

Klamath Dams Removal In The Midst Of 'Water Crisis' – Antithesis Of Water And Wildlife Conservation

A small minority of incentivized stakeholders disregard losing critical endangered and threatened species. Area's largest native American tribe ignored.

YREKA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, June 21, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent AP news release was titled 'Water crisis 'couldn't be worse' on Oregon-California border'. And the unfolding historic drought is predicted to worsen.

Clearly, the growing needs for domestic water to support human needs and food production as well as wildlife habitats must not be ignored. That said, dam removal proponents are short-sighted and are merely looking to their own needs, which do not consider the big picture.

The shocking truth is that; in the middle of a record period of historic drought and 'water crisis', the governors of Oregon (Kate Brown) and California (Gavin Newsome) have collaborated with Berkshire Hathaway's profitable Pacific Corp and a relatively few minority stakeholders to circumvent a Congressional Act, the Klamath River Basin Compact, and wrongfully remove 4-dams during a drought that's intensifying.

And in that process, deprive a super-majority of Americans of their beneficial rights to the water, recreation, wildlife and other resources provided by Copco and Iron Gate Lakes behind the dams.



'Beneficial Use': Copco Lake: One of three lakes behind the Klamath Dams that together hold 45.4-billion gallons of fresh water, providing domestic water, recreation and wildlife habitat – Photo: William E. Simpson II

“In addition to circumventing the Act without Congressional approval, this ill-conceived dam removal project arguably flies in the face of the Public Trust Doctrine (‘PTD’). The Public Trust Doctrine requires the ‘highest and best use’ of the public’s natural resources in the beneficial interest of the majority of Americans and wildlife, not the minority. Instead, this project seeks to deprive the overall majority of Americans and instead favors the demands of a small self-serving minority who are supported merely by money and power, instead of science and logic. We desperately need national media coverage from NBC News, ABC News, CBS News, AP News and the rest of the national media to help bring attention to this pending catastrophe before it's too late”; said naturalist William E. Simpson II



'Beneficial Use': Firefighters drew over 1-million gallons of water from Iron Gate Lake (one of the lakes behind Klamath dams) to fight Klamathon Fire (38,000 acres) that threatened Ashland OR and Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument – Photo: William E. Simpson II

Three of the four Klamath River dams proposed for removal are in Siskiyou County, CA, where a referendum proved that [78.84% of voters were against the Klamath dam removal project](#).

“

Numerous threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna will lose critical habitat and likely perish, collapsing the area’s trophic cascades, further speeding extinction of more rare species”

*William E. Simpson II -
Naturalist*

In Klamath County Oregon, where one of the Klamath River dams is located, voters considered whether the four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River should be removed. That vote proved 72% of voters are opposed to the Klamath River dam removal project.

Do the whims of a few minority groups who are arguably self-serving, and a wealthy for-profit corporation, now have preeminence over the American democratic process?

The native American Shasta Tribe, which historically is the largest tribe in the area of the Klamath Dams (see map

graphic), are steadfastly against the removal of the dams.

“The Shasta Tribe has been asked for input by the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (‘KRRC’), and we have provided our input, but it seems our input was ignored. The deal that KRRC has

struck is illegal. Eighteen treaties were made with local native American tribes, including with our tribe, the Shasta Tribe, which was not ratified. Land can only be taken by treaty. Our tribal lands make up the largest area around the Klamath Dams, which are on our tribal lands. We stand against the removal of the Klamath River dams.”; said Roy Hall, Chief of the Shasta Tribe.

The fresh water stored behind 3 of the 4 dams in Siskiyou County California amounts to 139,200 acre-feet of water. That equals about 45.4 - billion gallons of stored fresh water that will be lost if these dams are removed!

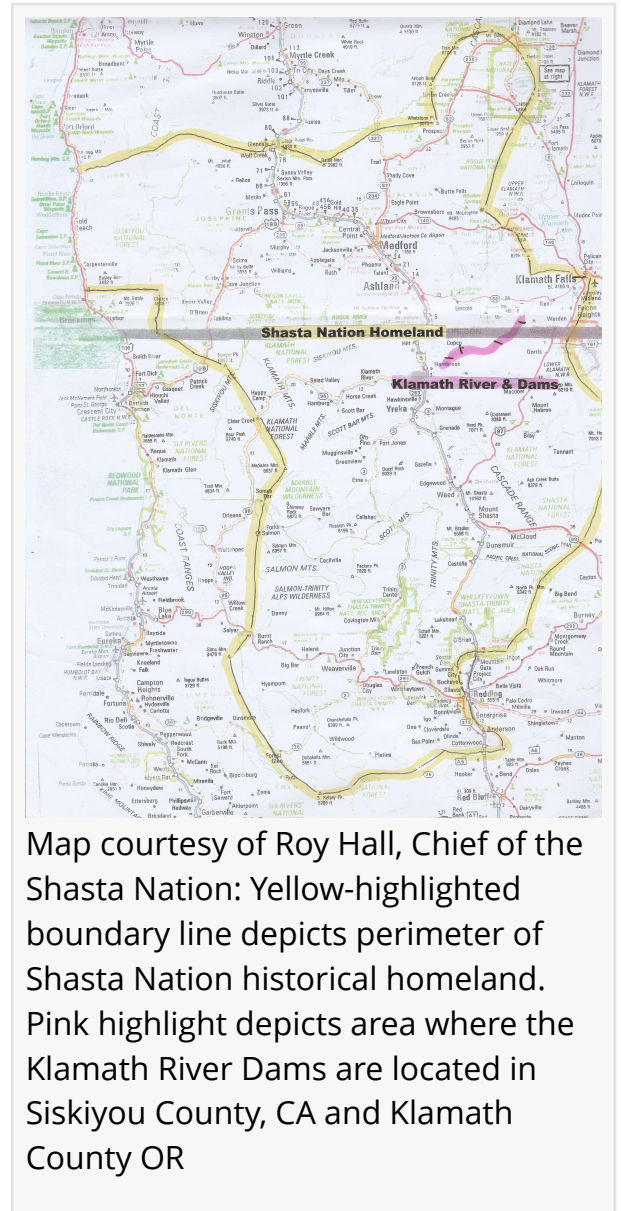
“As the fire chief of Copco Lake Volunteer Fire Department since 2008 I have witnessed many wildfires and structure fires at and near the lake. On countless occasions the fires have been swiftly and effectively extinguished due to the lake's ability to provide quick, easy and safe access to helicopters and water scooping fixed wing aircraft. The lake also provides an excellent fuel break for fires which the river alone would not be guaranteed to provide. Proof of this is when the Klamathon fire jumped the river in Hornbrook leading to devastating loss of life and property in the town of Hornbrook. The loss of the lakes would create higher danger of fire spread and higher risk to the pilots of water drafting helicopters”, said Francis Gill - Chief 200 Copco Lake Fire Department.

Phil Reynolds, President of the Copco Lake Community Club said;

"Over the last 18 plus years, our members have repeatedly told the state, County, and local authorities and public servants 'no dam removal'. We have endured countless meetings with multiple state, federal and other bureaucrats and a few with the (KRRC) about dam removal. Always our message has been no dam removal. We the citizens who are directly affected are continually brushed aside and ignored. Enough is enough”.

Ray Haupt County Supervisor, District 5 Siskiyou County California Board of Supervisors stated that;

“Under many decades of NEPA settled law, yesterday FERC made a Predetermined Decision to



Map courtesy of Roy Hall, Chief of the Shasta Nation: Yellow-highlighted boundary line depicts perimeter of Shasta Nation historical homeland. Pink highlight depicts area where the Klamath River Dams are located in Siskiyou County, CA and Klamath County OR

move forward with license transfer for the purpose of Klamath Dam removal. The associated ordered EIS is tainted as the transfer predetermined any objective EIS analysis and decision."

"After 7 years and nearly \$2 million dollars spent by Siskiyou County providing expert scientific testimony to protect our citizens and the environment, FERC dismissed our arguments without debate on its Consent Agenda. I pray looking forward, science and not politics will mandate environmental remediation that was required in the original KHSA but stripped from this latest agreement with the states of Oregon and California. Land owners, who will suffer the biggest financial loss, must be protected from the effects to flooding, devaluation of their property investments, loss of groundwater in wells and loss of water for firefighting that routinely protects the communities of Hornbrook and Copco California. The loss of tax revenue to the county's schools, service districts and general fund with no plan for replacement is significant to my constituents."

"If the dams are removed, numerous threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna would lose critical habitat and would likely perish, collapsing the area's biodiversity and trophic cascades, further speeding the potential extinction of even more rare species. Just a few of such species of fauna include: Yellow legged frog, giant California garter snake, giant California salamander and the short-nosed sucker fish. There are numerous raptors, other birds and water fowl that depend on the open-water of Copco and Iron Gate Lakes as well as the shoreline ecosystem for access to prey and other sustenance. This includes Bald Eagles,



'Beneficial Use': CAL-FIRE drafted over one-million gallons of water from Iron Gate Lake battling the 38,000 acre Klamathon Fire. It was stopped before it incinerated the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and Ashland OR: Photo by; William E. Simpson II



Helicopters shuttling water from Iron Gate Lake (behind the dam) to fight the Klamathon Wildfire, one of several wildfires that have threatened the priceless Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Photo: William E. Simpson II

Just a few of such species of fauna include: Yellow legged frog, giant California garter snake, giant California salamander and the short-nosed sucker fish. There are numerous raptors, other birds and water fowl that depend on the open-water of Copco and Iron Gate Lakes as well as the shoreline ecosystem for access to prey and other sustenance. This includes Bald Eagles,

Golden Eagles, Osprey, numerous species of hawks, falcons, and numerous species of birds, many of whom depend upon insect hatches in the lakes as well as co-evolved flora for sustenance..."

"Wildlife advocates and scientists who are desperately trying to be the voice for the endangered and threatened species that would suffer a loss of critical habitat are being ignored and obfuscated by the money and power that is pushing this illegitimate project. Clearly, it's an insult to the democratic process and wildlife; said William E. Simpson II a naturalist who studies the wildlife in the area of the proposed dam removals.

Richard Marshall, President of the Siskiyou County Water Users Association, which represents a large number of commercial, residential and farming interests in Siskiyou County, stated;

"The issue that is constantly avoided by dam removal proponents namely that the removal of the dams will not help the Salmon population as represented by the adherents to dam removal at any cost."

"The Siskiyou Water users have been intensively studying the science regarding the proposed removal of the four Hydro Facilities and find it to be continuously misrepresented by the proponents of removal. The fact is that historically the Salmon did not go past Ward's Canyon except in extreme flood condition. The lava reefs prevented further movement. In addition, it needs to be noted that the Klamath River is a unique upside-down temperature gradient river meaning that the headwaters are warm and shallow and the Klamath River as it travels to the ocean becomes cooler fed by cold water streams out of the mountain ranges. This is important to understand because Salmon don't spawn in warm water. Since time immemorial, the Klamath River was blocked by four successive lava flows creating a lava cliff 135 feet high at the location of Copco I. This was impossible for the Salmon to travel beyond."

Even if keeping the dams in place may cost the uber-wealthy Berkshire Hathaway company a relatively slight loss in corporate profitability, this corporation must be held into account for attempting to:

- a) Work-around Congressional approval that is arguably required to disregard an Act, and remove the Klamath dams; and,
- b) Ignoring the fact that a super-majority of Americans have voted against any dam removal, and pretending that is not the case; and,
- c) Denying a super-majority of Americans their rightful 'beneficial uses' related to 45.4-billion gallons of stored fresh water in the lakes behind the dams, recreation on those lakes, and the unique and rare wildlife that require the lakes and the shoreline ecosystems of Copco and Iron Gate Lakes.

Here are a few of the most important and obvious reasons for keeping the Klamath River dams in place.

1) About 80,000 homes and businesses in southern Oregon and California would lose the cheap, clean hydroelectric power that comes from the power generation plants on the Klamath River dams.

2) Removal of the Klamath Dams would interrupt existing natural pollution mitigation in the lakes by the green-algae that require the lakes as habitat. This in turn would require the Klamath basin agricultural industry to significantly reduce their production tempo, resulting in reduced food production in order to roll-back the agricultural runoff (nitrates, phosphates and livestock feces). And ranchers/farmers can bet that the DEQ will see that this is done when they see the eutrophication of the Klamath River if the dams are removed.

3) Numerous threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna and co-evolved dependent species would lose critical habitat and would likely vanish. Just a few of such species of fauna include: Yellow legged frog, giant California garter snake, giant California salamander and the short-nosed sucker fish.

4) The flood control and protection provided by the dams to the down-river homes and town of Happy Camp in California would be gone:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_flood_of_1964

5) Water for irrigation of lands and crops along with easily accessed water critical for fighting increasing catastrophic wildfires in the areas around the dams would be gone! The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument was arguably saved by the water from Iron Gate Lake... Here is video interview with a CAL-FIRE Battalion Chief:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLcfj1crUH0&app=desktop>

6) There will be a change in the ground-water (hydrology) and some homes, ranches and farms on and around the lakes will suffer changes in their well-water; reduced (lost) production, sedimentation changes, etc.

7) Potential for long-term catastrophic damage to the entirety of the Klamath River ecosystems due to the release of approximately 5-million metric yards of clay sediments that are laden with decades of pollutants from industrial agricultural production up-river from the lakes formed by the dams.

It's important to know that the dams themselves are structurally sound and perfectly good. And that, over the past many years, Pacific Corp has been charging consumers for their electricity a fee to cover Pacific Corp's costs for their planned dam removal. However, if Pacific Corp doesn't care to renew their license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), they could (and should) merely decommission and remove their generating plants, leaving the dams in

place and improved with fish ladders. The fees collected from rate-payers, which with compounding interest-earned, is estimated to be approaching \$1-billion! And now, Pacific Corp and their shell corporation, 'Klamath River Renewal Corporation' have somehow concocted a better scheme to get the taxpayers of California and Oregon to bear the lion's share of costs and liability for the proposed illogical dam removal project, a project that is laden with unprecedented environmental and economic risks!

Oregon state senator, Dennis Linthicum, [began his letter to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality](#) with this:

"Current and future Oregonians are, and should continue to be, beneficiaries of the monumental achievements in water infrastructure that has created Oregon's exemplary agricultural economy. The proposed removal of the four PacifiCorp dams, including the J. C. Boyle dam in Oregon, will destroy that very infrastructure. "

Richard Marshall
Siskiyou County Water Users Association
+1 530-468-4204

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/544283346>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2021 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.