OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item J

Board Update

Klamath River Post-Dam Removal Habitat Restoration

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD
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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting
Staff report – Agenda Item J. Klamath River Post-Dam Removal Habitat Restoration Final Update

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #6: Take bold and innovative action toward funding projects that advance climate resilience.

I. Introduction

This report provides the board with a final update about the Klamath River post-dam removal habitat restoration investment made by the board in October 2022. At the April 2026 meeting, OWEB board and staff will be joined by representatives from the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) and RES, KRRC's restoration contractor, for a presentation about status of the restoration work, next steps, and lessons learned.

II. Background

PacifiCorp previously owned four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River, three in California and one in Oregon (J.C. Boyle dam). PacifiCorp and the Oregon Public Utilities Commission determined that it is in the best interest of the company and its customers to stop operating the dams rather than spending substantial amounts of money on improvements needed to continue generating power. KRRC is a private, independent nonprofit organization formed by signatories of the amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA). Signatories of the amended KHSA – including the States of Oregon and California, local governments, Tribal nations, PacifiCorp, irrigators, and several conservation and fishing groups – appointed KRRC to take ownership and oversee the removal of the four Klamath River dams. Initial funding from a subset of these entities was committed in the amount of $450 million for removal and watershed restoration.

The Reservoir Area Management Plan (RAMP) submitted by KRRC to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission described measures for restoration, monitoring, and adaptive management of the former reservoir areas exposed following dam removal, upland sites, and high-priority tributaries, including actions specifically planned for the former reservoir area upstream of J.C. Boyle dam in Oregon. The federal review process resulted in the need for the states and PacifiCorp to provide up to $45 million in additional financial support for the project, divided equally among the three entities, to address contingencies.

On October 26, 2022, the OWEB Board committed $15 million over a period of 3-5 years for Klamath River post-dam removal watershed restoration costs incurred by KRRC. The

agency utilized $3,533,000 in Measure 76 Lottery funds and $11,467,000 in competitively awarded Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Funds to support this investment.

III. Status Update

On August 1, 2025, OWEB completed the final payment to KRRC for work under the scope of the grant. Since the last written report to the board in July of 2025, KRRC and RES have completed the following work.

- In mid-2025, restoration activities at J.C. Boyle transitioned to focus on monitoring and adaptive management to ensure ongoing restoration success. As a reminder, RES has ongoing responsibility for restoration of the reservoir areas through the license surrender term.
- Following soil chemistry testing, RES found that pH levels in the J.C. Boyle reservoir footprint reduced revegetation regrowth. In fall 2025, RES began to spread limestone and added mycorrhizal fungi to the footprint to balance the soil chemistry and promote vegetation growth on 235.4 acres. They also seeded these acres.
- RES then began additional planting of trees and shrubs in the former reservoir area in January 2026. Species planted include White fir, Incense cedar, Grey rabbitbrush, Tall Oregon-grape, Lodgepole pine, Ponderosa pine, and Douglas fir. In total, 26,215 stems have been planted this year.
- RES will continue to monitor the key restoration sites at J.C. Boyle (i.e., reservoir footprint, previous power canal and scour hole areas, and Spencer Creek connection area) to evaluate if additional seedings, plantings, invasive exotic vegetation treatments, or construction activities may be required. They also continue responsibilities to ensure fish passage, per the Tributary-Mainstem Connectivity Plan and RAMP, through aerial drone monitoring, ground/river-based monitoring, and monitoring of fish presence.
- RES will begin irrigation of upland revegetation sites this summer, pending spring monitoring results and soil moisture conditions. Revegetation of these sites above the floodplain will support erosion control and general restoration.
- The connection from Spencer Creek to the mainstem Klamath River was found to be in good shape following reservoir drawdown. Rather than doing extensive restoration construction work at the tributary connection, RES determined that enhancing habitat in Spencer Creek would be most beneficial to support fish passage and habitat. They placed 66 large woody structures in Spencer Creek in 2024, and salmon began to use the habitat immediately following drawdown. KRRC is pleased to report that salmon used this habitat again in 2025.

IV. Recommendation

This is an information item only. Representatives from KRRC and RES will be available to answer questions at the board meeting.