



COUNTY OF SISKIYOU

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Elizabeth Nielsen, Project Coordinator

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SUBJECT: Klamath Dams Update

County staff has developed this report to provide an update on the Klamath Dams Process and recent activities performed by Siskiyou County and their recently retained consultant, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA).

Background:

In September 2016, PacifiCorp and the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) submitted two applications to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) seeking to transfer and surrender PacifiCorp's hydropower license for the four Lower Klamath dams. Together these applications propose to transfer, decommission, and remove the dams. In October 2017, FERC submitted a supplemental information request to KRRC, requesting additional information on their applications, including requests for updated and detailed budgets for dam removal, how funding would be obtained for removal, details on risk management plans, details on insurance, liability, and bonding coverage for the project and, details on funding available for restoration and post-dam removal monitoring. A full response to FERC's request is expected from KRRC by July 2018. In addition to this process, the California State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) has initiated requirements under the Clean Water Act and California Environmental Quality Act, which has included holding a scoping meeting in Yreka in early 2017, and developing and distributing a Scoping Report in April 2017. The State Board anticipates releasing a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in late Spring/early summer 2018. It is further anticipated that KRRC will be seeking to comply with the federal Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act contemporaneous with efforts to obtain State Board authorization.

Due to the short timeline, complex details and requirements surrounding KRRC's proposed project, the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors retained SWCA Environmental Consultants to assist in various aspects related to the activities surrounding the Klamath Dams, including providing technical expertise and guidance to Siskiyou County. SWCA is a highly qualified nation-wide consulting firm with over 100 completed Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), hydroelectric, and dam projects, including relicensing projects. SWCA also has significant expertise

in NEPA, CEQA, cultural resources, and water quality certification with over 600 staff nationwide focused on technical and scientific expertise. Due to their vast experience, SWCA provides the County the ability to stay fully engaged in every process related to KRRC's efforts, and can help identify missing information, unsound science, and further explore all impacts of dam removal.

Over the past two months SWCA has been reviewing past and current documentation related to the Klamath Dams, familiarizing themselves with the concerns of and impacts to Siskiyou County, its citizens and natural resources, and providing expert information and recommendations related to these concerns and impacts. SWCA has also been in contact and discussions with FERC staff, the State Board, Bureau of Reclamation, KRRC and its consultants, and is in coordination with the California and Washington D.C. law firm contracted by Siskiyou County.

Much of this initial work has been in preparation for the State Board's anticipated release of their draft water quality certification and EIR, and KRRC's final submittals to FERC. After release of the draft EIR, SWCA plans to make an in-person presentation to the Board of Supervisors that will outline the material provided in the draft documents and will detail the comments that SWCA recommends Siskiyou County should provide to the State Board. SWCA will also provide similar recommendations during comment periods and associated activities announced and initiated by FERC.

In recent initial staff meetings with agencies and KRRC, SWCA assisted staff in identifying informational gaps and in requesting additional analyses, including:

- additional detailed deep-sediment sampling and analysis;
- additional Total PCB and PAH analysis;
- analysis related to bio-accumulation of hazardous material in aquatic species and deposition of sediments along the Klamath River;
- studies related to the spreading of noxious weeds along the Klamath River corridor and beyond the corridor during high water events; and
- County-specific studies relating to economic and recreational impacts, among others.

SWCA's review of project documents has also resulted in advisement on the importance of accurate groundwater level studies for identifying impacts to residents within close proximity of the reservoirs, some of whom have publically expressed great concern about groundwater impacts to residential wells resulting from dam removal. As detailed by SWCA:

“As discussed in the proposed project documentation, groundwater elevations surrounding the reservoirs will likely lower in response to dam removal and restoration (Detailed Plan 2012). A drop in groundwater elevation may significantly reduce some domestic water well supplies in areas surrounding the existing reservoirs. If the proposed project is implemented, it is essential that adequate mitigation occur to make landowners in Siskiyou County whole for the impacts associated with groundwater. An upcoming groundwater

evaluation from KRRC is necessary to ensure that your interests are protected *if* the project is implemented. One of the proposed mitigation measures for impacts to landowner's groundwater is deepening of existing affected domestic or irrigation wells, or complete well replacement, to ensure that groundwater production rates are the same as pre-project rates. In order to determine if a landowner's well has been impacted, KRRC will need to obtain information on the current groundwater elevations in the areas surrounding the proposed project. Collecting pre-project, or baseline data, is a crucial step in properly evaluating a project's impact on the environment and your property. Without baseline data, it may be impossible for KRRC to adequately compensate landowner's for their loss of, or reduced access to, groundwater. Therefore, these landowners should consider the importance of KRRC accessing property to study current groundwater levels and conditions."

This information will also be provided to KRRC to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities.

Future staff reports will be provided to the Board of Supervisors and public, and the public will be made aware of any upcoming or announced activities. If members of the public have any questions, would like information related to the proposed dam removal, or would like more information regarding the County's efforts regarding the proposals, please visit the Siskiyou County Natural Resources web-page at <http://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/page/natural-resources>. Additionally, information can be obtained by contacting Elizabeth Nielsen, Siskiyou County Project Coordinator at enielsen@co.siskiyou.ca.us or (530) 842-8012.