

Klamath Settlement Group Releases
Proposed Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement for Public Review

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Representatives of diverse communities in the Klamath Basin, working with federal, state, and county governments, have developed a Proposed Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement to rebuild fisheries, sustain agricultural communities, and resolve other longstanding disputes related to the allocation of water resources. The non-Federal parties released the Proposed Agreement today to inform the public and to provide public review and comment before taking final action. This is an important first step in a collaborative effort to seek solutions with the key stakeholders in the Klamath Basin on an environmental restoration strategy.

The Klamath Settlement Group is presently negotiating with PacifiCorp in an effort to reach agreement on the removal of the utility's four lower dams in the Klamath Basin, referenced as the "Hydropower Agreement." Dam removal is a necessary part of the overall restoration effort, and the Hydropower Agreement along with the Proposed Agreement released today has the potential to provide a comprehensive solution for the Basin. The group is working to finalize both agreements in February.

Key provisions of the Proposed Agreement include:

- A comprehensive program to rebuild fish populations sufficient for sustainable tribal, recreational, and commercial fisheries. Elements include: Actions to restore fish populations and habitats, including a program to reintroduce anadromous species in currently-blocked parts of the Basin; actions to improve fish survival by enhancing the amount of water available for fish, particularly in drier years; and other efforts to support tribes in fisheries reintroduction and restoration efforts.
- A reliable and certain allocation of water sufficient for a sustainable agricultural community and national wildlife refuges.
- A program to stabilize power costs for the Upper Basin's family farms, ranches, and for the two national wildlife refuges.
- A program intended to insure mitigation for counties that may be impacted by the removal of the hydroelectric facilities.

The Klamath Settlement Group has developed the Proposed Agreement over the course of the last two years. It is still refining some details in the Proposed Agreement. Representatives of the following parties have been part of the discussions:

Farmers and Ranchers

Klamath Water Users Association

Off-Project Water Users

Tribal

Hoopa Valley Tribe
Karuk Tribe
Klamath Tribes
Yurok Tribe

Federal

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
U.S. Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Department of the Interior, including Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and Fish and Wildlife Service

State

California Department of Fish and Game
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Water Resources Department

County

Humboldt County, California
Klamath County, Oregon
Siskiyou County, California

Conservation and fishing groups

American Rivers
California Trout
Friends of the River
Klamath Forest Alliance
National Center for Conservation Science and Policy
Northcoast Environmental Center
Northern California/Nevada Council Federation of Fly Fishers
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Salmon River Restoration Council
Trout Unlimited.

All of the representatives agreed to public release of the Proposed Agreement. The three counties and several irrigation districts will hold public meetings on the Proposed Agreement prior to deciding whether to sign it. Negotiators for two organizations, the Hoopa Valley Tribe and Klamath Off-Project Water Users (KOPWU), do not approve the current draft. The Federal agencies, while at the table during the negotiations, will not be signatories of the Proposed Agreement. Instead, subsequent Federal review of the Proposed Agreement and legislation will be needed.

Greg Addington of the Klamath Water Users Association said: "The result of the negotiations is a series of compromises and proposed commitments between farmers, tribes, conservationists, counties, and state and federal agencies aimed at keeping all of the Klamath's rural communities economically and ecologically viable."

Troy Fletcher of the Yurok Tribe noted: "This spirit of trust, respect, and compromise is unprecedented in the Klamath Basin. This agreement will provide a path to restore fish populations and strengthen our commitment to work with each other."

Chuck Bonham of Trout Unlimited said “The negotiators have worked through difficult and complex issues to get broad support for the actions in the Proposed Agreement. We hope others will share our desire to work for a solution.”

For a summary or a copy of the Proposed Agreement please go to the following website:
<http://www.edsheets.com/Klamathdocs.html>.