreation related benefits?

Restoring fish passage and habitat throughout the reservoir areas will promote long-term health of fisheries in the Basin which will result in enhanced recreational fishing opportunities, especially steel head.

When can the public provide input on this project?

The public will have opportunities to provide input into KRRC's applications for dam license transfer and surrender and as part of the project's environmental review processes. Government agencies responsible for these regulatory approvals will determine the schedule and specific opportunities for public engagement. KRRC will post information on its website about specific opportunities or deadlines for public input. In addition, KRRC will hold periodic public meetings. An Open House will be held in Yreka on Nov 8, 2017. We also welcome your questions and comments by phone (415-820-4441) and email (info@klamathrenewal.org).

What agency is reviewing the project?

The agencies reviewing KRRC's permit applications include the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). FERC and these agencies will evaluate KRRC's proposed project and will decide on mitigations.

KRRC's work is part of a cooperative effort to re-establish the natural vitality of the Klamath River so that it can support all communities in the basin.

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