

State of California, County of Siskiyou

Board of Supervisors Minutes, May 23, 2023

The Honorable Board of Supervisors of Siskiyou County, California, met in special session this 23rd day of May 2023; there being present Supervisors Brandon Criss, Michael N. Kobseff, Nancy Ogren, Ray A. Haupt and Ed Valenzuela, County Administrator Angela Davis, Deputy County Counsel William Carroll, and County Clerk and ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Laura Bynum by Deputy County Clerk Wendy Winningham. Supervisor Haupt was absent.

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

Presentations from the Public

Audience member Albert Kutzkey appeared before the Board and voiced concerns regarding the potential negative impacts that dam removal will have on local fishing guides. Mr. Kutzkey advised that river/fishing guides were not included in the compensation notification process associated with the dam removal project.

Siskiyou County Water Users Association President Rich Marshall appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the potential negative impacts that dam removal will have on local fishing guides and compensation process associated with the Klamath Mitigation Fund.

Copco Lake resident Linda Ebert appeared before the Board and presented and summarized a one-page letter of concerns regarding the Klamath Mitigation Fund process. Ms. Ebert additionally shared concerns regarding the potential negative impacts to the Copco Lake shoreline associated with the silt/debris that will be released upon removal of the Klamath Dams.

Audience member Becky Davis appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the impacts associated with dam removal on her father's home along Copco Lake and the need for just compensation for those Copco residents that will lose the lake upon dam removal.

Klamath River Country Estates (KRCE) Board member Ann Noel appeared before the Board, providing an update regarding the Klamath River Renewal Corporation's (KRRC's) efforts to work with the KRCE for mitigation of potential dam removal impacts.

Yreka resident Grace Bennett appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the need for additional fish counting stations within County waterways in order to provide accurate statistics related to those salmon leaving and returning to the Klamath River watershed.

Montague resident Debbie Bacigalupi appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the potential for full basin management and control of local property owners' water/rights.

Local fishing guide Dennis Moore appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the potential harmful impacts to spawning fish associated with silt/sediment that will be released upon removal of the Klamath Dams.

County Administration - Discussion, direction and possible action re update on the Klamath Dams Project, the special Klamath Dams Board meetings, and request to draft a letter to the Klamath River Renewal Corporation, the State of California, and the Klamath Mitigation Fund regarding compensation deadlines as detailed in the Klamath Mitigation Fund Informational Document. Staff directed to draft a letter to the Klamath Mitigation Fund regarding extension of certain deadlines.

Deputy County Administrator Elizabeth Nielsen appeared before the Board, advising that the County's contractor Chelsea Murphy was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Nielsen provided an update from the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) regarding their anticipated public outreach to Copco Lake residents with regard to the options available for removal of private docks and an update regarding the ongoing and future efforts by the County's Public Works Department and KRRC's contractors to maintain certain roads in the Copco Lake area.

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County Administration – (continued)

Ms. Nielsen provided an overview of a recent heavy equipment accident in the Copco area, advising that County staff continues to work with KRRC's contractors to ensure that possible emergency situations around the dam removal project are dealt with timely for the public's safety. Ms. Nielsen further advised of an upcoming meeting, which would include the County's Office of Emergency Services, to discuss the project's emergency action plans and advised that KRRC's contractors would provide signage in an effort to prevent heavy equipment traffic outside of the project area. Ms. Nielsen additionally advised that the upcoming special Board meetings scheduled for June, July and August would be paused, with future special meetings to be brought back as needed as dam removal projects developments dictate.

Ms. Nielsen requested that the Board consider directing staff to draft a letter to the Klamath Mitigation Fund, requesting an extension of various property owners' compensation requests deadlines. Ms. Nielsen advised of plans to develop a monthly staff report that would be available on the County's Klamath Dam webpage link as a means to keep the public informed of the dam removal project. Ms. Nielsen further advised that KRRC financial disclosures had been obtained and would be placed on the County's Klamath Dam webpage link as well.

Discussion followed between members of the Board and Ms. Nielsen regarding the County's request for the Klamath Mitigation Fund representatives to attend the special Board meetings and a recent report to the Siskiyou County Fish and Game Commission related to the release of juvenile salmon from the Fall Creek Hatchery (currently under construction), concerns regarding the potential impacts associated with a new flood plain map (planned for development after the dams are removed).

Supervisor Kobseff advised of the need for a Memorandum of Understanding between the County and various state agencies related to the County's liability for the potential impact of water/habitat conditions after sediment release, on Coho salmon runs in the Scott and Shasta watersheds.

In response to Supervisor Kobseff regarding the Community Development Department's permitting process, Planning Director Hailey Lang advised that the Department will continue to work with those wishing to build down the Klamath River and that no permits have been denied based on lack of a new flood plain map for the area.

Further discussion followed, including Ms. Lang regarding the Department's use of the current flood plain maps, the possible unknown impacts should a building conflict with a new flood plain map (once released) and the Department's efforts to reach out to FEMA and other agencies regarding the flood plain unknowns.

Supervisor Valenzuela suggested development of a future agenda item to further discuss the flood plain map timing and potential impacts to those wishing to build or re-build.

Discussion followed, including Deputy County Counsel William Carroll regarding the potential impact of silt/sediment from dam removal on juvenile and spawning salmon, the need to request Calfire representatives attend the upcoming project emergency action plans meeting, Ms. Nielsen's request to draft a letter to the Klamath Mitigation Fund and the process for tracking County staff time to work on the Klamath Dam removal project.

In response to Mr. Carroll, Ms. Nielsen requested an extension of certain Klamath Mitigation Fund deadlines in a letter to the Fund, which would allow qualified members of the public to gather information to support their compensation claims.

It was moved by Supervisor Kobseff, seconded by Supervisor Ogren and carried, following a roll call vote with Supervisors Kobseff, Criss, Ogren and Valenzuela voting YES and Supervisor Haupt ABSENT to direct staff to draft a letter to the Klamath Mitigation Fund requesting extension of certain compensation claim deadlines with the Chair authorized to sign.

Additional discussion followed regarding recent public/community outreach efforts by the Klamath Mitigation Fund and/or KRRC, the need for information regarding FERC's participation and/or monitoring of the dam removal project, the need for the status of permits required prior to removal of the Copco 2 dam and the need for information regarding the Air Pollution Control District's air quality monitoring of the project.

County Administration - Presentation of a general update re the Lower Klamath Decommissioning Project from California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Chuck Bonham. Presentation and discussion only.

Deputy County Administrator Elizabeth Nielsen appeared before the Board, advising that California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Chuck Bonham was unable to attend the meeting.

California Fish and Wildlife Klamath Watershed Environmental Program Manager Michael Harris appeared before the Board, advising that he is the point of contact with regard to Klamath Dam removal (i.e. local fishing guides seeking information). Mr. Harris additionally advised that the Department would be seeking public input with regard to possible regulations related to fishing on the Klamath post-dam removal and that he would relay the Board's suggestion for additional counting stations to the Department's management. Mr. Harris further advised of a storyboard map that was available on the State of California's website for information on current projects throughout the State.

Discussion followed between members of the Board and Mr. Harris regarding the anticipated process to study returning spawners to the watershed, the process for sucker translocation, an update on the Fall Creek Hatchery construction project, the potential impacts associated with ocean conditions on salmon populations, the anticipated timing and survival rate for fingerling fish leaving the hatchery when sediment will be in the river, possible participation of hatchery staff at a future Board meeting, the benefits associated with a target range for number of fish returning to the watershed and the need for State assistance in addressing the negative impacts associated with the de-watering of the Tulelake basin.

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

