

Klamath River Settlement Agreement Summary

In February 2010, Governor Schwarzenegger and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Director John McCamman signed the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA) and the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA). The KHSA lays out a process for evaluating whether removal of four dams on the Klamath River will serve the public's interest and advance depressed fisheries in the Klamath waterway. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) now must affirm the provisions of the agreements. After so doing, the governors of California and Oregon must concur with the secretary's determination allowing for dam removal to commence in 2020. The KBRA sets forth a comprehensive strategy to restore fisheries, conserve and distribute water, provide electric power and support wildlife refuges, and other activities in the Klamath Basin. California would fund \$250 million of the KHSA's \$450 million budget with the remaining \$200 million funded by rate payers. The anticipated \$1 billion for the KBRA would be federally funded.

These agreements were signed by approximately 45 involved parties from state and federal agencies to Native American tribes to a diverse composition of stakeholder groups. While the agreements do not give any of the parties everything they requested, by resolving the longstanding conflicts related to the Klamath River's water supply, fisheries and hydroelectric operations, they will realize greater benefits than they could expect to receive without the agreements.

Not everyone is satisfied with the agreements. The Hoopa Valley Tribe, Siskiyou County, Oregon Wild (a stakeholder group) and numerous farmers and landowners have mixed and contradictory opinions, which range from leaving the dams in place to removing them sooner than is proposed. There also is a difference of opinion on agriculture water supplies. Farmers want to ensure they receive adequate water supplies yet other stakeholders believe no water should be diverted for land use as it could result in Trinity River flooding and the release of toxic sediments. Another opinion was that the slated recovery and restoration projects will actually destroy salmon and steelhead populations, but DFG fisheries experts do not concur.

DFG supports both agreements and will serve as the lead agency for restoration efforts in California. Currently, DFG is collaborating with DOI on a joint environmental document, which is scheduled for release in November 2011, and staff is participating on numerous technical teams to evaluate potential impacts, design considerations and plans for the projects.