

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
Thursday, August 15, 2019
Regional Water Quality Control Board Office
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Updates on Klamath Basin Water Quality and Water Quality Certification for Dam Removal: (*Clayton Creager, Mark Bransom, Klamath River Renewal Corporation, and Parker Thaler CA SWRCB Division of Water Rights*)

BOARD ACTION: This is an information item only; no action will be taken by the Board.

BACKGROUND: The Regional Water Board has directed staff to provide regular updates on activities to improve water quality and supporting conditions for beneficial uses within the Klamath River Basin. In April 2018 staff provided a comprehensive update to the Regional Water Board with a basin-wide overview describing four ongoing initiatives critical to improving water quality and supporting conditions for beneficial uses throughout the Klamath Basin including: 1) key elements of Klamath Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation; 2) the Klamath Basin Integrated Fish Restoration and Monitoring Plan; 3) activities being conducted by the Klamath River Renewal Corporation; and 4) the State Water Resources Control Board's development of the Lower Klamath Project Water Quality Certification and companion California Environmental Quality Act analysis. This update will focus on 1) an update on a few of the ongoing water quality improvement and restoration activities in the Klamath Basin; 2) the status of water quality certification and environmental documentation for the Lower Klamath Project; and 3) continued progress and project updates for dam removal from the Klamath River Renewal Corporation.

DISCUSSION:

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Update: Regional Water Board staff continue to collaborate with organizations and individual landowners throughout the Klamath Basin on a variety of water quality improvement activities. The focus of this update is on a few of these initiatives that have recently reached key milestones or decision points.

- *Klamath Basin Monitoring Program:* Our long-term monitoring coordination framework currently has no funding and is operating without a coordinator.
- *Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement Interim Measure 11 Water Quality Improvement Projects:* The Interim Measure Implementation Committee has completed the preferred list of projects document, description of governance, and selected a fiscal agent to administer funds (not yet received).
- *Upper Klamath Watershed Action Team:* The Team has completed an internal working draft of an Action Plan that will be used to guide water quality

improvement and restoration activities of its members within the Upper Klamath Basin.

- *Lower Klamath Lake Watershed Stewardship Partnership:* A working group has been formed and they will be initiate charter development meetings this fall.
- *Wood River Diffuse Source Treatment Wetlands:* The construction phase has been completed and project monitoring to evaluate project hypotheses is ongoing.
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service Klamath Basin Integrated Fisheries Restoration and Monitoring Plan:* Phase 2 of this comprehensive plan will be completed by the end of August 2019 and it will provide a restoration planning framework for the Klamath Basin at the Sub-basin scale which is practitioner friendly. Phase 3 of this project will allow participants to develop collaborative implementation projects.
- *Coalition of the Willing:* The Department of Interior is sponsoring a series of facilitated meetings involving stakeholders from throughout the Klamath Basin to explore the possibility of reviving a process to support agriculture sustainability, support water quality improvements, and resolve water supply issues within the Basin.

These are just a few of the activities that could be included in this update. As in previous updates, there remains many more projects and activities that can be mentioned. The Regional Water Board is grateful to all Tribes, federal, state, and local organizations, and individuals working throughout the basin conducting ecological restoration and improving water quality in the Klamath Basin.

State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights 401 Certification

Update: State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff will provide an update on the Lower Klamath Project's water quality certification and associated California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process. The Lower Klamath Project primarily consists of the decommissioning and removal of four dams (J.C. Boyle, Copco No. 1, Copco No. 2, and Iron Gate) and associated facilities located in the Hydroelectric Reach (i.e., the Klamath River and tributaries from Iron Gate Dam to the upstream extent of J.C. Boyle Reservoir), to re-establish a free-flowing Klamath River and provide for volitional fish passage. The Project implements portions of the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement, as amended on November 30, 2016. The Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) applied to the State Water Board for a water quality certification to decommission four dams and associated facilities on the Klamath River in Oregon and California in accordance with the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement. On June 7, 2018, the State Water Board released a draft water quality certification for review and comment. On December 26, 2018, the State Water Board released a draft environmental impact report (EIR) for review and comment. State Water Board staff are in the process of evaluating and drafting responses to the approximately 2,600 comments received on the draft EIR and updating the draft water quality certification. Information on the Lower Klamath Project's water quality certification process can be found on the State Water Board's [Lower Klamath Project webpage](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/lower_klamath_ferc14803.html) at:

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Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) Update: 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 of four PacifiCorp dams — JC Boyle, Copco No. 1 & 2, and Iron Gate — and then remove these dams. Following removal, KRRC will restore formerly inundated lands, and implement required mitigation measures in compliance with applicable regulations.

As described in the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Lower Klamath Project License Surrender Volume I (December 2018) the anticipated KRRC project benefits include: 1) anadromous fish passage to and from at least 420 miles of historical habitat above Iron Gate Dam (when combined with fish passage at Keno Dam), 2) anadromous fish access to low gradient historical habitat of critical importance to spawning and rearing under Copco 1 and Iron Gate Reservoirs, 3) natural recruitment of spawning gravel and river processes within and below the Hydroelectric Reach, 4) elimination of much of the elevated late summer/fall water temperatures in and below the Hydroelectric Reach by removing the largest reservoirs, 5) improved dissolved oxygen and pH conditions, 6) elimination of much of the algal toxins produced in the Hydroelectric Reach (JC Boyle, Copco No. 1 & 2, and Iron Gate) and transported downstream, and 7) reduced concentrations of myxospores associated with carcasses accumulating below hatchery facilities, thus reducing disease. This presentation will provide an update on project benefits, regulatory processes, technical developments, schedule, and other elements of KRRC's dam removal and restoration program.

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: None.