

Klamath Controversy: The Stakeholders

Farmers: Run farms in middle Klamath Basin, irrigate over 200,000 acres of highly productive farmland with water from dams and irrigation canals from the Klamath River. Provide the majority of jobs and economic activity in the region. Feel that U.S. government owes them a certain amount of the water from the Klamath due to irrigation guarantees made during the construction of the dams and irrigation canals in the early 20th century. Aren't actively against protecting either the endangered salmon or suckerfish, but feel these priorities should not be placed ahead of their livelihoods and those of the region.

Fishers: Fish for Chinook Salmon, a non-endangered cousin of the endangered Coho Salmon, in the lower reaches of the Klamath River. Conditions seen as good for the Coho (high water flow downriver) usually also assist the Chinook and increase the catch of the fishers. Although providing fewer jobs and income than irrigated farming, fishing still offers a livelihood for thousands of families in the region.

Upper Klamath Native American Tribes: These tribes live on the upper reaches of the Klamath River, and used to supplement their diet with endangered suckerfish that live in Upper Klamath Lake. The Native Americans highly value these suckerfish and the areas surrounding the lake and wish them to continue in their relatively undisturbed state (which requires a fairly constant water supply). They also feel that treaties negotiated between these tribes and the federal government in the 19th century allow them legal claim to much of the water in the basin. Increased water flows downriver to the Coho Salmon may adversely impact the suckerfish and the lake as well as the farmers.

PacifiCorp: PacifiCorp provides more than 1.5 million customers with energy. It has more than 8,300 megawatts of generation capacity from coal, hydro, renewable wind power, gas-fired combustion turbines, and geothermal. It is currently seeking a 30-50 year renewal of its license to operate five hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River.

Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec) (and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC): As the federal government body that controls the various dams and diversions on the Klamath River and its tributaries, it is the BuRec's duty to manage the flow of the river. The suckerfish and Coho Salmon both enjoy protection under the ESA, and the Native Americans, Fishers and Farmers all have some legal claim to the water in the Klamath in its tributaries. You must decide between the arguments presented by the farmers, fishers and Native Americans, keeping in mind the interests of the region as a whole and the ESA. FERC has the authority to authorize or reject a relicensing agreement with PacifiCorp for the continued operation of five dams on the Klamath River.