

## **Water year**

# **Refuges, others already feeling the effects**

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Some in the Basin are already feeling the effects of an expected water shortage.

Ron Cole, manager of the Klamath National Wildlife Refuges on the Oregon-California border, said the refuges have received no water from the Klamath Reclamation Project so far this winter.

Glen Spain, northwest regional director for Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, said he's working to organize a conference with the region's stakeholders to share data and make sure everyone is on the same page.

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said he has been working with the local Bureau of Reclamation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other stakeholders to find solutions in case water is in short supply this year.

"I'm confident we'll get there," he said.

### **Ways to help**

Sue Fry of the Bureau of Reclamation said her office is working with Klamath Water Users Association and the Klamath Water and Power Agency to find ways to mitigate the shortage. Possibilities include pumping groundwater, idling land and implementing conservation measures.

### **Private wells**

Cole and other stakeholders also are being proactive.

Klamath Drainage District has agreed to send 2,500 to 3,500 acre-feet of water from its irrigators' private wells to the refuge.

Meanwhile, the refuges are pumping some water onto lands serviced by Tulelake Irrigation District to provide additional habitat for migrating birds while also loading the soil with water prior to irrigation season.

"These are the kinds of things we're all counting on to get through this interim period," Cole said.

Spain added that it's a little too early to tell just what the water situation will be since winter storms could still help the region.

He said the relationships the rest oration agreement has forged, as well as past experiences with tough times, will see everyone through.

"Is it going to be a white knuckle ride? You bet," he said. "Every water year is."

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