

# LIFE ON THE EDGE

A newsletter concerning all inhabitants of the south coast of Oregon

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

The **ECLIPSE ISSUE**

NOVEMBER 23, 2022

Solar eclipse- High resolution image



Sebastian Voltmer

In memory of my mother, she who watched the stars, so loved by all.

**June P Johnson**

**April 26, 1932 - October 17, 2022**

**Standing Rock Sioux tribal member**

- Darcy Grahek

## NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

### Klamath River Dams to Be Removed

U.S. regulators approved a plan Thursday to demolish four dams on the Klamath river and open up hundreds of miles of salmon habitat that would be the largest dam removal and river restoration project in the world when it goes forward.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's unanimous vote on eliminating the lower Klamath River dams was the last major hurdle and the biggest milestone for the proposed \$500 million demolition. Backed by both Native American tribes and environmentalists for years, this project restores the lower half of California's second-largest river to a free-flowing state for the first time in more than 100 years.

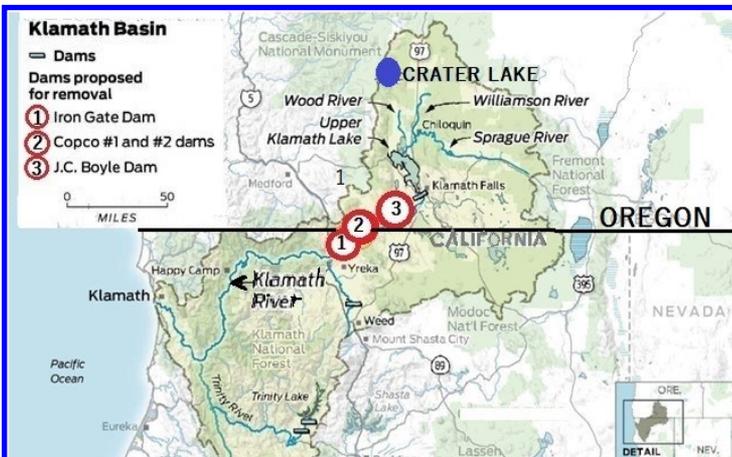
The battle over the water in the Klamath River has been ongoing for decades. . An 1864 treaty entered into between the Klamath Tribes and the United States reserved to the Tribes "sufficient water to keep our fisheries and other aquatic resources healthy so that we can protect our natural resources and cultural traditions." The fight really escalated in 2002, when a greatly increased amount of irrigation water that was released to farmers resulted in a fish-kill of 33,000 of an endangered species. The Yurok, Karuk and Hoopa tribes as well as the Klamath-Modoc tribe were joined by the non-profit American Rivers and other allies to protect the waters.

According to US Fish & Wildlife "the Klamath River once supported the third most productive salmon run on the West Coast of the United States while Upper Klamath Lake supported robust populations of Lost River and shortnose suckers. Today, Klamath Basin fisheries are in decline, including spring-run and fall-run Chinook salmon, and there are several species of fish that are listed under the Endangered Species Act, such as Lost River and shortnose suckers, bull trout, and coho salmon."

The original Klamath River agreements were shaped through the leadership of native tribes in the basin who conferenced with American Rivers and other conservation organizations, PacifiCorp, state and federal agencies, commercial fishing

representatives, along with members of the agricultural community. Working to remove the dams, restore habitat and resolve decades-long water management disputes.

These dams, owned by Pacificorp, don't provide flood control or irrigation water, only a small amount of hydro-power. The removal of the dams is a restoration of 300 miles of river habitat for salmon and other species. Dam removal will improve water quality as currently toxic algae accumulates in the reservoir water behind the dams, threatening the health of fish and people. The deconstruction work is expected to begin in 2023.



"Salmon has the power to unite people. The world over, salmon connect and enrich the communities they come in contact with"

— Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

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## BIDEN TALKS TREES

by Darcy Grahek

President Biden was in Portland, Oregon on April 21, 2022, the day before issuing an Executive Order that includes a demand to assess the condition of the oldest forests of Oregon and neighboring States. It is a hot button topic in the Pacific Northwest, “old growth”. These words can paralyze a conversation, inflame a discussion, alienate neighbors, and divide communities. For the logging industry in the forests of Oregon the term “Old Growth” began to be used as a reference in the 1940’s, to differentiate slower growing forest from the newer forests with their rapid growth. The foresters came up with a measure called “dbh”, or “diameter at breast height”, assessing the largest of the trees present in the forest.

In the larger view of history involving American forests, many of these forestry decisions were based on philosophies shared from Gifford Pinchot, appointed as a special forest agent for the United States Department of the Interior in 1897. Most of his management philosophy came from a Forestry College in France. Some of the management choices were political and fear of forest fires certainly shaped decisions made for forest stewardship, although there is a natural rotation of fire in an ecosystem. And now, Climate Change has brought a keen awareness, to anyone paying attention to the environment, of just how stabilizing of an influence on our climate that these very old trees which live in the centuries old forests provide.

Discussions regarding what constitutes old growth expanded in the 1970s with an expanding environmental movement.<sup>1</sup> Into the 1980’s the conversation continued around what characteristics define an old-growth. Finally, a working definition that could lead the Forest Service was adopted. It read, “*Old-growth forests are ecosystems distinguished by old trees and related structural attributes. Old growth encompasses the later stages of stand development that typically differ from younger stages in a variety of characteristics that may include tree size, accumulations of large dead woody material, number of canopy layers, species composition and ecosystem function.*”<sup>2</sup> Perhaps we should say that “Old growth” is best described as a forest system, not a single tree, and where there is little disturbance from human activity. These are ecosystems which have incredible plant species richness (biodiversity), trees more than 200 years old, and many down and decaying trees.

These forests provide not only species diversity and a multitude of habitats but a huge measure of carbon sequestration, providing climate stability. The description above may be as close to a definition as we can get since within nine different ecoregions or geographic areas, no one definition represents the full diversity of old-growth ecosystems. Definitions are specific to the vegetation type, according to altitude, geography and climate. Today, the discussion of old-growth forest has expanded to include an earlier stage of forest called mature forest. Concerns associated with environmental threats led to a broader view of forest management that includes all stages of development. Climate change has spurred more frequent and longer lasting disturbances, such as wildland fire, severe weather, flooding, and insects and disease.

(Con’t on Page 3)

### **NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY -**

#### **POTLUCK JAN 7 , PORT ORFORD**

If you’re connected to or love the flora of Oregon’s South Coast, you’re invited to join the NEWLY REACTIVATED! South Coast Native Plant Society of Oregon.

A kick-off potluck celebration and meeting will be held

**LDS church, 2000 Jackson St.**

**Port Orford. Sat., Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>, 11:00am**

If you register online be sure to tell them you wish to be added to the new South Coast Chapter. Link to join below.

<https://www.npsoregon.org/membership.html>



### **HUMOR?**



Come plant a restoration shrub with us at Johnson Creek! Green Friday on November 25 — runs from 10 am—2 pm, just south of the Best Western on Beach Loop, Bandon. (old Face Rock golf course)



## **BIDEN TALKS TREES,** con't from page 2

On April 22, 2022, the Biden Administration released Executive Order 14072: “Strengthening the Nation’s Forests, Communities and Local Economies.” The order reiterates the Administration’s policy regarding consultation with state, local, Tribal and territorial governments as well as the private sector, nonprofit organizations, unions, and the scientific community. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which President Biden signed into Law, says in Section 1. that this law will ‘provide generational investments in ecosystem restoration and wildfire risk reduction. As we use this funding, we will seek opportunities, consistent with the IIJA, to conserve our mature and old-growth forests on Federal lands and restore the health and vibrancy of our Nation’s forests by reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfires through ecological treatments that create resilient forest conditions using active, science-based forest management and prescribed fires; by incorporating indigenous traditional ecological knowledge; and by scaling up and optimizing climate-smart reforestation.’<sup>3</sup>

The title of **Section 2.** is **Restoring and Conserving the Nation’s Forests, Including Mature and Old-Growth Forests.** This section promotes stewardship and science toward the management of forests on Federal land, which include old growth forested places areas and areas of mature trees. It states that stewardship includes “continued health and resilience; retain and enhance carbon storage; conserve biodiversity; mitigate the risk of wildfires; enhance climate resilience; enable subsistence and cultural uses; provide outdoor recreational opportunities; and promote sustainable local economic development. Science—based reforestation is one of the greatest opportunities both globally and in the United States for the land sector to contribute to climate and biodiversity goals.”<sup>4</sup>

Timberland is managed very differently, arguments over treatment of these Federal lands will undoubtedly ensue. This Executive Order directs that it will be in discussion with the public and other stakeholders to determine the best way forward in this effort to safeguard habitats and protect people. The reader has an opportunity to be that local voice. Sharpen your pencils and write or email letters to our representatives. Voices simply must be heard, this affects both human and planetary health.

Under Section 2, b. is this statement: “(b) The Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands, shall, within 1 year of the date of this order, define, identify, and complete an inventory of old-growth and mature forests on Federal lands, accounting for regional and ecological variations, as appropriate, and shall make such inventory publicly available.”<sup>5</sup> Other considerations include honoring Tribal treaty rights and changing things up to “deploying climate-smart forestry practices and other nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of our lands, waters, wildlife, and communities in the face of increasing disturbances and chronic stress arising from climate impacts”.

Biden’s order called for the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management over the next year to define and inventory all mature and old growth forests on federal land. After that, the agencies must identify the biggest threats those forests face and come up with ways to save them. New language may need to be created so the folks on different sides can even agree on definitions like the term “old growth”.

There’s disagreement over which trees to count. Environmentalists have said millions of acres of public lands should qualify. The timber industry and its allies have cautioned against a broad definition over concerns that could put new areas off limits to logging. The Forest Service manages 209,000 square miles of forested land, including about 87,500 square miles, where trees are older than 100 years. The Bureau of Land Management oversees about 90,600 square miles (233,000 square kilometers) of forests. The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management issued a notice in August, seeking public input for a “universal definition framework” to identify older forests needing protection.

We Americans are called to be the stewards of these forests because we live in a place where timber plantations are confused with forests, and the highest interests being served may be at the corporate level. Find out enough facts and information so you can decide for yourself about the questions asked, and actions planned, regarding the stewardship of these public lands.

**Comment, submissions or questions regarding “Life on the Edge” newsletter can be sent to [Stellaray60@yahoo.com](mailto:Stellaray60@yahoo.com)**

**3, 4, 5** <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/04/22/executive-order-on-strengthening-the-nations-forests-communities-and-local-economies/>