

Klamath River Renewal Project

A cooperative effort to revitalize the Klamath River

October 2019

Information for Residents & Property Owners

Who is KRRC?

The Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) is an independent nonprofit organization formed in 2016 as part of the amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA). Signatories of the amended KHSA, including the States of California and Oregon, local governments, Tribal nations, dam owner PacifiCorp, irrigators, and several conservation and fishing groups, appointed KRRC to take ownership and oversee removal of four hydroelectric dams on the river and restoration of formerly inundated lands. KRRC's work is funded by PacifiCorp customer surcharges and California Proposition 1 water bond funds.

When will this project take place?

The project must undergo thorough regulatory analyses and technical studies before dam removal may begin. At this time, KRRC anticipates a 2022 drawdown and removal, but that date is subject to change pending Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and other regulatory agency actions. KRRC and its contractors stand ready to commence expeditiously once FERC provides the required approvals.

What is the process for reservoir drawdown?

Drawdown is a relatively slow and regulated process that involves a number of phases. First, reservoir levels will be lowered to existing gate or spillway elevations. Then reservoir drawdown will continue to allow a controlled release of sediment, ideally over a period of two months (January - February). Drawdown will continue throughout the year as dam removal proceeds. Reservoir water levels will reach the ultimate river elevation when dam removal is complete. Drawdown is described further in Section 4 of the Definite Plan.

What will happen to my wells?

Private wells located adjacent to the reservoirs may be affected by the lowered reservoir water levels during drawdown and into the future. It is unlikely that domestic groundwater wells adjacent to the Klamath River or its tributaries will be directly affected. KRRC will conduct groundwater monitoring to determine impacts to individual wells. KRRC has developed a Groundwater Well Management Plan (Appendix N of the Definite Plan) to avoid and mitigate such impacts.

What construction impacts can I expect?

Temporary construction impacts will include construction-related traffic, air quality, and noise during the estimated 18-month period of dam deconstruction and reservoir restoration. The peak construction period will be between May and October of the second year of project construction. The Definite Plan (Section 5 and Appendix O) lays out the steps KRRC proposes to reduce impacts, including limitations on hours or days for construction activities, alerts and outreach to residents, taking measures to control dust, and other mitigation measures.

How will my property values change?

Some properties will no longer have reservoir views or access once the reservoirs are drawn down - but will gain river views and access after the restoration work is complete. KRRC's study and planning efforts will evaluate various ways to mitigate impacts to landowners.



Copco 1 Dam



Copco Lake

What are KRRC's plans to restore the reservoirs?

Following reservoir drawdown and dam removal, KRRC will perform restoration activities on formerly inundated lands. The goals of these restoration efforts will be to stabilize reservoir sediments and floodplain areas and to jump-start the native revegetation process. The Definite Plan provides the anticipated timeline and restoration plan for each reservoir area along with detailed descriptions for restoration actions under Appendix H, Chapter 5.

How will flow rates in the river change?

During drawdown of the reservoirs, flows will increase incrementally due to the release of the reservoir water. KRRC will manage reservoir drawdown rates to ensure dam and reservoir safety and to maintain downstream river flows that would be typical for a wet season. After dam removal, river flows will be primarily controlled by the US Bureau of Reclamation via releases from Upper Klamath Lake. As is the case today, flows will also be influenced by the watershed and numerous tributaries that flow into the Klamath River.

Will my property flood after the dams are removed?

Although PacifiCorp does not operate Iron Gate and Copco 1 dams for flood control, the reservoirs provide some minor flood control benefits because of the volume of flow required to overtop the spillways. KRRC has proposed to make improvements to the few dozen structures which will be at increased risk of flooding in a 100-year flood event after dam removal (Definite Plan Section 7.7). KRRC's modeling indicates that flood elevations may slightly increase between 6 to 18 inches in the 18 miles below Iron Gate Dam (just downstream of Yreka).

KRRC's work is part of a cooperative effort to re-establish the natural vitality of the Klamath River so that it can support all communities in the basin.

How will recreation areas and opportunities be affected?

The majority of existing recreation areas around the reservoirs are maintained by PacifiCorp. Man-made facilities will be removed and these sites will be restored to native habitats. Recreation areas currently maintained by other entities (e.g. Bureau of Land Management) will remain. Restoring fish passage and habitat throughout the project will result in enhanced recreational fishing opportunities (especially for steelhead). Overall, KRRC anticipates a positive outcome for the regional recreation economy. While dam removal will result in the loss of some recreation opportunities and facilities, other types of recreation are expected to increase post-dam removal. The Definite Plan includes a programmatic recreation plan under Appendix Q.

Will this project create any local jobs?

Yes. KRRC's direct activities in the Klamath Basin, including dam deconstruction and river restoration work, will create a few hundred jobs in the Klamath Basin. KRRC intends to work with local chambers and economic development agencies to ensure local companies are aware of opportunities and requirements. In addition, KRRC's expenditures in the basin are expected to stimulate creation of 1,400 related, or indirect, jobs.

What agency is reviewing the project?

The agencies reviewing KRRC's permit applications include FERC, the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). FERC and these agencies will evaluate KRRC's proposed project and will decide on mitigations.

The Definite Plan for the Lower Klamath Project is available at www.klamathrenewal.org/definite-plan.

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