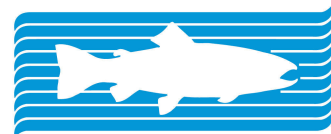


the current

abundant wild fish · healthy waters · better California

Winter 2015

CALIFORNIA TROUT



FISH · WATER · PEOPLE

Klamath Crumbles

Decades of collaboration and compromise crushed
in the hands of Congress



HAT CREEK

A helicopter, back hoe,
and crane make for a
big day of restoration



WOLF CREEK

Field report from a
remote area of the
Eastern Sierra

Cover photo: Val Atkinson



A message to you

Our goal with each issue of *The Current* is to bring our stories and projects to life, with more images, videos and links... offering you a rich perspective on the work **your support makes possible**. We are thankful to you, our donors, who help us ensure that there will always be resilient populations of wild fish thriving in healthy waters for a better California.

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The Klamath Basin Agreements have faded into the distance as Congress has failed to act on the collective compromise.

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In search of native Lahontan Cutthroat Trout on Wolf Creek in the Eastern Sierra.

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REGULARS

VIDEOS

For over 15 years CalTrout has worked with a diverse set of stakeholders on the Klamath River to restore fish runs and provide community stability in California's second largest watershed.

In this article, guest writer Frank Eldredge looks back on how the Klamath Agreements were developed and how a broad diversity of stakeholders came together to ease tensions and solve problems around one of the West's most contentious water issues.

Klamath Agreements

Historic Klamath River Basin Restoration in

UPDATE 12-17-15

Curtis Knight, Executive Director

To our bitter disappointment, we learned this week the Klamath Agreements were not approved by Congress before the end of the legislation session, effectively killing the broadly supported and locally developed package of three separate but coordinated settlement agreements. Congressman Walden (R-OR), Congressman LaMalfa (R-CA) and Congressman Bishop (R-UT) deserve to be called out for their lack of leadership and vision in letting time run out. In the end, they did what a lot of people blame Congress for doing—nothing. We are grateful for the efforts of Congressman Huffman (D-CA), Senator Wyden (D-OR)

and Senator Merkley (D-OR) for their leadership in DC. But in the end, the Agreements were not approved.

The Agreements, hammered out by local ranchers, government agencies, and PacifiCorp and environmental groups, have been waiting for Congress to pass. **What is at stake is the largest dam removal project in our nation's history**, an effort to remove four hydroelectric dams, a project that opponents in a major vote will have to overcome their differences to pass. The local communities of the Klamath River have done the hard work of putting the Agreements together and compromise to come up with a solution.



ts Crumble

Peril

(-OR) for their support and the end, it wasn't enough.

ered out by Indian tribes, agencies, the owner of the environmental groups, have ss to act since 2010. **What river restoration project in** unprecedented removal of , and a blueprint for how western water dispute can es and find common ground. of the Klamath Basin have instaking negotiations and with the agreements. In the

end, Congress has failed the Klamath basin and its communities.

What next? Many stakeholders still remain committed to working together to find a solution to water sharing, habitat restoration and dam removal. But lack of congressional approval of a locally brokered solution will force parties to the courts, regulatory agencies and the Obama administration for solutions. PacifiCorp will be required to reengage in the FERC dam relicensing process which could still lead to dam removal. But it is also possible that FERC may ultimately relicense the dams.

BREAKING NEWS

The Klamath community is mourning the untimely passing of Troy Fletcher, Executive Director of the Yurok Tribe. Progress in the Klamath starts with diverse interests coming together, and this requires strong leadership. Troy led the tribes to reach out to farmers in the upper Klamath basin and, more than any other person, brought people together. His passion, strong leadership, and unwavering commitment to the Klamath River and its people will be remembered by all. The CalTrout community sends its condolences to Troy's family and the entire Yurok Tribe. We will miss Troy and his vision greatly.



FEATURE CONTRIBUTOR

Frank Eldredge

26-year CalTrout Member

Frank joined in 1989 and is embarking on a second career writing about conservation and fly fishing topics.

Federal Government Not Delivering

The Klamath River begins in southern Oregon where snowmelt from the Cascades feeds rivers that form Upper Klamath Lake, and from there the river carves its path through the rugged Siskiyou Mountains in northern California before emptying into the Pacific Ocean at the town of Requa. In its prime, the Klamath River was one of the top three salmon rivers on the West Coast (along with the Columbia and the Sacramento), supporting up to a million spawning



adults a year. But the mighty Klamath has been dealt many grievous blows over the past century and a half from the effects of gold mining, lumber harvesting, water diversions for farming and ranching, and the building of dams. All of these impacts have cumulatively taken a heavy toll on the native fish: Coho and Fall Chinook salmon numbers have dropped to roughly 10 percent of their historic numbers.

The agreements worked out by local communities represent an historic opportunity to reverse this decline and ensure a sustainable and healthy future for the Klamath River and the people who depend on its waters. If the four Klamath dams are removed in 2020 per the agreements, salmon and steelhead would gain access to over 300 miles of additional spawning habitat and colder water in upper basin tributaries that have been closed off to them for nearly a century.

A Brief History of the Klamath

The Klamath agreement history can be broadly grouped into three phases:

2000 to 2006


Negotiations regarding the mandatory relicensing of the four dams on the upper Klamath River as required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which concluded with key parties agreeing that removal of the dams was the best solution.

2006 to 2010

Negotiations and signing of two comprehensive agreements covering the Klamath River Basin and dam removals, which were supported by a broad and diverse coalition of over 40 stakeholders (including CalTrout).

2010 to present

Klamath agreements were further expanded to include a negotiated agreement between Upper Basin ranchers and the Klamath Tribes, making the settlement package even more comprehensive; the agreements sent to Congress for approval and funding, where they have been stuck for the last five years.



"The local communities did their part, but unfortunately the federal government has not yet delivered on their end of the deal."

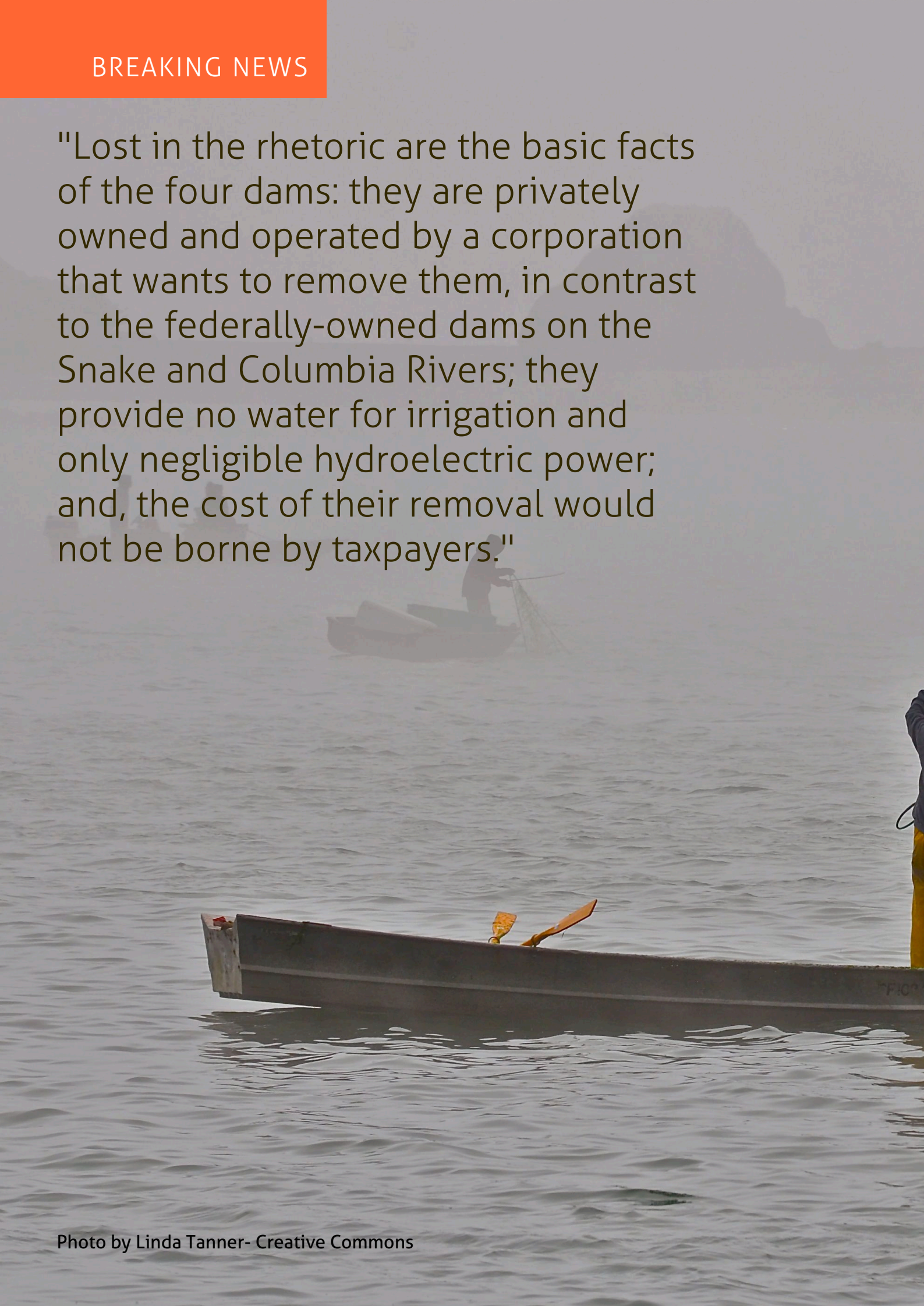
Curtis Knight, CalTrout Executive Director

Samath Basin Agreements

The Dam Relicensing Negotiations (2000 to 2006)

The key issue that needed to be resolved in the FERC relicensing negotiations was how PacifiCorp, which owns all four dams, would address the requirement of the Federal Power Act to allow salmon to migrate and spawn above its dams. PacifiCorp's opening gambit was to propose a "trap and haul" solution to transport salmon around the dams in order to avoid the high cost of building fish ladders. CalTrout played a key role in these discussions and joined others in pushing hard for a solution that allowed for natural salmon passage, either via fish ladders or dam removal. PacifiCorp initially explored building fish ladders, but that solution turned out to be very expensive. CalTrout and partners contributed studies and other evidence in favor of removing the dams, and after running the numbers PacifiCorp came to the conclusion that the most economical solution for its ratepayers was to remove the dams. A subsequent Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) done by the Department of the Interior validated that dam removal was the best way to restore the upper river habitat and fisheries.

"Lost in the rhetoric are the basic facts of the four dams: they are privately owned and operated by a corporation that wants to remove them, in contrast to the federally-owned dams on the Snake and Columbia Rivers; they provide no water for irrigation and only negligible hydroelectric power; and, the cost of their removal would not be borne by taxpayers."



The Settlement Agreements (2006 to 2010)

Overcoming years of arguments and animosity, the key players in the Klamath Basin finally realized that it was time to try to work together and see if they could find common ground. What emerged from these years of discussions and negotiations were two major agreements:

1. The Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA), which established predictable water allocations for ranchers, farmers, fish, and wildlife refuges, and also identified restoration projects throughout the basin. The KBRA was signed by the Secretary of the Interior, the governors of California and Oregon, and 41 stakeholders in 2010.

2. The Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA), which detailed the plans to remove the four dams owned and operated by PacifiCorp. PacifiCorp would contribute the first \$200 million towards the cost of the dam removals, most of which has already been collected through surcharges to its ratepayers. Any costs above that level would be covered by the state of California using funds from the Water Bond that was passed in 2014. The total estimated cost of the dam removals is around \$300 million. The KHSA was also signed in 2010 by KBRA parties plus PacifiCorp.

3. A third agreement, the Upper Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement, was added in 2014 to resolve water disputes between ranchers and the Klamath Tribe in the upper watershed.

Key Dates in the History of the Klamath

(prior to Agreements)

Circa 5000 BCE

The first Native Americans settle in the Klamath Basin

1850s

The first gold miners arrive and use water cannons to extract ore, which results in wiping out hillsides and silting the river

1905

The federal government creates the Klamath Reclamation Project, draining marshes and lakes to create fertile farm land

1908

President Theodore Roosevelt creates the Klamath Wildlife Refuge to protect critical habitat for migratory birds

Post WWI and WWII

Veterans are given homestead rights based on a lottery and promised an endless supply of water for farming

1917 to 1964

Four hydroelectric dams are built on the river, cutting off migratory salmon and steelhead from 300 miles of spawning habitat

2001

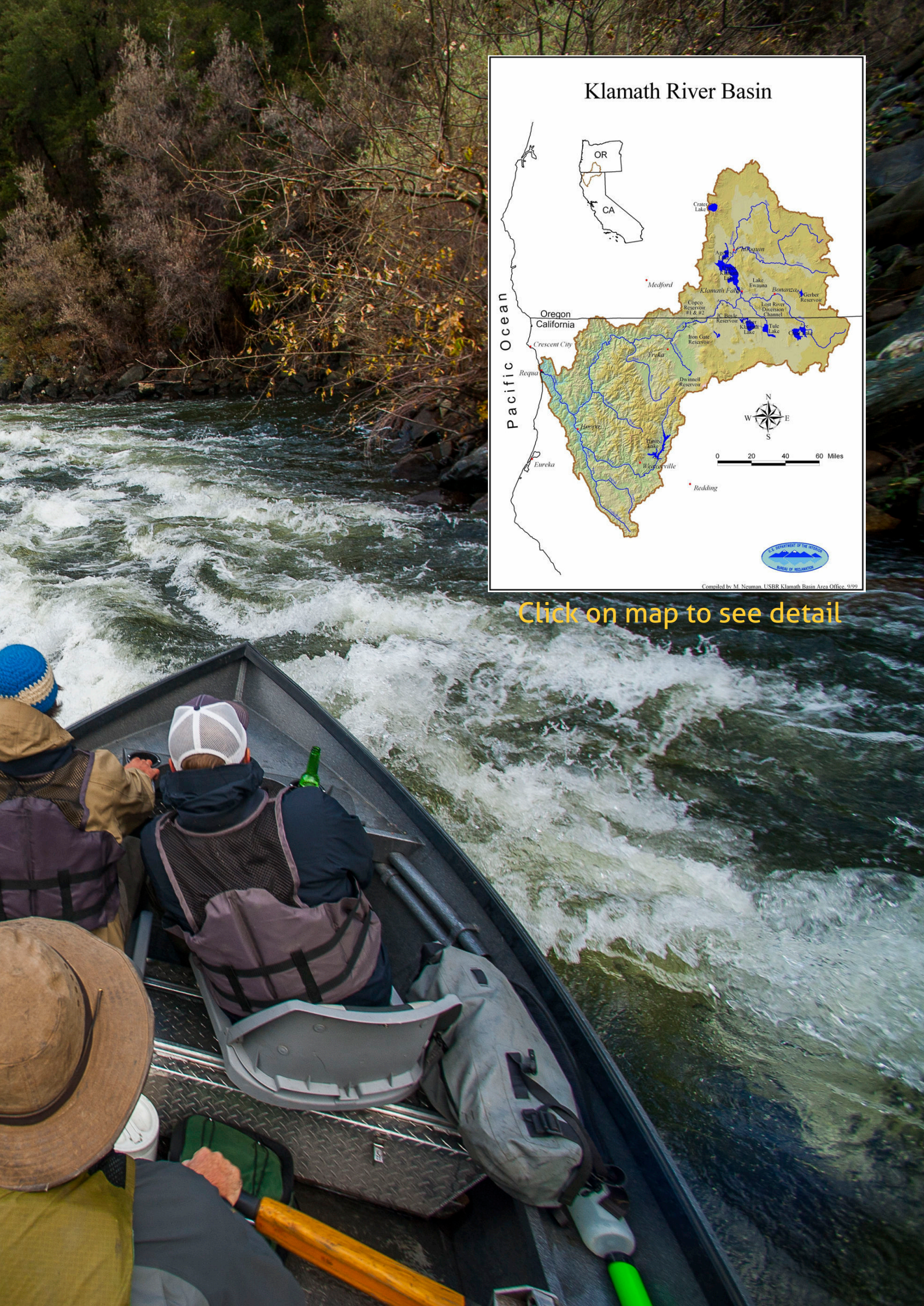
The federal government shuts off water to farmers to protect flows for fish as required by the ESA, touching off massive protests, illegal water diversions by farmers, and the famous "bucket brigade"

2002

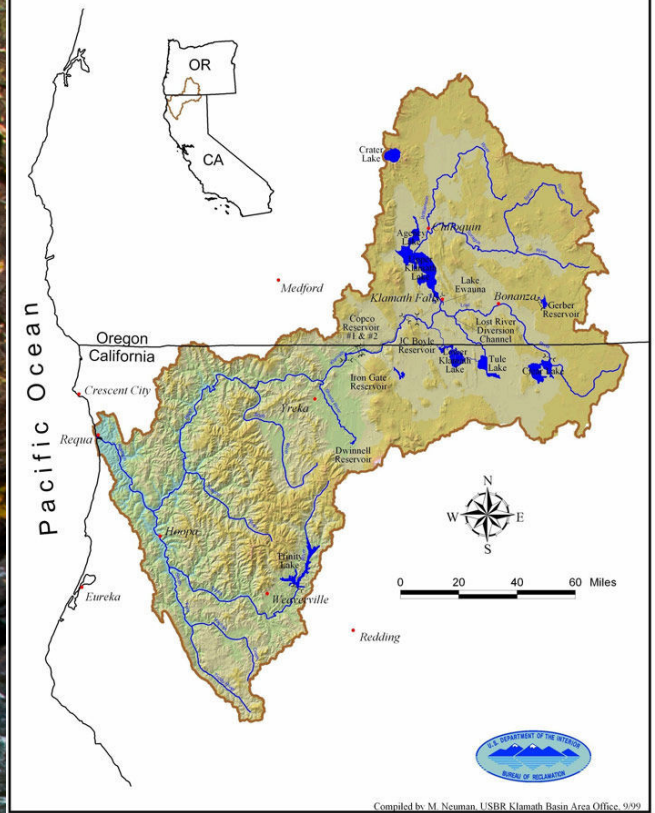
The federal government takes the opposite approach in another drought year by delivering water to farmers, which leaves insufficient water for migrating salmon that results in a huge fish die-off

Continue reading the history of the Klamath Agreements on page 48.





Klamath River Basin



[Click on map to see detail](#)



By ANDREW BRAUGH
Mt. Shasta/Klamath Director

Battle of the Four C

How Hat Creek is much more than a restoration

CalTrout's Hat Creek Restoration Project originated to restore a legacy of fly fishing in Northern California. But we quickly realized that this project is about far more than fishing. As with so many of our projects, the deeper meaning lies in the connection between local people and the places that we work.

Whether we're engaging rice farmers to restore floodplains in the Yolo Bypass, or incentivizing irrigators to restore flows in the Shasta River, our projects succeed because we use innovative approaches to solving complex social, economic, and ecological problems.

With Hat Creek, our restoration site rests on the sacred ancestral lands of the Illmawi Band of the Pit River Tribe. Therefore, a successful conservation outcome depends largely on our ability to engage the Illmawi in the project in a

Photo by Val Atkinson



To watch
our Hat Creek
video
[click here](#)

orners

tion project

meaningful and lasting way. The tribe's priority remains the protection of their cultural resources including the numerous archeological sites existing throughout the project area.

Most CalTrout members know Hat Creek as one of California's most famous Wild Trout Waters, but few realize the significance of these lands to the Illmawi people: the original inhabitants. Even fewer know about the deep and painful scar formed by the Pit River Tribe's effort to reclaim their ancestral lands.

Val Ar

HAT CREEK RESTORATION

For those that know Hat Creek well, the “Four Corners” at the intersection of CA-299 and CA-89 just northeast of Burney, usually signifies that the long pilgrimage from the Bay Area is almost over and a weekend of epic fishing is about to begin.

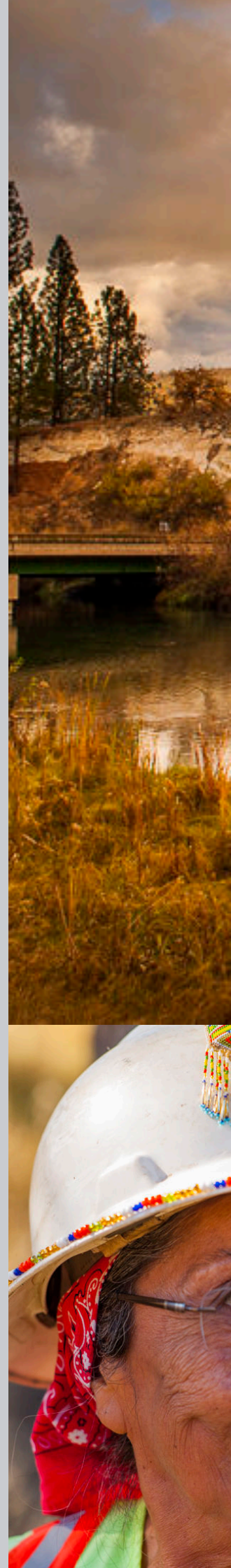
The Four Corners, however, have an entirely different and much darker meaning for those that bore witness to the conflict that occurred there on October 27th, 1970.

On that day, 52 armed police officers, including federal agents, state troopers, sheriff’s deputies, and 50 Forest Service personnel broke up a tribal protest. Now known as the Battle of the Four Corners, the Redding Record Searchlight described the melee, “Indians, both men and women, fought with bare fists, tree limbs, and planks of lumber. Officers and sheriff’s deputies swung billy clubs and sprayed mace.” “Then all hell broke loose,” recalled a tribal witness, “as the armed protectors of the law waded into our people, spraying mace, and breaking heads, swinging clubs and striking even those who already lay unconscious.”

In 1971, just one year after the conflict and less than five miles from the site, California Trout was incorporated to begin restoring Hat Creek and other Wild Trout Waters throughout the state.

Given this history, it goes without saying that the Illmawi people of the Pit River Tribe approach outside organizations, even ones dedicated to river restoration, with caution and suspicion. The Illmawi literally bled for this land at Four Corners.

Now, 45 years later, a fragile reconciliation is underway. We don’t pretend that the Hat Creek Restoration Project can change the past or ease the lingering pain from dispossession. Or that relations are now perfect. But in an effort to shape a path forward, we as an organization can genuinely commit to helping protect the things that matter most to those who came before us.





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Not your typical day at the office!



Any time it takes a 110 ton crane, a back hoe, 60,000 lbs of ballast, and a Firehawk helicopter to complete a project, you know it's going to be an interesting day at the office. That's just what Andrew Braugh, CalTrout's Mt. Shasta/Klamath Director and head of the Hat Creek Restoration Project had in store for him last month. This was the day that woody debris would be installed in the creek as part of the multi-year, multi-phase project. It was a day that was much anticipated, long planned, finely orchestrated, and met with just a hint of trepidation. And it went off without a hitch.

This 'woody debris' was not just a few twigs and branches placed in the creek. These were three separate log structures placed in locations along a quarter mile stretch of the river. Each structure was comprised of four trees weighing 8-9,000 lbs each. That's about 50 tons of woody debris to move and place in specific locations along Hat Creek. Cue the Firehawk helicopter that was necessary to move logs from their location in the nearby forest in order to protect the sacred ancestral land of the Illmawi Band of the Pit River Tribe. Cue the back hoe to place the logs into their predetermined, exact locations. Cue



the exhaled, held breaths of the crew followed by elated cheers for a job perfectly executed. Began in 2012, The Hat Creek Restoration Project's goal is to restore this designated Wild Trout Area to the iconic fishery it once was with over 5,000 fish per mile. The tasks have included planting over six acres of riparian corridor with some 5,000 native plants, shrubs, and trees; protecting cultural resources; constructing recreational trails, signs, bridges and parking areas; maintaining and monitoring all restoration components; establishing a the Hat Creek Youth Initiative and Pit River Tribe workforce training and jobs program.

The project and this particular endeavor could not have been done without the collaboration of dozens of partners including: Waterways Engineering, the Pit River Tribe, PG&E, Lomakatsi, Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Spring Rivers Ecological Sciences, UC Davis, and The Pacific Forest and Watershed Stewardship Council.

For more on the legacy of Hat Creek see the fall issue of The Current [here](#). For more on the Hat Creek Youth Initiative, see the spring article [here](#).



All in a days work

Photos by Val Atkinson





Your Support

Being a CalTrout member brings you into a community of Californians who believe that clean, cold water and wild rivers benefit fish *and* people. Our work relies on the support of our members. Please renew your membership in 2015. If you're not yet a member, join today, it's easy!

Your donation makes a difference to fish, water

Fish are to the ecosystem as canaries are to the coal mine. As such, ab mean healthy waters and healthy waters mean a better California. You CalTrout will help ensure that California will always have resilient pop thriving in healthy waters.



Please support Caltrout in the most sustainable, cost-effective way by donating online with a recurring gift today at www.caltrout.org

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3rd Annual Humboldt Steelhead Days

January 22 - February 6, 2016

IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY HUMBOLDT COUNTY HOSTS THE
LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF WINTER STEELHEAD IN CALIFORNIA

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JANUARY 22 - FEBRUARY 6, 2016

THREE WEEKENDS - SPANNING 16 DAYS OF ANGLING ADVENTURES,
FISHING CONTESTS, SPECIAL RIVER ACCESS, SEMINARS, CLINICS,
FILMS, THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS, AND MORE!

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**The northern third of C
important salmon and
Come celebrate!**

The 3rd Annual Humboldt Steelhead Days will span three weekends and a total of sixteen days. The focus of the festival to promote steelhead angling opportunities on the Trinity, M and Eel Rivers-with fishing, educational events, expos, and food tastings happening throughout Humboldt County- for locals and out-of-town visitors alike.



California's coast is home to some of the most steelhead rivers and watersheds in the state.

Humboldt Steelhead Days, includes fishing contests, seminars, theatrical performances and film and is a growing tradition in Humboldt.

CalTrout is hosting several Eel River events including a kick-off party on January 22, screening of the International Fly Fishing Film Festival (IF4) in Scotia and Eureka, and the Humboldt

Steelhead Expo in Eureka on January 30. Non-profit partners Mad River Alliance and Mountain Community and Culture are sponsoring events on the Mad River and Willow Creek/Trinity River respectively.

Join us and get a chance to fish the peak of the run and have a ton of fun!

Photos by Nina Danza

Wolf Creek

By Mikey Wier

On the way back from a staff meeting in Mammoth Lakes this September I decided to stop by Wolf Creek off Hwy 108 to take some photos and video of a meadow CalTrout is helping restore as part of our Sierra Headwaters Initiative. Wolf Creek is a tributary to the West Walker River flowing in from the north and a sister stream to Silver Creek. Both Silver and Wolf Creek are restoration sites for native Walker River Basin Lahontan cutthroat trout.

When I was a kid, both these creeks were full of wild brook trout. At the time, the native strain of Walker River LCT were thought to be extinct. In the 1980s a remnant population of LCT was found in a small tributary and in the 90s and 2000s work started to expand habitat for these endangered native fish. Wolf was the first to be treated starting in the mid 2000s. Brook trout were



mechanically removed and replaced with this native strain of Lahontan cutthroat trout by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The process took a few summers during which the creek was closed to fishing. About four years into the process, brook trout somehow managed to slip back into the system above the barriers. The creek was treated again and finally reopened to fishing after several years of being closed.

The season is short on Wolf Creek and only lasts from August 1 to November 15. The creek was low but there were plenty of nice little LCT in each pool where there was sufficient depth and cover. It's hard to imagine fish living through the winter in these high elevation creeks given the flows these past few years, but somehow they manage. If I crept up slow and stayed low I'd get a chance to watch or film several small but brilliantly beautiful wild cutties. Some pools held only one fish and others held up to five or six. All the fish were very skittish and bolted if you got too close or cast a shadow on the pool. I didn't bother fishing and spent the afternoon collecting some photos and footage for a Sierra Headwaters video. Patience paid off and I was even able to grab a couple



Wolf Creek

Silver Creek is currently in the third summer of going through the process of removing invasive brook trout to expand habitat for native LCT. It remains closed to fishing until a stable population has taken hold. CalTrout is also conducting restoration work in upper Wolf Creek meadow along with several other meadows in the area including Pickle, Upper and Lower Sardine, and Cloudburst with partners including the US Forest Service and others.

Wolf Creek is near the Marine Corps base off Hwy 108 and the marines stationed there often use the area for training. It's not uncommon to see buggies, quads and large trucks buzzing by on the road or hear gunshots during training exercises. The Marines even have a private ski lift tucked up in the hills. While I was out on the creek a large helicopter flew over several times making passes through the canyon and right over the meadow. As the sun fell down over the hill and the temperature began to drop, I hopped in the truck and rattled my way down the long dirt road back toward the highway. The aspens were starting to change and that cold crisp air seeped through my cracked windows. I felt like I'd had a good conversation with an old friend even though I hadn't said a word all day. Fall in the Eastern Sierra is magical.

Click to
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screening

CalTrout is pleased to present screenings of
The International Fly Fishing Film Festival
in the following locations:

North Coast -
Scotia
Saturday, January 23
Winema Theater

Eureka
Friday, January 29
Eureka Theater

Penninsula - Palo Alto
Thursday, March 17
Guild Theater

East Bay - Orinda
Wednesday, March 23
Orinda Theater

Marin - Larkspur
Thursday, March 24
Lark Theater

Sacramento
Wednesday, April 27
Tower Theater

Poster for the International Fly Fishing Film Festival 2016. The poster features a man with a long beard and a wide-brimmed hat, wearing sunglasses. The text "international fly fishing film festival 2016" is prominently displayed. Logos for sponsors like Gloomis, Fly Fusion, and Patagonia are visible. At the bottom, it says "GET YOUR TICKETS FLYFILMFEST.COM".



Craig's Corner

by Craig Ballenger, CalTrout Ambassador

Winter Steelheading in California

Between the Russian River to the south and the Smith River tucked away near the Oregon border, Northern California's Lost Coast has been the subject of many stories and one fine movie recounting the so called 'golden years' of steelhead angling here.

The collapse during the 1960's in rivers such as the Eel, overlooks the fact that steelhead populations seem fairly stable today, despite statewide drought. Clearly, the most popular rivers are the Trinity and the Klamath, yet there are miles and miles of water on each that are seldom fished. Even the fabled Smith has had the number of anglers diminish over the years. While working over there last winter on the *Eternally Wild* film project, only a couple of weekends found the Hiuchi Cafe hopping in early morning darkness. And most fish just from the Forks down, leaving the South and Middle Forks to a few walk and waders. The few deeply committed winter steelheaders I know remind me that I know most, which is to say there are not many of them. This cult of anglers subscribe to a lifestyle of night driving, often through rain and snow, to either jump in a boat, or wade in rain all day,



They study flow graphs on their phones, glassy eyed, over cheap coffee in late night, rural cafes. Their quarry though, is so remarkable that one angler I spoke with, who had fished from the Olympic Peninsula south to our Lost Coast Rivers last winter, claimed he landed five big chromers swinging, all season. When asked if it was worth it, he replied grinning, "Hell yeah!"

Over all, the fishing in California may be as good, if not better than Oregon and Washington Rivers. Perhaps simply because there is less fishing pressure here. Steelheading techniques came to their own in Northern California during the early part of the 20th century. The tradition is here. There are more river miles of steelhead angling to be found in California than anyone could comb in a lifetime.

To experience a big steelhead peel your reel is one of the experiences of a life time. And though our rivers are quite remote, you can get to any one of them in a day. Worthy of slipping off the couch, donning some rain gear and heading out for an old time adventure. You'll likely have the river pretty much to yourself.



Spot Check

by Mikey Wier

Forks of the Kern

This summer I had the pleasure of visiting the fabled Kern River. The Kern is one of the most interesting inland river systems in California. It's home to three distinct species of our native trout, the California Golden Trout, Little Kern River Golden Trout and the Kern River Rainbow. Before ever visiting the Kern I'd looked at it on the map several times. The first thing that caught my eye is the upper reach of the main stem. It flows directly north to south in almost a straight line for near 20 miles, cutting through the southern most toe of the Sierra Nevada range. The Kern originates high in the mountains with its source waters

coming from over 10,000 feet above sea level, flowing through this arid landscape of the Kern and later by the time it reaches the mouth of the Kern it is known as the Forks of the Kern.

The Forks of the Kern is a beautiful wilderness. From Kernville to the trailhead. The trail is a 2.3 mile descent to the river. The trail crosses the hill the trail crosses the hill you have the option to head down and head up the main stem. There, I opted to explore a



feet. As it wanders down
e it's met by the South Fork
he North Fork of the Kern
ern River. This confluence
he Kern.

within the Golden Trout
le, it's about an hour drive
descends just over 1000
the river. At the bottom of
he Little Kern. From there
d up the Little Kern or cross
n. Being my first time down
a little of both.

The Little Kern was very low. I estimated about 20 cfs or less. There were only a couple pools within a few miles of the confluence that were even holding fish at these flows. Hiking up the Little Kern is mostly off trail. At summer flows it's easy to cross in several places which is a good strategy for working your way up river. I could see there being pretty good fishing at higher flows. With this being the 4th year of drought though, many of the fish from the tributaries had been forced to move down into the main stem or into the isolated cold reaches way up river.

Photo: Mike Wier

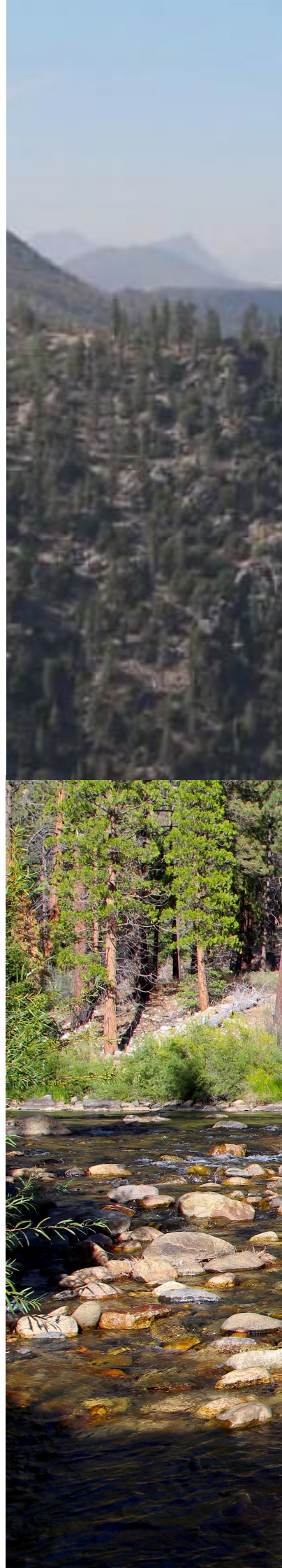
The main river, however was flowing well compared to most of the other California rivers I'd visited this summer. It's hot and relatively arid in this reach but most of the water comes from high in the mountains so it stays pretty cold. The water temperature was in the 60's here even in mid-August.

The main Kern is a classic trout stream. Crystal clear water with tons of nice runs and riffles. The algae growing on the rocks gives the water a green hue making it a bit hard to spot fish. It's all wild trout up in this reach. Apparently there has been some cross breeding with planted rainbows in the lower river over the years but the farther up river you go, the more pure strain of Kern River Rainbows you will find. The average bow in this section is 8-16 inches. However, the skilled and persistent angler can definitely find some fish up to 2 feet long. There are also rumored to be some really nice browns up in this section but they don't give themselves up easily.

I worked my way upriver and discovered some really nice pocket water. I began by throwing my fly into the most likely looking seams and pockets in and around the boulders. There were lots of feisty wild rainbows willing to take my fly. It wasn't uncommon to catch a couple fish out of each pocket. I was surprised by the number of fish we caught in a matter of a couple hours using a dry dropper rig.

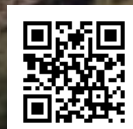
Forks of the Kern can be a nice day hike with plenty of hours to fish if you get an early start. Make sure to leave at least an hour or more to make it back up the hill before dark. It's a bit of an uphill slog after a long day of hiking and fishing. You can also hike for several miles up river from this location and find good fishing for several days or even weeks. There are some pack outfitters in the area who will pack in your supplies and set up a base camp or do a food drop for you too.

For more information on fly fishing the Kern River or guided trips, contact Guy Geans at the Kern River Fly Shop in Kernville.





Forks of the Kern



REFLECTIONS

Photos by CalTrout Members and Followers

VAL ATKINSON, San Francisco, CA: *'Fall Casting'*

REFLECTIONS





REFLECTIONS

Photos by CalTrout Members and Followers

VAL ATKINSON, San Francisco, CA: *'Shasta'*





Val Atkinson

REFLECTIONS

Photos by CalTrout Members and Followers

JACOB KATZ, Windsor, CA





REFLECTIONS

Photos by CalTrout Members and Followers

VAL ATKINSON, San Francisco, CA





CALTROUT VIDEO VAULT



GOLD FEVER TRAILER

CalTrout's Mikey Wier brings you this IF4 Oficial Selection. In Gold Fever, the 'nuggets' are huge wild brown trout from the heart of the Mother Lode in the Sierra Foothills of California.



SIERRA MEADOWS INITIATIVE

Learn about CalTrout's meadow restoration projects protect native inland trout, increase ecological resiliency and sequestor greenhouse gases.

SURFING THE WEB



ABOVE ILIAMNA

By Jason Ching - Fly high above Lake Iliamna, Alaska, following the crew of the Alaska Salmon Program as they conduct sockeye salmon surveys during one of the largest salmon returns in years.



FARQUHAR BIRD FLY

By Fish the Swing - Giant Trevally are a predatory fish that have even been known to eat birds. This video is proof that they also eat bird flies made from flip flops that wash up on the shore.

Who We Are

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



DARREN MIERAU, *North Coast Director*

Darren has a Masters Degree in Fisheries Biology from Humboldt State University and joined CalTrout in 2011. Before joining the organization, Mierau worked on numerous North Coast projects as a local watershed restoration scientist with McBain and Trush, Inc. Darren

is currently directing, among other projects, the Eel River Recovery Keystone Initiative, the organization's largest endeavor to date. He is a founding Board Member and current President of the Coastal Ecosystems Institute of Northern California, 2011.

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Klamath Agreements *continued from page 12*

Years of Congressional Inaction (2010 to 2015)

The Agreements stipulated that Congress must pass a bill by December 31, 2015 authorizing the agreements. Congressional involvement is required to address a variety of issues such as funding for the KBRA restoration projects (with a price tag of \$466 million), changes to how the Bureau of Reclamation operates the Klamath irrigation project, a transfer of land to Indian tribes, and federal assumption of liability if any property damage occurs as a result of removing the dams.

Finally, in January of 2015, Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) packaged the three Klamath agreements into one bill called *The Klamath Water Recovery and Economic Restoration Act (S. 133)*. With the Senate bill in motion, all eyes turned to Congressman Walden (R-OR) and Congressman LaMalfa (R-CA) whose districts encompass the dams and the majority of the agricultural interests in the basin, looking for a companion bill to be introduced in the House of Representatives.

The Causes of the Stalemate

One of the primary hurdles in the Republican led house was that certain Republican lawmakers, several of whom sit on key committees that oversee the Klamath Basin legislation, are ideologically opposed to dam removal and are fearful of the precedent it would set. The dictum "dam removal anywhere leads to dam removal everywhere" resonates with them. Republicans representing the Klamath Basin are heavily influenced by a vocal subset of their constituents who are fiercely opposed to dam removal and any change to their traditional way of life. Resistance is particularly vehement in Siskiyou County, home of "The State of Jefferson," where any attempt by the federal or state government to meddle in local affairs is viewed with suspicion.

Lost in the rhetoric are the basic facts of the four dams: they are privately owned and operated by a corporation that wants to remove them, in contrast to the federally-owned dams on the Snake and Columbia Rivers; they provide no water for irrigation and only negligible hydroelectric power; and, the cost of their removal would not be borne by taxpayers. Also lost in the rhetoric was the degree to which these are ground-up, local solutions - hardly an example of the federal government imposing its will on a community.

If the agreements expire, PacifiCorp will be forced to resume the FERC relicensing process and might end up building fish ladders or removing the dams on its own, in either case passing on the higher costs to its ratepayers. Meanwhile, the Indian tribes will be able to exercise their senior "time immemorial" water rights whenever they deem it

necessary to protect salmon runs. Congressman from California who represents the Klamath Basin, acknowledged at a recent hearing that "We know the tribes can make a case for dam removal (for farmers)."

Without the agreements, the Klamath Basin would be back to status quo ante: communities divided, no consensus, a return to lawsuits and battles to the courts. Any change inevitably reduces the amount of water available for agriculture.

Curtis Knight, CalTrout Executive Director, said "What's most disappointing is that the dam removal is not about but on political gamesmanship. Local governments are being asked to roll up their sleeves and bring it back to Washington. The local governments have done the game--did their part, but unfortunately the federal government has not."

The Last-Ditch Effort

There remained a glimmer of hope for the House bill by December. Representative Greg Walden, who is opposed to dam removal, released a draft bill that would take dam removal out of the House bill and make the bill more palatable to his Republican constituents. The bill would preserve the broader restoration goals and the dam removal process over to FERC.

However, Walden's approach quickly fell through. In the Senate, the Obama Administration's support for the House bill disrupted the balance negotiated over many years between the two chambers.

"Unfortunately, Congressman Walden's approach to the dam removal that's vital to the health of the whole agreement for my constituents is a poison pill in the form of massive cost increases. These were never part of the settlement," said Congressman Jared Huffman said.

And in the end, Congressman Walden's approach was reconciled with the Senate bill. With the House bill passing on December 31, and the KHSRA to expire in early 2016, the question is whether we can salvage the delicate balance that was negotiated in the agreements. The hard-line approach would have not only removed the dams but also the conditions throughout the watershed. The result would be full. A failure to act by several key

As Doug LaMalfa, a Republican whose district includes some of the town hall meeting in September, all on all water and shut everything

Klamath Basin could devolve to the aided by conflict and mistrust, with that will only intensify as climate amount of water in the drainage.

Director, offered this assessment. the Agreements died not on merit local parties were told by the Bush leaves and work out the issues and local communities--those with skin tunately Congress did not deliver."

hope as the calendar turned to Walden (R-Oregon), who is opposed ill in the House in early December of the equation and thereby make blican peers. Walden's bill would goals of the KBRA and turn the dam

ckly drew harsh criticism from the n and settlement parties because rgained for benefits and careful ars.

den's draft conspicuously leaves river restoration—the centerpiece nstituents in California—and adds ve giveaways of public lands that ement," California 2nd District in a statement.

Walden's poison pill bill never was th the KBRA expiring on December 2016, it's hard to see how Congress hat was reached through the three won comprehensive solution that dams but also improved riparian hed is unlikely to be preserved in y Congressman has sent a severe

set back to the Klamath Basin.

The documentary *A River Between Us*, by Jason Atkinson, poses this timely and relevant question at the conclusion of the film: "Are we big enough to finish the largest restoration project in American history?" The answer is no. At least for now.



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