

State of California, County of Siskiyou

Board of Supervisors Minutes, April 25, 2023

The Honorable Board of Supervisors of Siskiyou County, California, met in special session this 25th day of April 2023; there being present Supervisors Brandon Criss, Michael N. Kobseff, Nancy Ogren, Ray A. Haupt and Ed Valenzuela, County Administrator Angela Davis, County Counsel Edward J. Kiernan, and County Clerk and ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Laura Bynum by Deputy County Clerk Wendy Winningham.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Valenzuela. Supervisor Ogren led in the salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Presentations from the Public

Yreka resident Grace Bennett appeared before the Board, sharing concerning regarding the potential negative impacts associated with removing dams on the Klamath River, the anticipated closures of recreational sites along Irongate and Copco lakes, and the impacts associated with heavy trucks using the roads to the dams.

Copco Lake resident Francis Gill appeared before the Board and shared concerns regarding the request to remove privately-owned docks around Copco Lake, the anticipated closures of recreational sites along Copco Lake and the difficulties associated with navigating the Klamath Mitigation Fund process for property owners.

Local resident Jeanne Diaz appeared before the Board, voiced concerns regarding the negative impacts associated with heavy trucks on the roads along Copco Lake.

Klamath River Country Estates (KRCE) Owners Association representative Susan Wallace appeared before the Board and voiced concerns regarding the difficulties associated with the Klamath Mitigation Fund as related to KRCE buildings and the need for a current flood plain map that can be accessed by those living in the Irongate, Copco and KRCE areas and along the Klamath River.

Copco resident Linda Ebert appeared before the Board presented and summarized a two-page letter, voicing concerns regarding the inability to access a current flood plain map, the difficulties in navigating the Klamath Mitigation Fund.

Siskiyou Water Users Association President Richard Marshall appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the Klamath Mitigation Fund process and the requests for removal of privately-owned docks and closures of recreational areas. Mr. Marshall presented a four-page letter to the Board.

KRCE Director Ann Noel appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the Klamath Mitigation Fund process and a recent ZOOM meeting held by the Fund.

Copco Lake resident Rick Dowdy appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the dam removal process and presented a copy of a letter received from the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board noticing possible acquisition of property in/around his property.

Klamath River resident James Leach appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the lack of notification of recent flow releases from behind the dams down the Klamath River and the Klamath Mitigation Fund process.

County Administration - Presentation of an update on the Lower Klamath Project, including correspondence with the Klamath River Renewal Corporation and contractors from CKM Environmental. Presentation and discussion only.

Deputy County Administrator Elizabeth Nielsen appeared before the Board, providing a brief update regarding the Lower Klamath Project, advising that additional information would be provided by the County's consultant.

Ms. Nielsen introduced Chelsea Murphy who was attending the meeting via teleconference phone.

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County Administration – (continued)

Participation in this item by various staff and members of the public was provided via teleconference phone.

CKM Environmental representative Chelsea Murphy provided a brief overview of a previous visit to the area to consult with County staff and to meet Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) and their contractors. Ms. Murphy summarized various activities identified in the April 25, 2023 Staff Report, including progress of the project, associated construction efforts, work related to traffic and roads/bridges, speed limit signs and the efforts being made to update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and KRRC with regard to roles, timing, etc. Ms. Murphy additionally advised that the County's Public Works Department is working to review transportation permits related to bridges and that there were public notices provided by the KRRC regarding the future closure of recreational sites and removal of docks.

Ms. Murphy further provided an overview of ongoing efforts by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to relocate the fish hatchery from Iron Gate Hatchery to Fall Creek and the efforts being made to assist in communication regarding the Klamath Mitigation Fund.

Discussion followed between members of the Board and Ms. Murphy regarding the open/closure status of roads in the project area, anticipated plans related to recreational facilities owned by Pacificorp, concerns regarding the anticipated lengthy timeframe for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to create updated flood plain maps for the Klamath, concerns regarding the difficulties associated with navigating the Klamath Mitigation Fund (KMF) process, emergency response communications/collaborations, the potential financial impacts associated with removal of private docks around the lake, current flood plain maps/information located within the Project's environmental documents and the potential negative impacts to wildfire victims without a current and updated flood plain map for the Klamath River.

Public Requests - California Department of Fish and Wildlife - Presentation of an update re the Fall Creek Fish Hatchery from California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Chuck Bonham. Presentation and discussion only.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Chuck Bonham participated via teleconference phone, providing an overview of the anticipated processes for removal of the Iron Gate fish hatchery (as the hatchery's water supply would be lost upon dam removal) and to construct a hatchery at the Fall Creek site, where a hatchery was originally constructed in 1919 and operated until 1948. Mr. Bonham advised that Pacificorp was responsible for the Fall Creek hatchery project and would continue to fund the hatchery for eight years post dam removal. Mr. Bonham summarized anticipated hatchery construction phases and associated timelines.

Mr. Bonham additionally addressed the Klamath Mitigation Fund and flood plain issues that were raised during the meeting's public comments period, provided an overview of potential disposition of Pacificorp owned Parcel B properties that were not within the dam removal project boundaries and summarized plans to relocate sucker fish in the Iron Gate and Copco reservoirs. Mr. Bonham addressed questions asked at a previous board meeting regarding the status of Grayback Road and summarized various grants and funding opportunities related to water efficiency, restoration and conservation efforts in the County.

Discussion followed between members of the Board and Mr. Bonham regarding the need for additional information regarding the sucker fish relocation, anticipated options and processes for releasing fish into the Klamath with the potential impacts of sediment in the river after dam removal, CDFW's anticipated plans/strategy for reintroduction of salmon above Iron Gate dam, concerns regarding the potential changes to agricultural operations following dam removal, possible efforts to develop Grayback Road for resident ingress/egress support and the need for additional information regarding the funding that has or will be coming to Siskiyou County to benefit water, restoration and conservation efforts.

Public Requests - Klamath River Renewal Corporation - Presentation of an update on the Lower Klamath Decommissioning Project, including time lines and a schedule of event and activities. Presentation on and discussion only.

Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) Chief Executive Officer Mark Bransom appeared before the Board, introducing McMillen Corporation (construction) representative Mort McMillen and Camas, LLC (regulatory) representative Diane Barr.

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Public Requests - Klamath River Renewal Corporation – (continued)

Mr. Bransom presented a powerpoint presentation regarding the Lower Klamath Project, including an overview of the project and associated regulatory process. Mr. Bransom provided an overview of the various agencies and contractors associated with the project and their respective roles and key project elements, including anticipated timelines associated with reservoir drawdown, Pacificorp's continued power generation operation and removal of the JC Boyle, Copco No. 1 and Iron Gate dams. Mr. Bransom advised that additional traffic in the project area warranted reduced speed limits and early closure of Pacificorp owned recreational sites along the reservoirs and summarized the public safety outreach/notification efforts made. Mr. Bransom further advised of an upcoming meeting public information meeting scheduled in May, 2023.

Mr. McMillen continued the powerpoint, including an overview of the locations of the dams being removed, the dam removal, hatchery construction, restoration and monitoring timeline and the controlled reservoir drawdown timeline. In addition, Mr. McMillen summarized the anticipated process to utilize Pacificorp's emergency action plan and the turnover to the KRRC's emergency action plan in place after January, 2024.

Brief discussion followed between Supervisor Criss and Mr. McMillen regarding the anticipated emergency plan for access to the area during the various project activities.

Ms. Barr continued the powerpoint, including an overview of the various regulatory agencies, their associated regulatory authority and roles during the dam removal project. Ms. Barr further summarized the anticipated process associated with compliance and project monitoring.

Continuing the powerpoint, Mr. McMillen provided an overview of the anticipated public safety and protection activities, including an overview of the required Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) dam and public safety program, anticipated coordination efforts to test emergency action plans, controlled Bureau of Reclamation flow releases down the river, public and County notification processes with regard to reservoir drawdown actions, engineering oversight and monitoring, the anticipated sediment release amounts and processes and the recreational site closure locations along both reservoirs.

Discussion followed between members of the Board, Mr. Bransom and Mr. McMillen regarding efforts being made to address heavy trucks on the roadways, the need for communication/coordination with local private dock owners regarding the dock removal/disposal process, the process planned for relocation of City of Yreka's water supply pipelines, the possible options, including the use of culverts, to assist salmon returning to the area, the operations planned for the Iron Gate hatchery head gate, the KRRC's financial disclosure process/dissemination and concerns regarding the lack of transparency and communication with the Klamath Mitigation Fund (KMF) representatives.

Mr. Bransom advised that he would communicate the County's concerns to the KMF.

Further discussion followed, including Ms. Barr regarding the KMF funding source, the roles and financial responsibilities of the states of California and Oregon as the project's co-licensees, the tribal monitors associated with the project during deconstruction activities, concerns regarding potential negative impacts associated with flow releases down the Klamath, the use of Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES) as the restoration contractor for eight years post dam removal, the need for additional information regarding the anticipated restoration management plans, the Reservoir Area Management Plan (RAMP) list of projects related to the Lower Klamath Project, the need for efforts to secure an MOU with the County's Air Pollution Control District regarding air quality related to the project, the coordination efforts associated with flow management activities from the Upper Klamath, the anticipated processes to dismantle/remove/recycle large power generation equipment, plans to upgrade local bridges and roads to be used during deconstruction activities, the availability of KRRC staff locally and KRRC's plans to develop a post-removal recreation plan for the area.

Supervisor Kobseff voiced concerns regarding the lengthy timeframe associated with FEMA developing/modeling updated flood plain maps along the Klamath.

Supervisor Haupt voiced concerns regarding the anticipated coordination efforts related to wildfire access in the area and possible lack of access to attack a wildfire.

Discussion followed regarding coordination and collaboration efforts to develop a fire management plan, firefighting equipment provided to local fire responders and efforts to develop monitoring for early warning and detection of wildfires.

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Public Requests - Klamath River Renewal Corporation – (continued)

Deputy County Clerk Wendy Winningham advised that a public notice regarding the early closure of recreation sites and a property owner letter regarding the need to remove docks along Copco Reservoir would be included with the agenda item.

Supervisor Kobseff requested assistance in requesting that KMF representatives to attend a future Board special Klamath meeting and spoke in support of financial disclosure documents being made available on the County’s website and development of a letter to FERC regarding the flood plain mapping issue for future consideration by the Board.

Supervisor Haupt requested an update from Community Development Department regarding the housing situation following local wildfires down river.

Adjournment - There being no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, the meeting was adjourned.

Attest:
Laura Bynum, County Clerk

Ed Valenzuela, Chair

By: _____
Deputy

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