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Budget
Legal
Political Oversight
Power
Public Relations
Science
Water Bank

About the Klamath Water Users Association

The Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA) is a non-profit corporation that has represented Klamath Irrigation Project farmers and ranchers since 1953. KWUA members include rural and suburban irrigation districts and other public agencies as well as private individuals who operate on both sides of the California-Oregon border. We represent over 1400 family farms and ranches that encompass over 200,000 acres of some of the best farm land in the West.

The mission of the organization is to preserve, protect and defend the water and power rights of the landowners of the Klamath Basin while promoting wise management of ecosystem resources.

The Klamath Water Users Association is governed by an 11 member board of directors who are representatives from Klamath Project districts. The association employs an Executive Director and staff to execute the policy decisions made by the board.

Irrigation and Drainage

The Klamath Project on the Oregon-California border was one of the earliest Federal reclamation projects. In addition to providing irrigation, a major aspect of the project was drainage – the ability to remove water from a closed basin. The project was authorized by the Reclamation act of 1902 and construction began in May of 1905. According to a 1998 study conducted by Davids Engineering (“Klamath Project Historical Water Use Analysis”), effective efficiency for the overall Project is 93 percent, making the Klamath Project one of the most efficient in the country.

Water Supply

There are two main sources of water supply for the Klamath Project. One consists of Upper Klamath Lake and the Klamath River, and the other consists of Clear Lake Reservoir, Gerber Reservoir, and the Lost River, which are located in a closed basin.

Power

Power has always been an integral component to the Klamath Project. There are 5 major (drainage) pumping plants with power output ranging from 450 to 3,650 hp. In addition, there are 40 pumping plants of less than 1000 hp.

Canals, Laterals and Drains

There are 18 canals with a total length of 185 miles. Laterals total 516 miles and drains 728 miles.

(over)

Member Districts

Ady District
Improvement Co.

Enterprise Irrigation
District

Klamath Basin
Improvement District

Klamath Drainage
District

Klamath Irrigation
District

Malin Irrigation District

Pine Grove Irrigation
District

Pioneer District
Improvement Co.

Poe Valley
Improvement District

Shasta View Irrigation
District

Sunnyside Irrigation
District

Tulelake Irrigation
District

Van Brimmer Ditch
Company

Warren Act
Contractors

Westside
Improvement District

Wocus Drainage
District

Principal Crops

Alfalfa Hay
Beef Cattle
Barley
Dairy
Nursery Stock
Grass Hay
Horseradish
Mint
Onions
Oats
Potatoes
Strawberry Root-Stock
Wheat

Irrigation Season

The average irrigation season extends from April through September. The growing season varies considerably from year to year, but averages approximately 120 days.

Principal Crops

The primary commodities grown in this area are alfalfa hay, beef cattle, irrigated pasture, cereal grains, onions, potatoes, mint, and horseradish. Dairy production is a major component of agriculture in the Basin. In recent years organic production of most of these crops has increased significantly and the market for organics appears to be strong. In addition, the Klamath Basin has shown tremendous potential for the development of crops for use in bio-fuels.

Homestead Lands

Oregon and California legislation, which relinquished state title to project lands, and congressional action which directed the project undertaking, provided for disposition of the reclaimed lands in accordance with the 1902 Reclamation Act. Under provisions of the Act, the reclaimed public lands were to be opened for homesteading. The first public lands were opened for homesteading in March of 1917. Much of the Klamath project went on to be homesteaded by both World War I and World War II veterans.

Watershed

The Klamath River Watershed represents a landmass of over 10 million acres. Annual flows at the mouth of the Klamath River average over 15 Million acre feet per year. There are over 100 tributaries to the Klamath River that are located downstream of the Klamath Reclamation Project.

Habitat

The Upper Klamath Basin is home to 6 National Wildlife Refuges. Tulelake NWR and Lower Klamath NWR are two of the pre-eminent waterfowl refuges in the country. Water used by these refuges is delivered via the irrigation and drainage system of the Klamath Reclamation Project. Private lands in the Upper Basin are home to more than 400 species of fish and wildlife.

Conservation

In 2003 and 2004 the Klamath Water Users received the "Leadership in Conservation" award from the State of Oregon. The 2003 award recognized the organization for their continuing efforts and support of more than 250 conservation projects in the Basin since 1992. The 2004 award was given to KWUA for "exemplifying the spirit of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds".

In addition to these awards, numerous individuals and irrigation districts within the Klamath Project have been recognized for their contributions to conservation and cooperation.

For more information visit
www.kwua.org