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Contact Information:

Paul Simmons
(541)883-6100

KLAMATH WATER USERS ASSOCIATION REACTS TO FEDERAL WATER UPDATE

Klamath Water Users Association had mixed reactions to Friday's public meeting at Klamath County Fairgrounds on the status of Endangered Species Act consultations and expected 2019 water supply for the Klamath Project. "We greatly appreciate the hard work of the three involved agencies to get this done. That's essential to getting out from under the Court injunction that made 2018 so terrible", said Luther Horsley. "At the same time, the relative speed of the process made it difficult or impossible to engage with the agencies and others in the basin on some critical issues."

The public meeting was hosted by the Bureau of Reclamation and attended by Reclamation's Regional Director, Ernest Conant, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director Paul Souza, and Regional Administrator Barry Thom of the National Marine Fisheries Service. They and their staffs gave an overview of the nearly finished Endangered Species Act consultation intended to guide Klamath Project operations for the next five years as well as the projected water supply for 2019 under that process. KWUA met with these senior federal officials on Friday morning before the public meeting. Mr. Souza is the leader that was designated under an October 2018 memorandum from President Trump to coordinate and streamline the work of the agencies.

KWUA board member and Klamath Irrigation District Manager, Gene Souza said that "there are positive and negative things about what we heard. We assume 2019 should work out, although there shouldn't be any doubt about that in such a wet year. Over the next four years we will need wet conditions to not to have major negative impacts to the Klamath Basin, its people and economy." The anticipated water supply for the west side of the Klamath Project from the Klamath River system (referred to as Project Supply) is 325,000 acre-feet. This does not include any water that might be available to the west side from the Lost River system or any recirculated water in the Klamath Straits Drain.

"I'm glad we seem to be getting past the injunction that just doesn't work under the 2013 biological opinion", said Tulelake Irrigation District Manager Brad Kirby. "But I hope we'll have a chance to get into some details with the agencies about the future. I also believe we have re-established some good relationships in the basin and I want those to hold up."

KWUA is a non-profit private corporation that has represented Klamath Reclamation Project farmers and ranchers in its current form since 1953. The Association's membership includes rural and suburban irrigation districts, other public and private entities and individuals who operate on both sides of the California-Oregon border. These entities and individuals typically hold water delivery contracts with the United States Bureau of Reclamation. The Klamath Project is home to over 1200 family farms and ranches and encompasses over 170,000 acres.

KWUA is governed by an 11-member board of directors who are appointed from Klamath Project member districts.

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