



Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 7, 2006

Contacts: Dr. Donald McIsaac, Executive Director, 503-820-2280
Ms. Jennifer Gilden, Communications Officer, 503-820-2280

PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL CALLS FOR REMOVAL OF KLAMATH RIVER DAMS

At its meeting in Sacramento this week, the Pacific Fishery Management Council approved preparation of a letter calling for the decommissioning and removal of four dams on the Klamath River. The decision comes at a time when the Council voted for the smallest salmon fishery season in history off 700 miles of the California and Oregon coast to protect reduced runs of Klamath salmon (see press release linked below).

The four dams are currently up for relicensing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the letter comes days after National Marine Fisheries Service submitted a similar recommendation to remove the dams. NMFS noted that “the dam removal alternative is a superior alternative from a fish passage water quality and habitat restoration standpoint.”

“When the Council was discussing this issue, we heard a lot about poor habitat conditions for salmon in the Klamath River,” said Council Chairman Don Hansen. “We also heard compelling testimony from many people—commercial and recreational fishermen, environmentalists, communities—calling for a solution to the habitat problems there.”

The Council is calling for removal of the Iron Gate, Copco 1, Copco 2, and J.C. Boyle dams. Although there are other dams on the Klamath River, they are not currently being relicensed and the Council did not call for their immediate removal.

Ocean fisheries off the coast of California and Oregon are limited by the number of naturally-spawning salmon in the Klamath River. In 2005, fishing off Oregon and California was virtually halved to meet the Klamath fall Chinook spawning objective. This year, even with a further 75% cut of both commercial and recreational fisheries between Point Sur, California (just south of Monterey) and Tillamook, Oregon, the spawning objective will not be met. The regulations the Council recommended to protect these sensitive Klamath stocks are expected to have enormous economic and social impacts on West Coast fishing communities and tribes.

In the past, the Council has sent several letters to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies pointing out the negative effects of water withdrawals and hydroelectric projects to salmon populations in the Klamath Basin. In 2002, 30,000 or more adult Chinook salmon in the lower Klamath River were killed by a combination of environmental factors including low river flows.

The Council's letter calling for dam removal will be posted on the Council website (www.pcouncil.org) within the next 10 days.

For more information, please see:

- Press release on Council's salmon decision:
http://www.pcouncil.org/newsreleases/pr040706_sal.pdf
- Klamath salmon online press packet:
http://www.pcouncil.org/newsreleases/sal06_presspacket.html
- Council correspondence on Klamath flows:
<http://www.pcouncil.org/habitat/habdocs.html>
- Guide to the Pacific Fishery Management Council process:
<http://www.pcouncil.org/guide/Guide-intropage.html>

###