

P R E S S R E L E A S E

**Karuk Tribe • Yurok Tribe • Trout Unlimited • Klamath Tribes
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Institute for Fisheries Resources • Sustainable Northwest • Salmon River
Restoration Council • Save California Salmon • Native Fish Society**

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LARGEST DAM REMOVAL PROJECT IN HISTORY NEARS FINAL APPROVAL

FERC Staff Finalizes Recommendation to Remove Lower Four Klamath Dams

Washington, DC –Today the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) released a final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which recommends the removal of the lower four Klamath River Dams.

“We can see the light at the end of the dam removal tunnel,” said Karuk Chairman Russell ‘Buster’ Attebery. “I am so proud of everyone in our river communities that have worked so hard for the past 20 years to realize our vision of river restoration.”

“We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Tribal People and our allies who made this moment possible,” continued Yurok Vice Chairman Frankie Myers. “We would not be here without their relentless advocacy.”

In addition to responding to and addressing comments on the Draft EIS, the FEIS evaluates all of the benefits and impacts of the proposed dam removal project. According to the FEIS, “Commission staff recommends approval of the proposed license surrender,

decommissioning and removal of the [dam] project...” The document goes on to state, “The proposed action would result in benefits to water quality, aquatic resources, fisheries, and terrestrial resources used by all Tribes. These benefits would aid in the continuation and restoration of Tribal practices and traditions that have been adversely affected [by the dams].”

“It has been more than a century since our people have seen c’iyaals (salmon) in our rivers and streams, so FERC’s quick pace completing the comprehensive review of dam removals will be sweet news for our community,” said Klamath Tribes’ Chairman Clayton Dumont.

The five FERC commissioners will consider the final FERC staff recommendations of the FEIS when they issue a final ruling on dam removal later this year. “We appreciate the effort by FERC to complete the comprehensive review of dam removal in such a timely manner,” noted Amy Cordalis, Principal and Attorney, Ridges to Riffles Indigenous Conservation Group and Yurok tribal member and fisherwoman.

“Dam removal is a prerequisite for restoring and revitalizing the Klamath Basin,” explains Brian Johnson, California Director for Trout Unlimited. “It’s the single greatest thing we can do to restore Klamath fisheries, bolster local economies, and improve water quality.”

The FEIS comes almost exactly 20 years after a massive fish kill that left over 60,000 adult salmon rotting along the banks of the Klamath River in September of 2002. Today’s Klamath River salmon returns are less than 5% of their [historical abundance](#) with some runs extirpated from the system. Dams deny salmon access to hundreds of miles of historical habitat, degrade water quality, and foster the spread of fish diseases.

According to Cordalis, "This paves the way for the largest river restoration project in history to begin in 2023. This critical regulatory step is necessary for the United States to honor its legal obligations and uphold its trust responsibility to Klamath River Tribes."

Klamath Dam removal will also lead to major salmon fisheries improvements providing hundreds of new jobs to coastal salmon-dependent commercial fishing communities. Glen Spain of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations (PCFFA), the U.S. west coast’s largest organization of commercial fishing families noted: “Klamath dam removal will restore salmon access to more than 240 stream-miles of once fully occupied but now blocked habitat, improve river conditions enormously and nearly double the Klamath salmon runs that many coastal communities depend upon for their livelihoods.”

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Editor’s notes:

- Dam removal is funded by dam owner PacifiCorp and a voter-approved California bond measure.
- For summaries and the full text of the Klamath Settlement Agreements as well as additional fact sheets on the terms of the Agreements, see: <http://www.klamathrestoration.org>
- FERC FEIS can be found [here](#).
- FERC notice of availability can be found [here](#).

Quotes from the FEIS include:

- Commission staff recommends approval of the proposed license surrender, decommissioning and removal of the project with staff additional recommendations and mandatory conditions. Abstract Page 1
- The regional economy would experience a temporary, significant, beneficial effect. In the short term, increases in the workforce and expenditures associated with the construction and restoration activities would benefit the local economy. Section 3.16.10.
- The regional economy would experience a permanent, significant, beneficial effect. Dam removal and restoration would have beneficial effects on income from commercial fishing, subsistence fishing, ocean and in-river recreational fishing, riverine recreation, and tourism. Section 3.16.10.
 - We also found that none of these [other] alternatives would meet the need to address the factors that are affecting the Klamath River salmon runs in a timely enough manner to reduce the risk of their extinction. FEIS 2-1.
 - The no-action alternative would not address the water quality and disease issues which, when combined with the ongoing trend of increased temperatures, poses a substantial risk to the survival of one of the few remaining Chinook salmon populations in California that still sustain important commercial, recreational, and Tribal fisheries. FEIS xli.