

Proposed Klamath Dams Removal: Governors of California and Oregon and American Taxpayers Are Being Deceived

Recently discovered Department of Interior document proves existence of ancient lake behind 130-foot lava dam blocking migration of fish to upper Klamath Basin

YREKA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New evidence found in a 2006 Department of Interior ('DOI') document titled, 'Historic Landscape Overview of the Upper Klamath River Canyon of Oregon and California', proves that salmon never migrated up the Klamath River past the area where the Copco Dam 1 is presently situated.



Copco lake formed behind Klamath River dam 'Copco 1' is the evolved habitat for numerous rare species of resident and seasonal flora and fauna, including numerous migratory birds. Photo by M. Gough shows Arctic Terns and American White Pelicans.

It's turns out that legislators and regulatory agencies, like the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ('FERC') have been influenced with misinformation and conjectures by minority stakeholders. Moreover, information critical to the decision-making process has obviously been obfuscated.

Undisputed geologic records and settled science show that; millions of years ago, lava flows created what are known as 'lava reefs' across the upper Klamath River Canyon, where the present day Klamath River dams are located.

One such lave reef formed a natural dam that is 130-feet tall that blocked the Klamath River millions of years ago. Behind this lava dam, or 'reef' was formed a large natural lake that existed since time immemorial. That naturally formed lake was "mile wide" in places and five-miles long, and given the topography, likely over 100-feet deep.

The evidence shows that a large natural lake existed for millions of years and until modern time

and the establishment of Copco 1 dam. Copco Dam and its lake merely replaced the natural lake with a larger body of water.

If the dam removal project that is clearly based upon misinformation continues, numerous threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna that we now know evolved in the area, would lose critical lake and shoreline habitat that has existed for millions of years and continues to this present day at Copco Lake, as well as at the contiguous Iron Gate Lake.

Here is the excerpt from the [Department of Interior \(DOI\) document on page 162](#):

“At COPCO No. 1 the engineers took advantage of the constriction of the Klamath River and a reef of andesite”.

“John C. Boyle explained”:

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New evidence found in a 2006 Department of Interior ('DOI') document proves that salmon never migrated up the Klamath River beyond the area where the Copco Dam 1 is presently situated.”

*William E Simpson II -
Naturalist*

would have a surface area of 1000 acres and would have a catchment of 77,000 acre feet (Boyle 1976:10-11).”

This new evidence, found in a Department of Interior document dated 2006, immediately



Copco Lake that enhanced an existing ancient lake, is formed by the Copco 1 dam on the Klamath River has been the critical habitat for an amazing variety of species of flora and fauna, including numerous endangered and threatened species. Photo by William E. Simpson II

“Geological conditions upstream from the site indicated that at one time the river ran over this reef, 130 feet above its present bed.

During this time that the river was at this height the water was backed up approximately 5 miles and formed a natural lake which varied in width to a mile at the widest part.

It was proposed to fill this gorge made by the river in eroding the reef, with a concrete dam, and over the old original lake bottom with a new artificial lake. The new lake

requires that any and all considerations of a mythical salmon migration in the upper Klamath River now be discounted as nothing more than wishful thinking by incentivized minority groups and some fishermen.

Furthermore, this new evidence requires that all work towards dam removal be immediately halted, until a properly informed and unbiased environmental impact report ('EIR') and environmental impact study ('EIS') is undertaken and those results considered.

The DOI documented ancient lake, which was located where the present-day Copco Lake is located, explains the evolution of the amazing biodiversity of rare, endangered and threatened species of flora and fauna in the area around the lakes formed behind Iron Gate Dam and Copco Dam today. Clearly, over the millions of years since natural forces created a lava dam and natural lake, species evolved to take advantage of this unique freshwater habitat.

Americans cannot allow a small minority of incentivized stakeholders to disregard potential loss of critical endangered and threatened species. And at the same time, ignoring the area's largest tribe of indigenous people, the Shasta Nation, who stand against the removal of the Klamath dams.

The sobering truth is that; in the middle of a record period of drought and 'water crisis', the governors of



Copco Lake was created over an existing lake where numerous species evolved and existed for millennia. The myriad of species of flora and fauna in and around the critical habitat provided by the fresh water ecosystem of the lake is amazing. Photo: William E. Simpson II

California-Oregon Power Company Plants No. 1 and No. 2

The California-Oregon Power Company incorporated on December 15, 1911, to acquire and consolidate with other properties the holdings of the Siskiyou Power and Light Company. At the time of COPCO's formation, Siskiyou Power had already commenced construction of Klamath River Dam No. 1 (COPCO No. 1). Engineers were compelled to abandon the initial dam site at the head of Ward's Canyon and move it 1,000 feet downstream to gain more solid rock for the north abutment. Work on the new dam started simultaneously at another site farther down the Klamath (Boyle 1976:10, 14).



Figure 59. Construction of COPCO No. 1 in 1917 (Photo courtesy of Siskiyou County Museum, Yreka, California, P13668 OS COPCO 2).

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Geological conditions upstream from the site indicated that at one time the river ran over this reef, 130 feet above its present bed. During this time that the river was at this height the water was backed up approximately 5 miles and formed a natural lake which varied in width to a mile at the widest part.

It was proposed to fill this gorge made by the river in eroding the reef, with a concrete dam, and over the old original lake bottom with a new artificial lake. The new lake would have a surface area of 1000 acres and would have a catchment of 77,000 acre feet (Boyle 1976:10-11).

Excerpt from the Department of Interior's 2006 document titled: 'Historic Landscape of the Upper Klamath River Canyon of Oregon and California

Oregon (Kate Brown) and California (Gavin Newsome) have arguably been duped into collaborating with Berkshire Hathaway's profitable Pacific Corp, a shell-corporation called Klamath Basin Renewal Corporation (KRRC) and a relatively few minority stakeholders to circumvent established law Congressional Act, the Klamath River Basin Compact. And their proposed dam removal process would wrongfully remove 4-dams during an intensifying record drought.

The proposed Klamath River dam removal process would deprive a super-majority of Americans of their 'beneficial use' and rights to the water, recreation, wildlife and other resources provided by Copco and Iron Gate Lakes behind the dams.



Eagles, as well as many other raptors at Copco and Iron Gate Lakes on the Klamath River, prefer nest boxes and trees at the lakeshore, which provides open-area easy access to prey on and around the lake. Photo: M. Gough

"In addition to circumventing the Klamath Basin Compact Act without Congressional approval, this dam removal project arguably flies in the face of the Public Trust Doctrine ('PTD'), which requires the 'highest and best use' of the public's natural resources in the beneficial interest of a majority of Americans. Instead, this project seeks to deprive the overall majority of Americans to favor the demands of a small minority who are supported merely by money and power"; said naturalist William E. Simpson II

Three of the four Klamath River dams proposed for removal are in Siskiyou County, CA, where a referendum proved that 78.84% of voters were against the Klamath dam removal project.

In Klamath County Oregon, where one of the Klamath River dams is located, voters considered whether the four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River should be removed. That vote proved 72% of voters opposed to the removal.

Do the whims and conjectures of a few minority groups who are arguably incentivized, and a for-profit corporation, now have preeminence over the American democratic process?

The fresh water stored behind 3 of the 4 dams in Siskiyou County California amounts to 139,200 acre-feet of water. That equals about 45.4 - billion gallons of stored fresh water that will be lost if these dams are removed!

"As the fire chief of Copco Lake Volunteer Fire Department since 2008 I have witnessed many

wildfires and structure fires at and near the lake. On countless occasions the fires have been swiftly and effectively extinguished due to the lake's ability to provide quick, easy and safe access to helicopters and water scooping fixed wing aircraft. The lake also provides an excellent fuel break for fires which the river alone would not be guaranteed to provide. Proof of this is when the Klamathon fire jumped the river in Hornbrook leading to devastating loss of life and property in the town of Hornbrook. The loss of the lakes would create higher danger of fire spread and higher risk to the pilots of water drafting helicopters", said Francis Gill - Chief 200 Copco Lake Fire Department.

"As president of the Copco Lake Community Club I can say that over the last 18 plus years, our members have repeatedly told the state, County, and local authorities and public servants 'no dam removal'. We have endured countless meetings with multiple state, federal and other bureaucrats and a few with the (KRRC) about dam removal. Always our message has been no dam removal. We the citizens who are directly affected are continually brushed aside and ignored. Enough is enough", said Phil Reynolds - President of the Copco Lake Community Club.

"If the dams are removed, numerous threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna that have evolved in the area, would lose critical lake and shoreline habitat that we now know has existed for millions of years and would likely perish, collapsing the area's biodiversity and trophic cascades, further speeding the potential extinction of even more rare species...

Just a few of such species of fauna include: Yellow legged frog, giant California garter snake, giant California salamander and the short-nosed sucker fish. There are numerous raptors, other birds and water fowl that depend on the open-water of Copco and Iron Gate Lakes as well as the shoreline ecosystem for access to prey and other sustenance. This includes Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, Osprey, numerous species of hawks, falcons, and numerous species of birds, many of whom depend upon insect hatches in the lakes as well as co-evolved flora for sustenance...

Wildlife advocates and scientists who are desperately trying to be the voice for the endangered and threatened species that would suffer a loss of critical habitat are being ignored and obfuscated by the money and power that is pushing this illegitimate project. Clearly, it's an insult to the democratic process and wildlife", said William E. Simpson II a naturalist who studies the wildlife in the area of the proposed dam removals.

Richard Marshall, President of the Siskiyou County Water Users Association, which represents a large number of commercial, residential and farming interests in Siskiyou County, stated;

"A recently discovered Department of Interior document from 2006 substantiates the fact that the Salmon were prevented from going further upriver both in recent times and in ancient and prehistoric times. This document serves to substantiate the article written in a February 22, 1913 for the prestigious Journal of Electricity Power and Gas by the renowned engineer of the Klamath Hydro Electric facilities, Mr. J.C. Boyle. That very thorough and peer reviewed article details the construction of Copco I dam and also discusses the prehistoric lake formed in that

area by a natural dam caused by lava flows which were prevalent at that time. This natural dam was over 130 feet high and still can be seen by looking at the lava banks surrounding Copco I. The outlines of this ancient lake were documented by Boyle in his article.”

Ray Haupt, District 5 Supervisor of the Siskiyou County California Board of Supervisors said;

“Under many decades of NEPA settled law, yesterday FERC made a Predetermined Decision to move forward with license transfer for the purpose of Klamath Dam removal. The associated ordered EIS is tainted as the transfer predetermined any objective EIS analysis and decision.”

As we now know, the historically largest native America tribe in the area of the proposed dam removal project, the Shasta Nation, has and continues to be against the proposed dam removal project on the Klamath River, an area that falls within the historic boundaries of the Shasta Nation tribal homeland.

“The Shasta Tribe has been asked for input by the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (‘KRRC’), and we have provided our input, but it seems our input was ignored. The deal that KRRC has struck is illegal. Eighteen treaties were made with local native American tribes, including with our tribe, the Shasta Tribe, which was not ratified. Land can only be taken by treaty. Our tribal lands make up the largest area around the Klamath Dams, which are on our tribal lands. We stand against the removal of the Klamath River dams.”; said Roy Hall, Chief of the Shasta Tribe.

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