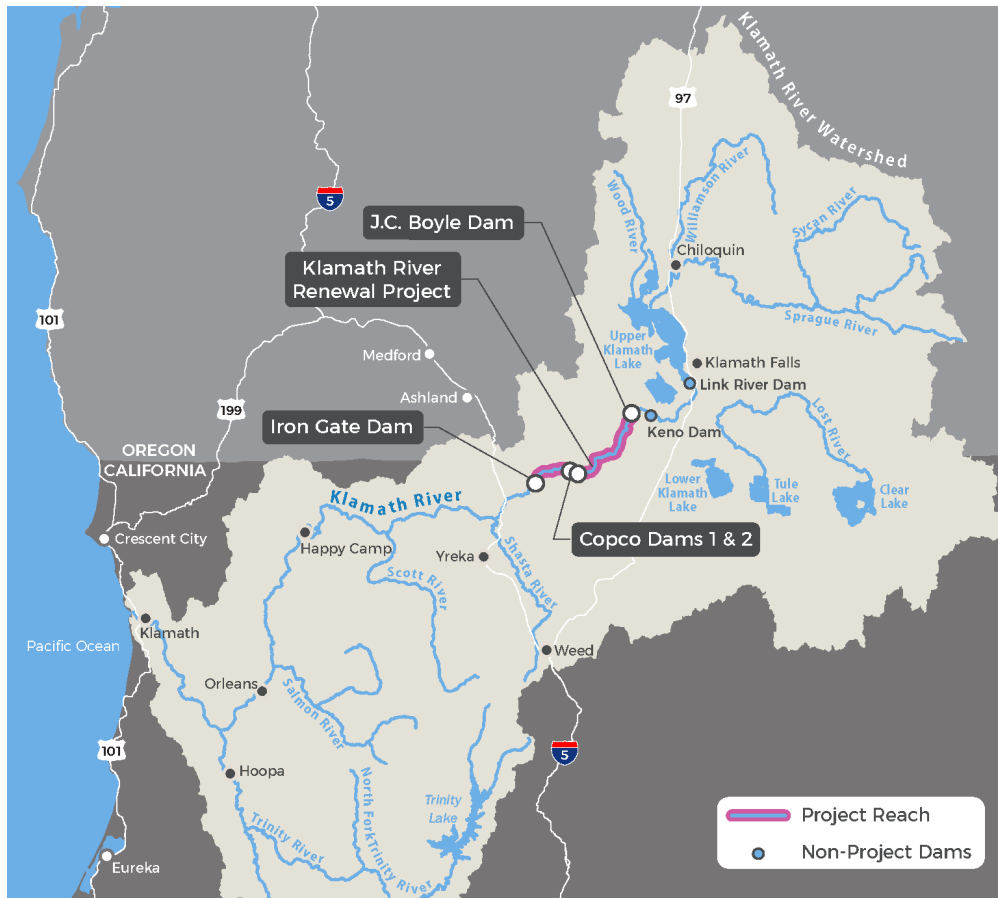


The Saga of the Klamath River - Dam Removal and Recovering an Historic Salmon & Steelhead River

Mark Rockwell, Nor Calif. Council, Fly Fishers International

The Klamath River was once the 3rd most productive salmon & steelhead river in the lower 48 states. Only the Columbia/Snake & the Sacramento/San Joaquin river systems were more productive. It drains an area in Northern California & South Central Oregon that is 12,000 sq. Miles in size. Here is a look at the river basin and the location of the dams to be removed:



When electric power became important to the expansion of the west and agriculture was the preferred way to do it, a 1906 Dept. of interior policy began one of the largest Reclamation projects in history. It drained and channeled nearly all of the Upper Klamath basin turning 80,000 acres of lake into farm land. It destroyed most of Lower Klamath lake. The lake was once so large they needed a paddlewheel ship

to cross it from Klamath Falls to the California side of the lake.

1905 was the year the Klamath Basin Project was authorized, and all the historic changes began. The first delivery of water to agriculture was in 1907. 1917 was the year homesteads were authorized in the basin, and Copco 1 was built in 1918. This was the beginning of the end for fish. J.C. Boyle dam, uppermost of the 4 now scheduled for removal, started in 1918, and 1925 saw Copco 2 become operational. The river ran for several years with these 3 dams, but pulse flows from generation made the river unsafe. In 1962 Iron gate was completed and operates as a check and power dam, and is home to the only fish hatchery for the river.

Of great importance - There was no fish passage required at that time, and from 1906 to the present anadromous fish have not had access to the entire upper Klamath Basin - 400+ miles of lost spawning and rearing habitat - the most suitable of the entire river. GONE! Nearly all of the entire run of Spring-run Chinook was lost as were most of the Coho salmon & steelhead, all of which required the upper basin to sustain them in drought & hot weather. In 1964 the hatchery at the base of Iron Gate dam became operational, helping the commercial fishery in

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the ocean, but creating mixed genetic stocks of fish, further putting the wild fishery in peril. Here's the result of these changes on the fish:

- Historical salmon populations - 500,000 - 1,000,000 spawning adults annually
- Recent returns - 27,000 - 50,000 spawners, 45%+ hatchery
- Steelhead historical estimates = 300,000 Summer & winter spawners annually
- Steelhead over past decade (Cal Trout) = 2,000

Every 30-50 years power dams must be relicensed to operate, and the Klamath license was to end in 2006. Renewal was requested by PacifiCorp, a subsidiary of Scottish Power, in April, 2004. That is when the major battles over the Klamath began. One week later, the Klamath River Tribes (Yurok, Hoopa, Karuk and Klamath), the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and Friends of the River filed comments with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) citing deficiencies in the License document. The Klamath Tribes filed suit against PacifiCorp for \$1 billion in compensation for the lost salmon runs. In 2002 the largest fish kill in history happened on the Klamath - >70,000 spawning salmon died in the river before spawning as a result of low water flows and resultant disease. It was clear, something must change.

We owe much of the progress to the Tribes, but, in the end, it took everyone doing their part to find success. In 2004 the lawsuit litigants all traveled to Scotland to attend the stockholders meeting and meet with Scottish Power leaders, and informing stockholders of the problems their dams were causing on the Klamath.

Some of the group of 20 traveled to Brussels to meet with European Union members. The primary fishery groups who did not travel were Trout Unlimited (TU), Northern Calif. Council, Federation of Fly Fishers(NCCFFF) and Calif. Trout. This effort in Europe proved to be successful because it got attention by the media, and resulted in a major outcome: *A motion by the **Scottish Legislator Robin Harper who said, "I regard Scottish Power's failure to include salmon restoration strategies in its future plans as a failure and calls on Scottish Power to lead the way in taking active measures to reverse the decline in salmon numbers in what was once America's third greatest salmon river."***

While this was happening, the tribes gathered on the lawn outside the stockholder meeting for a demonstration. They sang, drummed and had a salmon bake during the four-to five-hour demonstration. Inside the meeting, Jeff Mitchell, intertribal fish commissioner, and Leaf Hillman, vice chairman of the Karuk Tribe, spoke before the stockholders. The impact they had was immediate, with one stockholder saying, *"**I was shattered when I learned what has happened to you**"*. This became a leading media topic in Europe for months, and embarrassed Scottish Power.

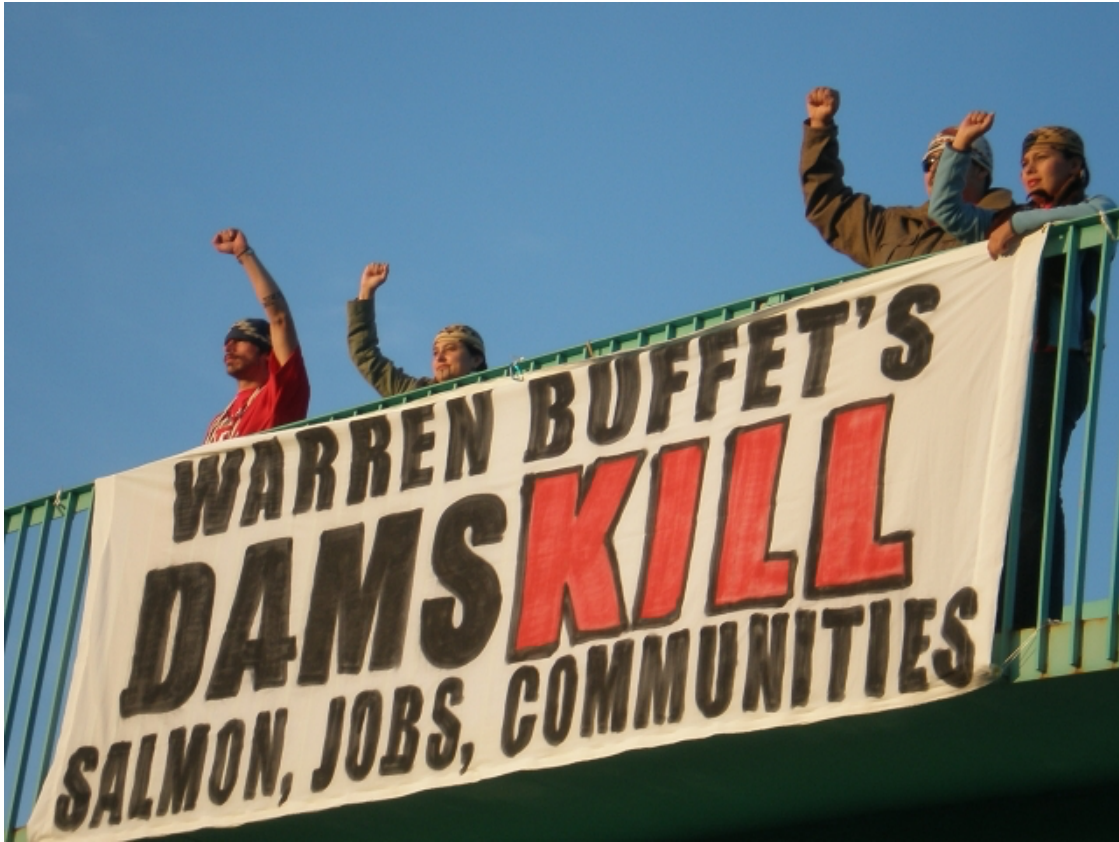
As time passed, Scottish Power sold PacifiCorp to MidAmerican Energy, a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, in 2005. This started the process with Warren Buffett's company. In 2006, Klamath River Basin tribal leaders, Native American activists, commercial fishermen, recreational anglers and conservationists traveled to Nebraska to disrupt Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway annual shareholders meeting in Omaha, Nebraska. http://www.eurocbc.org/scottishpower_pacificorp_fishing_damage_03jul2004page1709.html

In 2007, The Yurok, Karuk and Hoopa Valley tribes and fishermen capped off their historic cross-country pilgrimage to Omaha, Nebraska on May 5 with a protest outside the shareholders meeting of Warren Buffett's company. They demanded 4 dams be removed from the Klamath River.

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In May, 2008, they did it again! Stockholders were getting to know the klamath problems.
<https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2008/05/06/18497443.php>



I tell these stories because they have been lost over the ensuing 14 years of effort. In 2010 we negotiators collectively signed two agreements:

- The KBRA - Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement
- The KHSA - Klamath Hydropower Settlement Agreement

These agreements were the basis of both dam removal and Klamath Basin Restoration, and brought a guarantee for water distribution to agriculture, more storage of water in the basin, ground water management, equitable power rates, replacement power and much more. The two agreements were kept separate in case something went wrong. The KBRA required federal funding, and that turned out to be the leverage point used by Republican legislators to block the deals. The KBRA ended in 2015, but because the KHSA was not tied to it, the dam removal process moved ahead with a newly renegotiated KHSA in late 2015. The Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) was established in 2015 to manage all the permitting, license filings with FERC, Construction & 7 years of restoration work to be done after the dams are removed. <https://res.us/home/restoring-at-scale/klamath-river-restoration/>

What has been Learned from 20 Years of Effort?

I cannot condense 20 years of effort into 2,000 words. All I can say is the effort and dedication shown in the early years I shared earlier was matched in all years of this effort - all the way to

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2022! Everyone worked tirelessly, each in our own way and with our constituents/communities, and we communicated constantly with everyone - friend and foe. There were countless tough spots where we'd think there was no way forward. This was the story all the way into 2022. It was a rollercoaster ride - beginning to end. **There were two driving realities that proved pivotal:**

1. **The attitude that we'd never give up - no matter what.** All of us working for dam removal just said when a problem arose, "Well, let's find a way forward". And we did. We made friends with perceived enemies, created bonds between Tribal partners and other NGOs, and worked to better understand the needs of the other side. The goal was to return the river to its natural state and give the fish a chance to find their way to stability and health. We vowed we'd do that while addressing the needs of agriculture and others who needed the water and river. We didn't get all we wanted, but we're hoping the fish get all they need. Time will tell.
2. **Advocacy was the action that made the difference.** Advocacy is activity that pushes others to consider another way forward. Without advocacy as a constant background, no change would have happened. We met with media, did community briefings, met with Boards of Supervisors, attended meetings, gave presentations, met with enemies, filed briefs, did regulatory mandated reports, worked with federal and state agencies, scientists, politicians, and lawyers. We traveled often and spent thousands of hours on the phone, email, FaceTime and Zoom. It was a labor of love - for our planet and this watershed. Constantly 'pushing' was a must.

Where are We Today?

Most of us are cautiously optimistic about the project. It's hard to realize that when we look down the road today we no longer see red lights. **The lights are all green!** KRRC is now in charge going forward. They hold the license along with the states of California and Oregon.

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They have done all the contracts with our Contractors - Kiewit Infrastructure West (Kiewit) and Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES). They have developed the removal and restoration plans. The timing for each segment of the process is done, with pre-decommissioning construction starting in summer 2023, and Copco 2 scheduled to come out in 2023. The 3 other dams come out by October, 2024.

The fish will once again be free to pass from the Pacific to the upper basin in Oregon by the winter of 2024. Restoration starts after removal and will take 7 years, including monitoring and repairs when damage happens. **This is a big deal!** - for us, but more so for the Tribes who rely



on this river for food, culture, religion, health, and happiness. Most of all, it's a big deal for the fishery and watershed as they will have a chance to heal, recover and return to balance. Nature knows what to do!

We all should celebrate. The largest dam removal & river restoration project in U.S. history! Commitment, personal sacrifice, & advocacy made all the difference!

Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) - <https://klamathrenewal.org/>

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