

# Guest commentary: KBRA has tradeoffs, but offers solution to age-old problem

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I feel that many people oppose removal of the four dams on the Klamath River because of the loss of green power, the sedimentation of the lower river, the uncertainty of the repopulation of the fishery in Upper Klamath Lake and the loss of the recreational value of the present impoundments. Along with this, I hear much sentiment against the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, which has been proposed for the settlement of the fish, water, irrigation, wildlife and other conflicting ideas within the Basin.

Let's take a look at the overall picture of the things that are of conflict in the Klamath River Watershed.

The tribes have treaty rights to the fishery and a portion of the water on the Klamath River — not only the Klamath Indians, but various tribes downstream from Klamath Falls. These people have much political power and also have a lot of positive sentiment from population out of this area.

## **An obligation**

The Fish and Wildlife people have a federal obligation to operate and maintain a large amount of acreage within the Basin for the betterment of the wildlife present and migrating through here.

The environmental community is a very powerful force that has almost unlimited funding to lobby legislators and government agencies for favorable decisions befitting their agendas. This has to be recognized in any negotiations we make for a better water situation in the Basin.

California water interests have been a part of the KBRA development. We do not have the water problems that they are looking at with their large and growing population and I feel it is positive they have been involved. Go back in time and see what Southern California's Metropolitan Water District did to the Owens Valley. This could happen here and we could certainly not meet the funding or political muscle these people have at their disposal. See what they have done with some diversion of the Trinity River to California interests.

## Driving force

Irrigators of the Basin have been the driving force to get some sort of community agreement on the many different attitudes stated by the above. Since the water shut-off in 2001, volumes of dollars have been consumed in litigation, meetings, and travel — and just think of the time involved. Consequentially, participants from all sides decided it was time to get some sort of joint agreement where all parties gave up a little but maintained their major needs in the overall picture.

The KBRA and the future of the dams are not necessarily married to one another. Congress or Pacific Power could on their own decide to handle the dam situation as they see fit without the KBRA.

Much of the frustration that I have is from so much of the input in articles, meetings and conversations around the Basin. They are not about a better agreement for everyone's benefit, but just nitpicking on parts of the KBRA that are not to the liking of the individuals.

I hear much negative comment toward the political people who endorsed the KBRA, but just sit in their chair and look at the overall picture. Here, finally, is a document before them that has the overall approval of the concerned major parties with many trade-offs, but which gives us an agreed upon solution to an age-old problem.

If the KBRA is such a poor, secretly conceived, biased, document, please will you dissenters give us something to replace it, agreed upon by all parties, that does more to help the community out of this complicated mess. We certainly do not want another 10 years fighting, litigating and getting nowhere.

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