Dam’s Toxic Algae Spreads Downriver
as Warren Buffett and PacifiCorp back away from corporate responsibility

INSIDE
Un-dam the Klamath!
Putting Pressure on Oregon DEQ
Scott River Groundwater
“The efforts to remove dams and restore watersheds are not ours alone, but those of all of us that work on, and love, the Klamath River.”

Dr. Regina Chichizola, Executive Director, Klamath Riverkeeper

Keepin’ up with Klamath Riverkeeper...

UN-DAM THE Klamath ART & FILM NIGHTS
With live music and beautiful artwork by Klamath River artists, our fall outreach events were a huge success. People in Ashland and Arcata turned out to learn more about the campaign to Un-Dam the Klamath, meet up with other river lovers, and support local, grassroots art and activism.

We showed some great fish footage with Shake Your Orcahoynchus, and audience members were consistently inspired and educated by the documentary Saving the Klamath Criss - Keeping Fish and Farms Alive. Both films were produced by the Klamath Salmon Media Collaborative, and we’d love to work with you to bring them to your community. Contact us if you can help show our films at your college, community center, or in your living room.

T-SHIRTS HOT OFF THE PRESS!
Printed on made-in-the-USA organic cotton, our new t-shirts are selling quickly. Buy online at www.klamathriver.org or call us and we’ll send you your size in mens, womens, or childrens styles. T-shirts come free with memberships at the “Half-Pounder” level and above. Let us know if you have a retail location and you’d like to help sell these cool shirts.

PART-TIME WORK AVAILABLE
We need help in the office! Klamath Riverkeeper is growing and needs a part-time bookkeeper/administrata. We’re looking for someone skilled in Quickbooks and grant administration who can show our payroll and membership database who’s boss. Salary and hours dependant on experience and skills. Please contact us to learn more.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
We can always use more help doing outreach and tabling, organizing events, showing movies, stuffing envelopes, and before too long, sampling water quality. Don’t hesitate to let us know if you have extra time and would like to volunteer.

UPCOMING EVENTS, NEWS & ACTION ALERTS ON KLAMATH RIVER eNEWS
Our twice-monthly compendium of all the latest headlines on the Klamath includes ways to get involved in the issues, as well as important announcements about Riverkeeper actions and events. Email malena@klamathriver.org to get on the list.

Keepin’ up with Klamath Riverkeeper...
Toxic Algae Threatens Klamath Communities
Klamath Riverkeeper pursues Pacificorp in the courts & on the

This fall, water carrying dangerously high levels of toxic algae spilled out of Klamath reservoirs, stretching 100 miles from mid-river to the mouth in a neon plume of toxic pollution. Though the river was plastered with scary health warnings, California’s State and Regional Water Boards still do not have water quality standards for toxic algae in the Klamath, nor is the Klamath listed as impaired by toxic algae on the federal list of impaired water bodies. This lack of regulation is very convenient for Pacificorp, owner and operator of the Klamath dams responsible for breeding the algae Microcytis aeruginosa. So convenient that Pacificorp did not inform the public about the dangers associated with toxic algae until after water quality officials with the Karuk Tribe documented the algae in Pacificorp’s reservoirs. With algal toxins peaking at levels 4,000 times the river was plastered with scary health warnings, California’s State and Regional Water Boards still do not have water quality standards for toxic algae in the Klamath, nor is the Klamath listed as impaired by toxic algae on the federal list of impaired water bodies. This lack of regulation is very convenient for Pacificorp, owner and operator of the Klamath dams responsible for breeding the algae Microcytis aeruginosa. So convenient that Pacificorp did not inform the public about the dangers associated with toxic algae until after water quality officials with the Karuk Tribe documented the algae in Pacificorp’s reservoirs.

While Klamath communities struggle to survive Pacificorp’s one-two punch, Forbes Magazine reports that Warren Buffett is $10 billion richer than he was last year.

Klamath Riverkeeper takes policy action

Even before this year’s river closures, we’ve been supporting the Karuk Tribe in pushing for statewide regulation of toxic algae blooms. We’ve also filed a petition to the Regional Water Board - the agency that controls water pollution - to regulate Pacificorp’s dangerous discharges. We’re working with the state of California to ensure Pacificorp’s toxic discharges result in the state denying the corporation’s Clean Water Act permit at the dams - which is the only influence states have in the debate over dam removal. We’re also working to get toxic algae listed as a pollutant on the Klamath River, which would mandate a cleanup plan and regulations.

WHAT’S THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM ON THE KLAMATH?

One possibility that has been suggested is treating toxic algae with a chemical herbicide. This is a strategy that focuses on one symptom of a larger problem, and does so in a way that increases the public’s exposure to toxic substances. Pacificorp’s dams are a systemic solution to the problem on the Klamath, one that requires a systemic solution: dam removal and river restoration.

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Why are the Klamath’s Native Tribes concerned with toxic algae?

Native Tribes on the Klamath river are in constant contact with the water and salmon both with cultural ceremonies and while fishing for subsistence and livelihood. Tribal members and biologists have attended agency meetings and written letters to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on behalf of their right to fish and participate in cultural ceremonies.

Take Action on Toxic Algae

For information on how to contact the California Water Boards and demand that they start regulating for toxic algae on the Klamath and deny Pacificorp’s Clean Water permit, and for talking points for your letter to the editor, go to www.klamathriver.org/dams-algae. Join the campaign to remove Pacificorp’s dams by becoming a member of, or volunteering with, Klamath Riverkeeper.

McCarthy, one of the most effective plaintiffs’ firms in the western U.S.; Lawyers for Clean Water, specialists in water advocacy; and Kennedy and Madonna, Bobby Kennedy’s law firm; to prosecute the action. Pacificorp tried to have the case dismissed this summer, but was denied by a federal judge. The case is ongoing. In early December 2007, a coalition organized by Klamath Riverkeeper again sued Pacificorp, this time for violations of the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (“RCRA”), the federal law regulating hazardous and solid waste. The toxic algae and toxin generated by Pacificorp’s dams is solid waste, and Pacificorp stores or disposes that waste in the reservoirs and the river; threatening humans and polluting the Klamath. RCRA subjects the violator to penalties of $25,000 per day per violation, and to Court Orders to eliminate the activity. Since the only way to stop the toxic algae discharges is to take down the dams, this action poses serious problems for Pacificorp.

HOLDING A BILLIONAIRE ACCOUNTABLE

Will Warren ever walk his talk on the Klamath?

Our nation’s policy regarding large energy corporations gives them the free rein to companies like Pacificorp to pollute and hurt citizens with little regulation or accountability. Warren Buffett takes advantage of this while claiming to support social justice in the third-world. Klamath Riverkeeper is committed to making the Klamath’s major corporations take responsibility for their actions and will not stop fighting until the Klamath is fishable and swimmable again.

The toxic algae scum at left appeared in the fall in the free-flowing Klamath River below the dams; just above the mouth of Beaver Creek. Health Advisories were placed along the river from the dams to the ocean. Photo by Susan Corum.

Susan Corum, a biologist with the Karuk Tribe, samples water from Cato Creek this summer. With ancestral territory downstream of the dams, the Karuk Tribe is the only group tracking and keeping records on microcystin levels in Pacificorp’s reservoirs. Photo courtesy of the Karuk Tribe.

Klamath River News

Toxic Algae Threatens Klamath Communities

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Klamath River News
In 1918, construction was completed on the 250-foot tall Copco I dam. Several others followed over the next 40 years, effectively slicing the Klamath River in half and setting into motion a cascade of ecological effects that have helped reduce Klamath salmon populations by 90 percent. In 2007, the river’s ecological dysfunction and economic woes made daily headlines. We’re losing a salmon-based economy on the Klamath, but if we can remove these antiquated dams - now owned by Warren Buffett’s PacifiCorp - we just might get it back.

THE AGE OF DAMS IS OVER

When the Klamath was split by its first dam 90 years ago, we believed progress meant sacrificing natural systems. We live in a new paradigm now, one in which people are learning that working with the land is the only way to achieve sustainable prosperity. PG&E removed Marmot Dam in the Sandy River this year, the tallest ever removed in Oregon. The Marmot powered 12,000 homes, but PG&E found it would be cheaper to dismantle than to retrofit for fish passage under current re-licensing standards. Two dams on Washington’s Elwha River, including the 210-foot Glines Canyon Dam, were hit hard by the Elwha’s flooding Fall Chinook run, an economic reality that echoes the ecological relationships between the Klamath and the Pacific coastal ecosystems of which it is a part. Salmon Nation, the stretch of salmon-bearing watersheds between California and Alaska, is having an identity crisis as its famous salmon runs blink out, one by one, down the throat. By un-damming the Klamath, we can restore the fishery that feeds Klamath communities, and do our part to rebuild Salmon Nation.

BRINGING THE KLAMATH BACK TO SALMON NATION

Dam removal is vital to restoring the Klamath and its Salmon-based economy in sectors such as tourism, recreation, and fishing over the long term.

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Is Groundwater Pumping Bleeding the Scott River

New study will shed light on how groundwater levels affect Scott River flows and temps

One of the four main tributaries of the lower Klamath, the 58-mile Scott was once a stronghold for threatened Klamath River coho salmon, and is now on California’s 303(d) list of impaired waterways due to sedimentation and high water temperatures.

The Scott River begins high in the Trinity Alps, meanders through the wide, agricultural Scott Valley and then cuts a canyon through the eastside of the Marble Mountains before joining the Klamath. The portion of the river flowing through the Scott Valley commonly dries up completely during the summer, and flows at the confluence with the Klamath can dip to little more than a trickle. Low flows have an adverse affect on the cool water temperatures needed on the Klamath.

Ocean’s Department of Environmental Quality is an emasculated, isolated, compromised disaster.
EYE ON THE AGENCIES...

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Issues contradictory final EIS on Klamath dam re-licensing

No one was quite sure what to make of FERC’s Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), released this November; on the 4 Klamath dams up for 50-year re-licensing. The FEIS clearly showed that keeping the dams would cost PacifiCorp – and in turn, the rate-paying public – $7 million more per year than removing the dams and buying replacement power. Despite this economic fact, FERC still recommended keeping the dams. FERC also ignored a recent federal court mandate for fish ladders on the Klamath dams and in a Biological Assessment Claims Klamath Irrigation Project will continue to endanger fish.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Biological Assessment Claims Klamath Irrigation Project will continue to endanger fish

In a Biological Assessment (BA) released in October, the Bureau concluded its own Klamath Project will continue to endanger fish. The Bureau of Reclamation has not slowed the rate of salmon declines. Moreover, salmon that travel in-river typically survive at higher rates than those that are trucked or barged.

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

Speaks up for dam removal

In an official letter to state Public Utilities Commissions (PUC) in October, this commission asked the PUCs NOT to let PacifiCorp pass on the costs of dam relicensing to its customers, instead recommending the PUCs authorize cost-recovery for dam decommitting only. The Commission emphasized that if dam removal is pursued over re-licensing and costly upgrades, the ratepaying public would receive an economic benefit to the tune of $38 to $153 million, even when replacement energy is factored into the equation. All economics aside, an analyst with the commission also told the press, “The California Energy Commission not only has a responsibility to provide reliable energy supplies, but to provide for the environment. It takes that balancing mandate seriously.”

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

Asks for coordinated science on the Klamath, backs higher flows for fish

The National Research Council released a report in November denouncing the current fragmented approach to science on the Klamath, and called for a “big picture” basin-wide plan that avoids political quagmires and keeps an eye on climate change. Bucking political inertia from the White House, the council also came out in support of a previous Utah State study whose results confirmed the obvious: ailing Klamath salmon runs need higher flows than recommended by federal managers.

Thank you!

Our heartfelt thanks to the foundations, individuals, businesses and organizations that support us. If your name is missing, let us know and we’ll get you in the next issue.


Dan Bacher, Fish Hero

We would like to extend a special thank-you this issue to Dan Bacher, fish activist extraordinaire and tireless supporter of Klamath Riverkeeper.

According to Fish Sniffer magazine, where he edits the print edition and contributes to the online version, Mr. Bacher is known as “Dangerous Dan” to fish and out-of-line government agencies alike. Dan’s hard-hitting and well-researched articles have been inspiring anglers to take action for decades through Fish Sniffer. His articles also find their way to the general public via on-line publications like Aquaforim.com, Californiaprogressreport.com, Counterpunch.org and San Francisco Independent Media. Dan has also written articles for the Sacramento News & Review and North American Fisher-

Dan is actively involved with Restore the Delta, an organization advocating a fishable, drinkable, and farmable Sacramen-to-San Joaquin River delta; and Water 4 Fish, a coalition of angling groups working to restore the California Delta and Klamath River. A key figure in the fight to Un-Dam the Klamath and to save the Delta Smelt, Dan is also active in the anti-globalization and social justice movements. Dan worked to get fishermen and Native American Tribes much needed relief after the commercial salmon fishing closures of 2006. Dan has been a stalwart Riverkeeper ally, regularly helping us spread our news and action alerts around the internet and in fishing and Native American magazines. Very few activists do such a great job of breaking down the walls between social movements by tying in diverse people and campaigns. We thank Dan for his help and encouragement in getting the Klamath Riverkeeper off the ground, and for all the work he puts in to save fish and fishing jobs throughout California.
BECOME A MEMBER

The most effective way to show your support for the work of Klamath Riverkeeper is to become a member. You can donate online at www.klamath-river.org, or you can send this form with a check to the address below. Every membership comes with a Klamath-related gift, from t-shirts to DVDs to raft trips.

- [ ] Salmon Fry - $25
- [ ] Half-Pounder - $50
- [ ] Steelhead - $100
- [ ] Spring Chinook - $200
- [ ] Green Sturgeon - $400+

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Email ________________________ Phone (___)___________ Today's Date _______ I am donating $__________
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