



Feds To Release Additional Trinity River Water Through September

Under political pressure from the Hoopa Valley Tribe and Humboldt County, the federal government announced on August 10 it will release additional water from Trinity Lake to supplement flows in the Lower Klamath River this year.

The water is being released to protect a forecasted record-breaking run of adult Chinook salmon from disease outbreak and mortality. Scientists forecast 380,000 Chinook salmon will return to the Klamath River this fall. That is 250

percent more salmon than in 2002, when over 68,000 salmon perished in the lower Klamath in low, warm water conditions in the largest fish kill of its kind in U.S. history.

Releases from Lewiston Dam began on August 13 and will end in the last week of September, according to Pete Lucero, spokesman for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Flows in the Lower Klamath River will be targeted at 3,200 cubic feet per second during this period, and Lewiston Dam releases will be adjusted

accordingly. Lucero said Lewiston Dam releases increased from the current rate of 450 cfs on August 13 and will vary between about 1,000 and 1,200 cfs prior to dropping to 450 cfs in late September.

"The rate of increasing releases could be as high as 250 cfs every two hours, and the rate of flow reductions could be as high as 100 cfs every four hours," said Lucero. "The public is urged to take all necessary precautions on or near the river while flows are increased."

Regina Chichizola, Communications Director for the Hoopa Valley Tribe, praised the announcement, but warned that water for salmon may not be on tap in the future unless more is done to protect the fish.

"While the Hoopa Valley Tribe applauds this announcement, we worry that in future years water releases for Klamath salmon runs may not be available," Chichizola said. "Both the peripheral tunnel plans and Klamath Basin Restoration agreements ignore the fact that salmon need water to survive. These proposals threaten the Trinity and Klamath River's water. We feel it is time for California water planners to get serious about protecting the Klamath salmon runs."

To prevent a fish kill from taking place again, the Tribe and Humboldt County this spring requested that the Bureau of Reclamation release 50,000 acre feet of water, water the county has the right to, down the Klamath. The Bureau rejected this request, but on July 17 released a draft plan to release Trinity River water down the Klamath to forestall another

fish kill from taking place this fall.

The additional releases are taking place as the Obama and Brown administrations fast-track the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) to build twin peripheral tunnels to divert more Sacramento and Trinity River water to corporate agribusiness on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California water agencies.

Kayla Carpenter, a Hoopa Valley Tribe member who is pursuing her PHD in linguistics at U.C. Berkeley, attended a rally with members of the Winnemem Wintu and Pit River Tribes and other Delta advocates at the State Capitol to protest the BDCP on July 25, the day Governor Jerry Brown and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar unveiled their water conveyance plan. Carpenter emphasized that "the peripheral tunnels plan is tied up with Trinity River water going south."

The Trinity is pumped into the Sacramento via Whiskeytown Reservoir and we already have to fight hard to get water that we should be getting by law for fish," said Carpenter. "A bigger tunnel to suck California dry isn't going to help our fish."

An Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact were prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The draft documents were released for public review July 17-27, and public comments have been addressed in the Final EA/FONSI.

The documents are available at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=10230.



Delta Advocacy Group

and pursue more sustainable water policy in California.

Wolk, who is interviewed in the film

Restore the Delta is a grassroots organization committed to making the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta fishable