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Klamath Project Operations Update



A Canal on Link River from Link River Trail, July 2020

March 17, 2022

The Klamath Basin is experiencing a third year of consecutive drought conditions that it has not been experienced since the 1930's. Reclamation anticipates being able to provide some water this irrigation season as well as funding to offset the challenges of dry conditions. Separately, Reclamation is working on a team led by the Department of the Interior to bring needed investments in restoration and ageing infrastructure projects. These investments are hoped to resolve long-standing conflicts over water in the basin.

Additional updates for the Klamath Project:

Delayed Diversions

On March 1, Reclamation notified water users to expect a delay in beginning Klamath Project operations during the 2022 irrigation season due to severe dry conditions and to withhold diversions of water from Upper Klamath Lake and the Klamath River until



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further notice.

Allocation Announcement

Reclamation anticipates a small allocation for the Klamath Project in 2022, and is working with regulatory agencies to determine the available water supply based on hydrologic conditions, biological conditions, and regulatory requirements. Reclamation anticipates announcing the 2022 Klamath Project water allocation by April 8, after receiving April 1 inflow forecast data.

A Canal Operations

In preparation for the 2022 irrigation season, Reclamation is also monitoring the Klamath Irrigation District's (KID) efforts to prime the A Canal. On March 1, KID began slowly priming the canal in anticipation of the irrigation season. Due to drought, last year the A Canal remained dewatered. To ensure the A Canal remains structurally safe, a thorough inspection was conducted in early February, and a slower than usual water-up process will occur over the course of approximately 6 weeks, compared to 2 weeks that is normally required to prime the canal for deliveries. Regular inspections will be performed to maintain the safety of urbanized portions of the canal that run through downtown Klamath Falls and adjoining neighborhoods. The estimated water needed for priming is 1,000-2,000 acre feet, most of which could be returned to the Klamath River if needed.

Coordination with the Services

Due to dry conditions, in February, Reclamation began early coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to discuss meeting Upper Klamath Lake and Klamath River elevation and flow minimums outlined in their biological opinions. An Operations Plan and Drought Plan are expected to be released in April, once a final determination can be made regarding 2022 Klamath Project allocations are made.

Restoration Funding

During 2022 Reclamation will fund approximately \$1,409,500 of local and regional on-the-ground efforts that improve degraded habitat and enhance the survival and recovery of natural populations of Southern Oregon and Northern California Coast (SONCC) coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*). From 2022 through 2024 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will administer a competitive grant program set to spend \$2.7 million to directly benefit SONCC coho salmon in the Klamath River Basin. In operating



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the Klamath Project, located in the upper Klamath Basin, Reclamation is required by the National Marine Fisheries Services to protect critical habitat for and populations of SONCC coho salmon in the Klamath River Basin, as they are listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. Pre-proposals are due March 28, for more information visit <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/bureau-reclamation-klamath-coho-habitat-restoration-program>.

Hydrologic Updates

Starting in December 2021, Reclamation began hosting monthly forecasting meetings to keep water users and Tribes about drought conditions in advance of the 2022 season. These forecasting meetings will likely continue through June and monthly hydrologic updates are posted on the Klamath Basin Area Office homepage <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/kbao>; the March 10 [update](#) is now available. Weekly Twitter hydrologic updates for the Klamath Basin are posted @ReclamationCGB.

Check back for additional operations updates and news stories about the ongoing work and activities of our local Reclamation Team who serve Klamath Basin communities.

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