

PRESS RELEASE

KARUK TRIBE

For Immediate Release: September 27, 2006

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CALIFORNIA DAM REMOVAL STUDY CONCLUDES THAT KLAMATH DAMS ARE 'GOOD TO GO' *State files study on heels of FERC's draft EIS*

Happy Camp, CA – A day after FERC staff filed a draft environmental impact analysis recommending a 'trap and haul' program to drive fish around PacifiCorp's aging Klamath dams, the California Coastal Conservancy has filed a report that concludes dam removal could be done safely and affordably without leading to floods or exposing the river to toxins.

The Coastal Commission's FERC filing states that "the toxicity of the sediment in the four lowermost dams is very low and will not affect method or cost of decommissioning." The document goes on to state that "sediment transport...would be unlikely to cause flooding"

"These findings clearly demonstrate that the Klamath dams are good to go," according to Karuk Vice-chairman Leaf Hillman.

Toxins in the sediment were a concern for dam removal advocates. However, since most of the gold mining on the Klamath River happened downstream of Iron Gate dam, toxins such as mercury were not found in sediments. "Getting rid of these dams will actually solve toxin problems by alleviating the massive blooms of toxic algae," stated Karuk Klamath Coordinator Craig Tucker.

Although FERC's draft EIS regarding the relicensing of the dams recommended trap and haul, the document did compare trap and haul, construction of ladders as required by the agencies, and the removal of Iron Gate and Copco 1 dams. FERC staff concluded that dam removal was the best option for fish and water quality and was cheaper than implementing the mandates from the fish agencies. Although FERC staff recommended trap and haul, the Federal Power Act gives NOAA Fisheries and US Fish and Wildlife Service the authority to mandate 'volitional' fish passage. In other words, the agencies can demand that fish swim upstream instead of hitching a ride in trucks.

Last March, the agencies submitted their draft terms and conditions which mandate ladders. Although the agencies cannot mandate dam removal, NOAA did recommend removal of the lower four dams.

“It’s time for PacifiCorp to read the writing on the wall: dam removal is the best deal for their customers and shareholders,” added Hillman.

Tribes, fishermen, and other basin stakeholders resume settlement negotiations with PacifiCorp next month.

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To see entire California Coastal Conservancy filing with FERC:

http://elibrary.FERC.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20060926-5075

Also see www.ferc.gov