

\$500,000 to go to restoration

Salmon projects to receive funding from PacifiCorp

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PacifiCorp will provide \$500,000 toward coho salmon restoration projects, a result of discussions about dam removal and a broader Klamath Basin water agreement.

The money will go toward four projects in the Klamath River Basin in Northern California. The projects range from installing fish screens and habitat restoration to reconstruction, according to a PacifiCorp press release.

Basin project

Government officials and others who worked with the Portland based utility in recent months on water issues in the Basin applauded PacifiCorp's commitment and noted the projects are just part of the larger Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement.

"They really are sticking to their bargains," said Glen Spain, northwest regional director for the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

The restoration agreement attempts to resolve water disputes among farmers, fishermen, tribes and environmentalists. Dam removal is a key aspect of the restoration agreement, with proponents saying it is necessary to restore the Klamath River's fisheries.

Money for the projects came from a Coho Enhancement Fund, an account established by PacifiCorp following discussions with federal and state officials and biologists about removal of the utility's four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River.

Annual funding

The fund will provide half a million dollars annually to projects benefiting coho salmon, which are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

"The funded projects demonstrate PacifiCorp's commitment to taking action with these significant measures to protect and enhance environmental resources of the Klamath Basin," said Diane Barr, the utility's environmental analyst, in the release.

Improvement projects

Spain said his organization has for a long time had areas in mind in the watershed that needed improvement. While expertise and time were available, funding was the final component.

Belinda Stewart, outreach and program coordinator for Klamath Water Users Association, said steps are being taken toward implementing the restoration agreement, such as forming the Klamath Water and Power Agency, or KWAPA, and reaching a settlement with the Klamath Tribes over water rights for Upper Klamath Lake.

"It's nice to see everyone thinking ahead," she said.

Spain said discussions are continuing on a final dam removal agreement, and while there are still a few small details to work out, a final document should be released by September.

"We're on the very verge of completing it," he said.

Requests for comment left for Craig Tucker, spokesman for the Karuk Tribe, were not returned.

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