



## Klamath Settlement Issues

# Outing the Klamath ‘Myth Labs’

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### KLAMATH AGREEMENT OPPONENTS PLAY LOOSE WITH THE FACTS

As the effort to implement the Klamath Agreements continue to gain traction, opponents of the Agreements are becoming fast and loose with the facts, and at times resorting to fear mongering, to gain support. Here we break down the products of the Klamath ‘Myth Labs.’

**Myth:** The 2002 Klamath Fish Kill was caused by a meth lab dump. This offensive myth stems from an article published in the Pioneer Press – a now defunct paper that was staunchly opposed to river restoration efforts.

**Fact:** According to three independent reports by California Fish and Game, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Yurok Tribal Fisheries Department, the Fish Kill was a result of a relatively large run of fish, very low flows in the river, and warm water temperatures. These conditions made the fish highly susceptible to columnaris and ich resulting in tens of thousands of fish dying before spawning.

**Myth:** Coho are not native to the Klamath Basin.

**Fact:** Aside from being wishful thinking on the part of Klamath Agreement opponents, this is blatantly false. Drawing on a myriad of data, the peer reviewed National Research Council Report entitled *Endangered and Threatened Fishes in the Klamath River Basin* (2004) reported that, “Historically coho salmon occurred throughout the Klamath River and its tributaries, as least to a point as high up in the system as the California-Oregon Border (page 253).” The Karuk word for coho is *achvuun*. Coho appear in ancient Karuk stories and were managed for traditionally long before non-natives arrived.

**Myth:** Salmon never reached the Upper Basin.

**Fact:** Salmon reached the Upper Basin in large numbers and supported a vigorous Indian fishery. A comprehensive analysis of the distribution of salmon before dams, along with references to primary sources and historic photos, can be found in Hamilton et al, *Distribution of Anadromous Fishes in the Klamath River Watershed Prior to Hydropower Dams*, American Fisheries Society, April, 2005.

**Myth:** Dam removal will lead to flooding.

**Fact:** The Klamath Agreements will add nearly 10 times more flood control capacity than they would remove. The Klamath dams to be removed offer only 11,000 acre feet of active storage that can be used for flood control. The Agreements would enlarge Upper Klamath Lake by 97,000 acre feet, expanding the active storage capacity of the Klamath’s only major water storage facility to over 500,000 acre feet. (see FERC Final EIS on PacifiCorp’s license application, page 3-72.)

**Myth:** Klamath Agreements will raise your power bill.

**Fact:** Dam relicensing will cost you more than removal. The Klamath Agreements limit PacifiCorp's costs to \$200 million. The cost of relicensing and building mandatory fish ladders and other improvements will likely exceed \$500 million. Ratepayers will foot bill either way. According to a recent ruling by the Oregon Public Utility Commission, an agency established to protect ratepayers, "We are persuaded that continued pursuit of the relicensing option would pose significant risks to ratepayers...The KHSA in contrast, offers a more certain path for the Project's future..... Due to significant tangible and intangible benefits associated with the KHSA, we conclude it is in the best interest of customers and find the KHSA surcharges to be fair, just and reasonable." (OPUC Rate Case No. UE-219 page 12, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010.)

It turns out when we look past the rhetoric and look at the facts, the Klamath Agreement opponents don't have a credible leg to stand on.

Aside from the issues of dams and fish, the Klamath Agreements increase water storage in the basin and establish a water balance such that farmers have greater water security and fish have adequate flows. This careful balance was developed through years of negotiation and research by local irrigators, Tribes, fishermen, conservation groups, and governmental agencies.

Learn more by visiting [www.klamathrestoration.org](http://www.klamathrestoration.org). Follow our campaign to Bring the Salmon Home on Twitter @scraigtucker.