



KLAMATH TRIBES NEWS

KLAMATH - MODOC - YAHOSKIN

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Excavation work is ongoing at the Agency-Barnes site where several breaks in the levy are allowing water to flow from Agency Lake into Upper Klamath Lake, and creating new marshlands. The project is expected to be completed in December 2025. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)

Levy breaks at Agency Lake will create 14,000 acres of marshlands, providing new habitat for fish and birds

By Christopher German
Klamath Tribes News

The breaking of a levy between Agency Lake and Upper Klamath Lake will create 14,000 acres of marshland. In mid-December, a break in the levy allowed water to flow freely from Agency Lake and Wood River Marsh into Upper Klamath Lake, providing much-needed habitat for fish and birds. It also offers nutrient sequestering of phosphorous and the inflow of much-needed

tannins that will help combat the unchecked growth of algae in the waterways of Upper Klamath Lake.

Adam Johnson, Assistant Regional Director of Science Applications for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 8 (California, Nevada, Klamath Basin), said that with over 75 percent of the marshes around the lake historically missing, the addition of 14,000 acres is a significant contribution to expanding the marshlands.

He said the properties in question were diked off for agricultural pur-

poses around the start of the 20th century. "Reconnection means they will then be fully connected to the lake," he said. "It will fluctuate with Lake elevation. It will change the plant communities. It will change the wetland status. There'll be open water areas that are open water year-round. There will be successful plant communities and different wetland types as you move

See page 16,
Agency Lake Levy Break

Lampreys are much overlooked but crucial species to the health of the Upper Klamath Lake ecosystem

By Ken Smith
Klamath Tribes News

Following the removal of four dams on the Klamath River, salmon have been getting the most attention as they migrate upstream to newly available habitats for the first time in over a century. Another fish species is not getting as much focus, but it is still an essential part of the Klamath Basin's ecosystem – the Pacific lamprey.

Klamath Tribes Ambodat Anadromous Fish Specialist Jordan Ortega is one fish biologist monitoring Pacific lamprey, which, like salmon, are anadromous. They spend their early life stages of development in freshwater as filter feeders, migrate to the ocean to feed as vertebrate parasites, and then return to spawn in tributaries along the Klamath River.

Ortega said that the lamprey is a primitive vertebrate during an interview with Klamath Tribes News. They are jawless and branched off early in the family tree of vertebrates and fishes. Some adult-feeding lamprey are scavengers, others predators, and some parasitic, sucking blood and body

See page 13,
Lampreys

Outdated Keno and Link River dams are impeding fish migrations

By Christopher German
Klamath Tribes News

If you were hoping to see salmon in the Upper Klamath Basin, you are going to be disappointed, as the Keno Dam has a few problems. In fact, so does the Link River Dam. Not only is the Keno Dam more complex than the Link River Dam, it didn't come with any instructions when Pacific Power handed the keys over last summer. The fish ladders are also inadequate to meet migrating fish needs, and moreover, it will cost taxpayers a boatload of capital to fix.

It all started on Halloween with comments from Bob Pagliuco of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), who mentioned in a Zoom press conference that the orifices in the fish ladder

of the Keno Dam are too small to accommodate the larger-sized salmon currently making their way up the Klamath River. But that is just the start of the dam's problems.

Oregon Department for Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) fish biologist for the Klamath Basin, Ben Ramirez, said the dam was never designed for salmon and that holes in the ladder are for the c'waam and koptu suckers that lack the ability to leap over obstacles the way salmon and trout do. In addition to limiting the size of fish that can use the ladders, they also make flows out of the fish ladder insufficient to attract migrating fishes and, in fact, are on the wrong side of the river entirely. To date, no migrating salmon have been detected above the Keno Dam.

As to why this was not noticed or resolved prior to the removal of

the four dams on the Klamath River, Pagliuco pointed to a July 2023 memo from ODFW that stated, "the ladder will not meet current fish passage criteria, and recommends a new fish ladder be constructed to meet the needs of migratory fish."

According to the memo, the small fish holes are just the start of the problems. In April of 2023, ODFW officials studied the fish ladder and discovered the orifices were too small to fit larger-sized fish like adult salmon and lacked the adequate flow to attract the migrating salmon. However, the report stated that increasing flows through the dam's fish ladder could be ideal for salmon but detrimental to the migrating c'waam and koptu.

See page 14,
Outdated Dams

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A New Year offers new housing assistance for Klamath Tribal elders at the Melita's property

By Christopher German
Klamath Tribes News

This is the time of year we think of those who are less fortunate who may not have warm homes to live in, but thanks to a newly passed resolution by the Tribal Council, the managers at the old Melita's property can now begin sifting through applications and giving some of the neediest tribal members a place to call home.

At the last Tribal Council meeting of the year, Bull Parazoo, a manager at the Tribal Temporary Senior Transition Housing located at the Old Melita's property, stood before the Council, awaiting approval of a long-awaited set of rules to govern the new housing community.

The Council gave its final approval, and with approval in hand, Parazoo can now begin accepting residents into the program, designed to help elder tribe members without homes find stability and safety.

Sorting through the application is hard work, but not quite as hard as it was to convert an out-of-business motel into a senior housing facility. Parazoo recounted stories of the rebuild and the hard work it took to get the property to where it is today. "Initially we had fridges that were ordered and they were too big for the actual areas to put them in, so they wouldn't fit," he said. "So, luckily, I went out there and measured before they actually got to the appliance store. Got to cancel that order and reorder, but it's just the small fridges, for some reason are on back order. No idea why," He explained, "So we do have fridges, microwaves, beds, and then after everything is all said and done, we will be installing TVs, and we'll have internet access."

Parazoo managed many of the details in rebuilding the



As of Jan. 2, 15 units are move-in ready at Melita's senior transition housing located off Highway 97 in Chiloquin. (Christopher German/Klamath Tribes News)

property and now will take on the role of manager of the 15 units that will be ready to move into as of Jan. 2, 2025. He said that about a third of the units are filled and will all have residents soon enough, but the need is so much more. "It's actually an unknown number of how many safely housed and unhoused tribal elders we have in the county or within the state," he said. "We have applications going out, and it's just a matter of getting them back and then going through the process of vetting the tenants, and then as soon as we get the clarification, we can get them in there. The units will be fully housed. So, it's pretty exciting."

Parazoo said that many of the applications he is receiving are unqualified. Residents of the new housing unit must be homeless without any permanent housing or assistance. Other requirements involve income levels and other factors, but many of the individuals he sees are destitute.

The program includes a navigator to help those who have not applied for social security or veteran benefits obtain the



The old Melita's Motel has been given a new life as tribal temporary senior transition housing. (Christopher German/Klamath Tribes News)

assistance they need. Each resident will be given a 30 to 60-day period to start rent-free to see what issues they may face. "The Navigator is going to be able to work through all those issues exactly, and we have all the people in place to really adequately address all the situations," said Parazoo. "Some tenants might not even have IDs, you know? Yeah, we've seen that before. Actually, when we just first started in housing, there was a couple people that came to us for help, and they didn't have IDs, social security cards, nothing, birth certificates. So, working with the navigator, then we'll

get back on track, getting all their proper documentation and seamless services that they are eligible for. You know some elders or veterans that never apply for VA benefits, things of that nature, and see where we can see where their standing is and get them on their feet."

But financial woes aren't the worst problems the homeless may face living on the street. Many of the homeless elders have long-term medical needs that have not been addressed in a very long time. "You know, we've got to keep in mind that some of these people have been on the streets, and we don't know if they might have pre-ex-

isting medical conditions, too," Parazoo said. He envisions working with healthcare to address the various illnesses many residents have acquired while living on the streets.

Parazoo said many of the referrals he is receiving come from family members. "I've been getting a lot of family members coming forward," he said. "So somebody's father or mother or cousin. Just through word of mouth."

If you have a family member or friend in need of a home, Bull Parazoo can be reached at 541-891-6882 or call the housing office at 541-783-2219, extension 136.



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By Phone: (541) 783-2219 / By Email: News@klamathtribes.com / By Mail: P.O. Box 436 Chiloquin, OR 97624

Editor: Ken Smith / Reporter: Christopher German / Production: Mary Hyde

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KLAMATH • TRIBES • LANGUAGE • PROGRAM

January
Snow Month—(nebabi meha)

"2025"

February
Sun Return Month— (taba kodyun meha)

Happy New Year - (Pisa sunami pide tommo)


POW-WOW!
ROUND DANCE
NEMENEGAKWI
(NUH'MUH'NUH'GAH'KNEE)


Snow - nebabi (nuh'bah'bee)


Big Coats—paba kuude -(pah'bah koo'duh)

VETERANS DAY
TUUKWASSE TABINO/ TOO'KWA'SUH TAH'BEE'NOH

Slip—kwatabi—(kwa'tah'bee)


STAR
PAATUZUBA?A
(PAH'TOO'ZOO'BAH?A)


WARRIOR
PAPABI?I/PAH'BAH'BEE?E


SNOWMAN
NEBABI NANA
(NUH'BAH'BEE NANA)

Cold Wind—uzeze hikwa—(oo'zuh'zuh hee'kwa)

ICE --TUZE.CO--(TOO'ZUH'GAH)


WARHORSE
NA?AKWIBA PUKU
(PAH'AH'KWE'BA POO'KOO)



Holiday Words

Merry Christmas

sidyay'ka q'cool waytas
/seed/yiy'kah/ /k'tchool/ /why/tah/sh
Klamath/Modoc
Happy Star Day

Happy New Year

sidyay'ka tey'ni ?iLool
[seed/yah/eekah/ / tay'/nee uh/ee/hlool]
?ewksiknii-Klamath and Modoc

Seasonal Words

Winter

loldam
/lool/tahm/

blanket snow

c'oms?am skoda
tch/uh/m/sh/uh/ahm/ /sh/koot/ah

It's snowing

kena gee
/cän/äh /c/ää/

Seasonal Sentences

I am very cold

moo ?an gattk'a
/muu/ ah/n /gaht/tkuh/ah

it's snowing

kena gee
/cän/äh /c/ää/

it's very cold

q'a ?a Gatkaks gee
/kuh/ah /ah/ /gah/t/tahk/sh/ c/ää/

Contact Information: Klamath Tribes Language Department

Address: 116 E. Chocktoot St. (Old KT Court Building) corner of Chocktoot St and 2nd Ave.

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 436

City: Chiloquin St: OR Zip: 97624 email: ktlanguages@klamathtribes.com

website: www.klamathtribes.org/language language book
downloads available on the website. Download to smartphone.

New Klamath Tribes Courthouse Opens

The Klamath Tribes' new courthouse was completed in October and has begun holding civil court in person. Michele Lyon, who has been the Clerk of the Court since 2016, stands in the new courtroom. Klamath Tribes artist Alena Thomas was commissioned to do the artwork in the court building. *(Ken Smith/ Klamath Tribes News)*



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In Memoriam

Buzz (Orin Gordon) Kirk, 83



The final sunset for Buzz (Orin Gordon) Kirk was on November 9, 2024. Born in Klamath Falls, Ore., on September 27, 1941, he spent most of his 83 years living in or near Chiloquin.

Descended from Chief Kelloque, Buzz was the grandson of Seldon and Mary Kirk and son of Friedman and Vina (Smith) Kirk.

In addition to his Klamath and Modoc heritages, Buzz's mother was a member of the Assiniboine Sioux tribe from the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana.

Buzz shared his love of ranching, cattle, horses, and hunting with his children. His pride and love for them was evident whenever he spoke of them.

He is survived by his son and daughter in law Danny and Stephanie Kirk of Colorado Springs, Colo.; his daughter Kristin Kirk and his two grandsons - Christopher Kirk-Cople and Kevin Pantoja-Kirk of Redding, Calif.; niece Eleanor Worden of Seattle, Wash.; nephew Jared Worden of New Town, N.D. and nephew Don Gentry of Klamath Falls as well as his Midkiff cousins, Lepha, Donald (Pete) and Charlie. His brother, Gene Gentry, and his sister, Freida Kirk, predeceased him. He is also survived by his closest friend and cousin, Joe Kirk, who was a lifelong good friend. Buzz also leaves many cousins in the Klamath Falls area and beyond.

Buzz graduated from Chiloquin High School, Oregon Technical Institute (now OIT), and Southern Oregon Col-

lege (now SOU) with a BA in Business Administration.

Raising cattle and hunting were the core of Buzz's life, but he also excelled in golf and bowling, which remained important to him his entire life. Besides being an Oregon Ducks fan, he also watched many other sports on TV.

Buzz was actively involved with the Klamath Tribes and served on many committees throughout his life.

Buzz worked with Dr. Doug Deur, an anthropologist and writer - for over two decades.

Dr. Deur said this about Buzz: "He had a major role in so many things. Our research was to protect tribal interests on all kinds of culturally significant land and resource issues - and he made a major difference in helping protect all kinds of important things. Rights of access to fishing and berry picking places, protection of old village sites and prayer places. The Klamath Dam removal effort might not have gone so well for the tribe without our work. And loads more. That was just our collaboration, but he was also active in many aspects of tribal governmentand all those committees (Elders Committee, Culture and Heritage, etc.). And almost anything the tribe did relating to the history of termination and trying to "fix the damage" still today - he was a huge part of that work for the tribe."

All his family and friends will miss Buzz. Graveside services will be held in the spring at Wilson Cemetery in Chiloquin.

Cheryl Wahl, 80



It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of Cheryl Christiana Wahl, who left us on November 1, 2024, at the age of 80. She was surrounded by loved ones during her final days and departed peacefully.

Those who preceded her in joining the Lord: Mother and Father, Harry 'Smiley' Burnett & Amelia Frost, her Husband Joe Wahl, Brother Gary Frost Sr & Melvin Frost, Sister Annabelle Sanchez, son Joseph Wahl and Granddaughter Tessa Wahl.

She is survived by her Brother Curtis Frost Sr, Son Chaz Wahl; daughters Camille Day and Millie Wahl; Grandchildren Chasitie Wahl, Willie Wahl, Desarae Wahl, Randy Gallagher, Louie Wahl, Rachelle Escatel-Tupper, Gary Robinson, Jesse Robinson, Raedawn Weiser, and Sandy Joe Miller. Cheryl has 13 Great-grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Cheryl was born in Beatty, Oregon, on July 2, 1944. She lived her life to the fullest, from being a high school cheerleader to a blackjack dealer, maid, and, most importantly, a loving mother and grandmother. She loved and cared about so many others and had so much love to give.

Her hobbies were softball and bowling (she was a champion, small but mighty). Her family and friends were her life. Cheryl enjoyed dancing and hunting with her husband Joe, playing Yahtzee, and being around all her grandbabies and family. She would give you her last dollar and shirt off her back. She also would tell it like it is and had no sugar-coat.

Cheryl has left a deep wound with her passing and will be missed by many, but her memories will be cherished and kept close to the heart during her earthly absence. The burial was held at Brown Cemetery.

Anna Frances Hurtado (Barney), 85



Anna Frances Hurtado, born to Julia Ione (Hawley) and Theodore Larry Barney in Klamath Falls, Oregon, on July 1, 1939, was a cherished wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. She passed away surrounded by love, leaving a legacy that touched the lives of all who knew her.

On May 17, 1958, Anna married the love of her life, Ned Lewis Hurtado Jr., fondly known as "Butch," in Reno, Nevada. Together, they built a life centered on family, faith, and community. They lived in Sprague River and Warm Springs, Oregon, raising a family and creating a network of love that extended across Alaska, Canada, Arizona, and everywhere in between. Their many travels to rodeos and family gatherings built lifelong connections with siblings, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and friends.

Anna dedicated her career to her community, working at Warm Springs Housing Authority, Kah-Nee-Ta Resort, Rainbow Market, Warm Springs Composite Products, and the 509-J School District. She also served as a foster care

provider and cattle rancher's wife. Yet, her life's true work was her ministry, sharing her love for God and her kindness with all she met. Whether sitting in the announcer's stand timing rodeos or gathering her family for gospel songs, Anna's faith was her guiding light.

Known for her beautiful singing voice, Anna found great joy in worshipping alongside her brothers and sisters in Christ. She often offered comfort to others through prayer and song, lifting spirits and providing strength in times of need. Later in life, she enjoyed visiting other elders throughout the Pacific Northwest, spreading joy, laughter, and music.

A lover of classic Western movies, a good yard sale, and Dairy Queen vanilla cones with nuts, Anna had a knack for finding joy in life's simple pleasures.

Anna was preceded in death by her beloved husband, her parents, her sister Pamela Louis, and her brothers Larry Barney and Victor Barney. She is survived by her sister Donna Converse, her brother Larry Lugo, and her children Desiree, Fay, Raymond, Theodore, and Buffy.

Her legacy lives on through her grandchildren—Trevor Hurtado, Shyrelle Hurtado, Joshua Smith, Paige Smith, Dustin Suppah, Lacy Hurtado, Ivarene Hurtado, Ted Barney, and Thunder Hurtado—and her great-grandchildren, along with the many children she fostered and cared for over her lifetime.

Anna's family invites everyone to celebrate her life with hymns, prayer, and the joy that she shared so freely.

In Memoriam Guide Lines

If you would like an In Memoriam included in the Klamath Tribes News, please email a Word document to news@klamathtribes.com. Limit the word count to 500 words or less and provide a photo as a PDF or JPEG.

Lava Beds National Monument Superintendent seeks new ways to improve site of 5000-year-old Petroglyph Point

By Christopher German
Klamath Tribes News

A series of public comment meetings in November to decide the future of the Petroglyphs at Lava Beds National Monument yielded limited input from the public, but that hasn't dissuaded Super Intendant Christopher Mengel from working to find a better way to preserve the native history while providing a better way to share the story of the Modoc Creation.

At three meetings in early November, Mengel and his staff heard from the public what they wanted to see as an alternative to the chain link and barbed wire fencing currently used to protect the wall of petroglyphs at Petroglyph Point. "Part of it is the preservation of the petroglyphs themselves," said Mengel. "It's very fragile rock, so we're trying to find ways to protect them, but right now, we have that old fence up. It's been there for several decades. So, we're just trying to figure out a better way to protect the petroglyphs from vandalism and to make it a more meaningful experience for tribal members and also the public."

Much of the 267-acre Petroglyph Point is protected by an unsightly barb-wired fence. Over a century of abuse, including etchings of initials from visitors and even bullet holes, has taken its toll on the site, which, as stated on the Lava Beds National Parks Service website, "is a detached unit of Lava Beds Monument and the most extensive panel of Native American rock art in the United States." He said they hope to find new ways to share history and the whole creation story of the Modoc people. "It'd be like putting the Vatican behind a rusty old chain link barbed wire fence; it's not the best idea," he said.

The lava beds date back over half a million years, when ancient lava flows carved out the landscape. Early Native Americans paddled out to what was an Island in Tule Lake to make the carvings, which have weathered the arrival of the white settlers,



The rock art at Petroglyph Point is a detached unit of Lava Beds National Monument, the most extensive rock art panel in the United States, and the center of a Modoc creation story. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)



Much of the 267-acre Petroglyph Point is protected by an unsightly barb-wired fence. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)

the Modoc War, and even the draining of Tule Lake.

The site also played a role in the Modoc War in 1872 and 1873, when a small band of Modoc Indians, including Kintpuash (also known as Captain Jack), was besieged by a U.S. Army force outnumbering them as much as ten to one. The majority of the battlefields of the Modoc War are located within the park and are still preserved today.

The U.S. Army hung

Kintpuash at Fort Klamath with three other Modoc leaders on Oct. 3, 1873. He was the only Native American leader to be tried and convicted as a war criminal. His life highlights many of the central conflicts over emerging federal reservation policies, the continuing practice of forced removals, and the war aims of the federal government, local citizens, and Native groups in the post-Civil War era.

With an eye to this history,

Mengel is working to figure out a better way to share the Monument's petroglyphs. Asked if he has considered any solutions, such as the type that protects the ancient Roman sites in Italy, he said, "We haven't totally looked at them, but we are looking at different options."

Mengel said the decision would be made early in 2025, with a draft proposal from public comments. "In the next probably three or four months, we'll get a draft together of com-

ments and everything used in the comments ideas," he said. "The planning team will put together a draft document that will go out for public review."

Mengel added that while public comments have been few and far between, the site offers a unique view of history. "It's pretty cool," he said. "It's literally, the whole rock formation is part of the creation story of the Modoc people. And then the petroglyphs, we believe, go back 5,000 years."

Klamath Tribes Ambodat staff working in a collaborative effort to monitor anadromous fish species

By Jordan Ortega

Numerous Tribal, state, federal, non-profit, and academic partners are working together to monitor anadromous fishes as they repopulate newly available habitats upstream of the former dams on the Klamath River. This collaborative effort follows the historic removal of four dams, which is expected to revitalize anadromous species that have been blocked from their traditional spawning grounds for over a century. The dams, which were removed as part of an agreement designed to restore river health and support the region's Indigenous Tribes, blocked the migration of fish species such as Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, Pacific lamprey, and steelhead trout. On August 28, 2024, the last of four dams (Iron Gate) was breached on the Klamath River, a major milestone for recovering the river's ecosystem.

The first adult fall Chinook salmon was observed migrating past the former Iron Gate dam location three days later via sonar imaging. On Oct. 16, Chinook salmon were observed in Spencer Creek, Oregon. Substantial numbers of Chinook salmon were observed spawning the following month in the mainstem Klamath River between the former dam locations and Keno dam, as well as multiple tributaries, including Jenny Creek, Shovel Creek, Fall Creek, and Spencer Creek.

The Klamath Tribes Ambodat department and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) are spearheading monitoring efforts in Oregon.

This collaborative partnership employs various monitoring strategies to characterize the upstream distribution, abundance, and life history characteristics of returning anadromous fishes. Specifically, monitoring strategies include utilizing radio telemetry and passive integrated transponders (PIT tags), conducting visual surveys, and collecting biological samples from post-spawn salmon carcasses. Moreover, 10,000 experimental spring Chinook salmon smolts are released annually in Upper Klamath Lake and tributaries to better understand habitat use as well as to identify passage or water quality barriers to outmigration. In the future, we will be implementing rotary screw traps (to estimate juvenile productivity), fish traps in the Link River fish ladder to radio and PIT tag adults (to understand individual movement and habitat use), and video weirs in Spencer Creek and the Link River fish ladder (to estimate run size).

This Oregon monitoring effort has revealed substantial spawning by fall Chinook salmon in the mainstem Klamath River from the Oregon/California border to Keno Dam. Furthermore, substantial spawning is also occurring in Spencer Creek. In Oregon, the maximum daily counts of spawning fall Chinook are 176 in the mainstem Klamath River and 182 in Spencer Creek. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) staff observed Chinook Salmon ascending the Keno fish ladder, and a monitoring camera at the Link River fish ladder recorded a few large un-

identifiable salmonids (salmon or trout) ascending the structure, indicating salmon may have migrated into tributaries of Upper Klamath lake. These observations triggered the Upper Basin Salmon Monitoring Strategy, and thus far, over 55 kilometers of tributary habitats upstream of Upper Klamath Lake have been visually surveyed (via snorkeling and standup paddleboard floats), principally the Wood, Williamson, and Sprague Rivers. However, these survey efforts have yet to identify fall Chinook salmon upstream of Upper Klamath Lake.

The abundance of and speed at which fall Chinook repopulated habitats upstream of the former dams exceeded many expectations. Despite these early victories, significant work remains to be done as Coho salmon continue to be threatened under the Endangered Species Act and Spring Chinook populations are depleted, far downstream of the former dams. Fall Chinook are the most abundant salmon species and life history, spawning in appreciable numbers directly below the former Iron Gate dam. Thus, it is likely recovery will be slower in the Upper Basin for Coho and Spring Chinook salmon as they are more depleted and must stray farther to reach newly available habitat compared to fall Chinook.

Furthermore, there is growing concern that the fish ladders at the Keno and Link River dams are unsuitable for passage. In particular, attraction flows (river flows that help fish find the entrance to the fish ladder) are not suitable for migrating salmon at the Keno fish ladder, uncertainty exists around



An Ambodat employee in the field monitoring fish.

juvenile outmigration survival at Keno, and small trash rack gaps at the Link River and Keno fish ladder may prevent the largest salmon from entering Upper Klamath Lake. There is no evidence that large numbers of salmon are packing below Keno unable to ascend the fish ladder, but it is still critical the fish ladders enable easy passage for the river's migrating fishes.

The Klamath Tribes, ODFW, and BOR staff are working tirelessly to implement temporary solutions at the fish ladders to remedy any migration hurdles present for these culturally, commercially, and recreationally important fishes. Moreover, The Klamath Tribes, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, ODFW, BOR, and other partners will soon conduct a feasibility analysis of Keno's fish ladder that will evaluate and identify long-term operational and structural solutions to improve passage.

Although fall Chinook salmon have responded favorably to dam removal, there remain

challenges to long-term recovery in the Upper Basin. Pacific lamprey, coho salmon, Spring Chinook, and steelhead trout face the same challenges as fall Chinook but some of these species (Coho and Spring Chinook) are much more imperiled. Despite these challenges,

The Klamath Tribes, ODFW, and numerous other partners remain committed to recovering anadromous species in the Upper Basin. The fast and robust response of fall Chinook to dam removal underscores the resolve of the 25+ year collaborative movement to restore the Klamath watershed and is encouraging for current and future efforts to restore self-sustaining, fishable populations of salmon, steelhead, and lamprey in Upper Klamath Lake and its tributaries.

Jordan Ortega is an anadromous fish specialist for the Klamath Tribes Ambodat Department.

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KTCSE, is excited to offer the following services to Klamath Tribal members:

- Paternity Establishment
- Child Support Establishment
- Child Support Order Enforcement
- Modification of Child Support


Local Office for:

- Payment Services
- Customer Service
- Notary Services

Please contact one of our Child Support Case Managers at your convenience – Blanche, Leah, or Program Manager, Margaret, can be reached by following the prompts at (541) 783-3020.

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APPLICATIONS CLOSE
JANUARY 20TH, 2025

TRIBAL HEALTH SCHOLARS

Tribal Health Scholars (THS) is a paid externship program that supports and inspires AI/AN high school students to envision themselves as healthcare professionals and to pursue education required for a career in healthcare.

Scholars from our 9 partner communities, as well from any Tribes in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), are encouraged to apply!

Learn more and apply at:
nnacoe.org/tribal-health-scholars

For questions or to request an application contact: Katie at murpkati@ohsu.edu or Isaac at butleris@ohsu.edu



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Chiloquin Awarded \$16.34 Million EPA Community Change Grant to Build State-of-the-Art Community Resilience Hub and Municipal Center

The City of Chiloquin will provide critical services and resources for its rural and historically underserved populations with a \$16.34 million Community Change Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This transformative funding will support the construction of a cutting-edge Community Resilience Hub and Municipal Center on the former Markwardt Bros Garage property in the heart of downtown Chiloquin. The project and programs developed around it will serve as a cornerstone for community resilience, environmental stewardship, economic development, and civic engagement.

“This grant is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our community,” said Cathy Stuhr, Brownfield Program Manager, City of Chiloquin. “It represents an investment in our infrastructure and in our residents. This project will honor our history and culture, increase our community resilience, and prepare us to face tomorrow’s challenges together.”

A Vision for Resilience and Community Empowerment

The Community Resilience Hub and Municipal Center will be designed with energy efficiency and sustainability in mind, the facility will include:

Emergency shelter and communication capabilities with special accommodations for the elderly and disabled (including their pets) ensuring the safety of all residents during crises.

Space for educational initiatives, community events, and public programs.

Modern municipal offices that streamline city services and support local governance.

Programs developed throughout the project will include a woodstove trade-out program and air monitoring studies and community disaster preparedness and resiliency training. This project reflects Chiloquin’s commitment to addressing the unique needs of our City and surrounding areas, fostering a resilient future for generations to come.

From Contamination to Transformation: A History of Environmental Brownfield Cleanup

The new facility will be built on a former brownfield site, symbolizing a remarkable journey of environmental reclamation and renewal. For years, the site—once home to industrial and commercial activities—posed significant environmental and public health risks due to contamination and physical hazards.

Thanks to dedicated efforts from local leaders and community stakeholders, the site underwent extensive cleanup funded through EPA and Business Oregon Brownfields Program grants, and private foundation funding. Contaminated soil and hazardous materials were safely removed, and the land was restored to support new development. This transformation eliminated environmental hazards and created a foundation for new opportunities.

Community Collaboration and Support

The City of Chiloquin worked closely with community members, The Klamath Tribes, regional organizations, and State and Federal partners to develop a vision for the project that reflects local priorities and values. Project partners include: Chiloquin Visions In Progress, Oregon Institute of Technology, Klamath Lake Long Term Recovery Group, and The Klamath Tribes. Continued collaborative community participation and support are essential for the success of the project.

Next Steps

Design of the Community Resilience Hub and Municipal Center is slated to begin in winter 2025 and construction is expected to be completed in early 2028. The project team will host public meetings and provide updates to ensure transparency and continued community involvement throughout the design and construction process as well as in the creation and delivery of community emergency preparedness and resiliency training and

workshops. Programmatic workshops and community resilience and disaster preparedness training will be conducted throughout the project.

For more information about the project or to get involved, please contact Cathy Stuhr at cathy@cityofchiloquin.org. **About the EPA Community Change Grant Program**

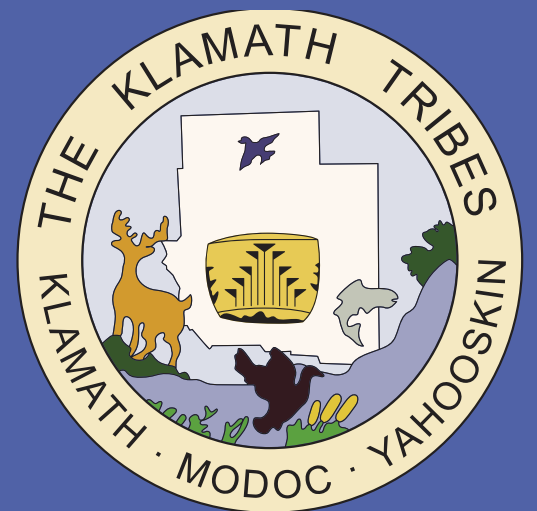
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency selected 105 applications from a pool of 2,700 applicants across the country for the Community Change Grants Program, totaling nearly \$1.6 billion in awards. The awards will advance local, on-the-ground projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity. The EPA Community Change Grant Program supports initiatives that promote sustainable, community-driven development and environmental justice. By investing in projects that address environmental, social, and economic disparities, the program aims to empower communities to thrive.

2025 Klamath Tribes Election

The Klamath Tribes’ nominations

for Tribal Council and Chief Judge

Positions will be held in February 2025.



Per the Klamath Tribes Election Ordinance, if you wish to be nominated and accept that nomination for placement on the election ballot, you must be present at the February General Council meeting and accept your nomination, in writing, before the adjournment of that meeting.

Per the Klamath Court Ordinance, the Chief Judge process for placement on the ballot is as follows: Any person who is certified by the Tribal Council as meeting the judicial qualification requirements of this Ordinance shall be eligible to be placed on an election ballot of the Klamath Tribes or be otherwise nominated to fill a vacancy on the Tribal Courts. Requests for

certification from the Tribal Council shall be made in writing on the forms provided by the Tribal Council and submitted no later than the second Tuesday of January before the judicial election.

Please make sure that your mailing address is current with the Member Benefits Department as ballots will be mailed to those addresses on file.

For more information on the Election Process, contact Kathy Rich, Election Clerk at 541-783-2219, ext. 101.

An early morning ride on a Klamath Tribes Quail Trail bus

By Christopher German
Klamath Tribes News

Running a bus in rural Southern Oregon isn't as easy as it seems. Just ask Patricia Damrow. She gets up in the predawn hours each day to fire up her bus and start her day.

Her morning routine consists of walking around her bus, checking the oil, and opening the big garage door to let the chilly December air in from the dark morning outside.

Damrow admits that letting the cold morning in could be dangerous, thanks to the rural landscape and her solitude. Wild animals and transient people could be lurking in the darkness. Her slight frame offers little protection against some of the larger creatures that lurk out there, but she climbs aboard her bus, puts on a brave face, and closes the doors before she sets out on her route.

"Some days, it's terrible because it's so dark," she said during an interview with this reporter on an early morning drive along. "I live for the days when they start getting longer. Here, pretty soon, it'll be a little bit lighter. By the time I get to town, I may see some daylight. So that's always hard, but other than that, it's not bad."

While Damrow is a little nervous about the wilds of the chilly Chiloquin morning, her primary focus, the people she transports, motivates her to brave the early day. "I like my hours. I like getting up early," she said. "And I get a different crew of people in the mornings. People going to work or going to school."

The route is called the "Quail Trail." It's a free shuttle bus between the tiny community of Chiloquin and its more urban neighbor, Klamath Falls. The bus is funded by the Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Transportation but is housed within the confines of the Klamath Tribes.

We took a spin around town to pick up passengers at the tribal housing units and the Strong Hold, a transitional housing facility located in the center of town. A young man deftly hoists his electric bike on the bike rack hanging off

the front of the bus. He climbs aboard, and Damrow tells me he is a student heading to Klamath Community College.

With our passengers aboard, Damrow pulls the bus onto Highway 97. The bus accelerates quickly into the dark morning. The studded snow tires grip the highway through the film of black ice. Before long, however, Damrow applies the brakes and slows to turn into the Klamoya Casino, where she stops to see if any passengers are waiting. She pauses for any stragglers to make their way, but no one appears, so she rolls on.

The half-hour drive to Klamath Falls is quiet, save for the sound of a radio station playing that fades in and out and the humming of the heater. Outside, the bus's snow tire studs click on the pavement as it makes its way to its first stop. Given the early morning, conversations between the driver and onboarding passengers are short nods of "hello" before they settle into their seats.

As we arrive at our first stop in Klamath Falls, the young man on his way to school gets off, and a young woman gets on. Damrow tells me this young lady works at the hotel next to the casino. At each stop, Damrow scribbles a few entries into a log book and logs her time on a tablet she has stuffed into the bus console. Those entries are sent back to the main office back in downtown Chiloquin, where Damrow's manager, Klamath Tribes Transit program manager Michelle Carson, and the Transit Program Specialist Ron Hugel are just arriving to work.

As Ron sits down at his desk, his phone rings. Ron said the phone can ring a few hundred times throughout the day. The free bus is just part of all the rides they provide to the public. They also manage all the rides for medical transport to places like Medford and Bend, as well as shopping trips, doctor appointments, and, of course, getting kids to school. As a publicly funded bus system, the bus complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and each bus is fitted with a wheelchair lift, and the bus service is free.

A fleet of five buses assists the Quail Trail transportation-



Patricia Damrow takes a break from driving the Quail Trail bus. (Christopher German/Klamath Tribes News)



A Klamath Tribes Quail Trail bus, one of five in the fleet, offers free service between Chiloquin and Klamath Falls. (Christopher German/Klamath Tribes News)

service. The team of drivers includes Pat, another full-time driver for afternoons, a part-time driver, and a team of temporary drivers. The team transports riders across the county to wherever they need to go, and all rides are free of charge.

As Carson explained, the bus is fully commanded by the drivers, who assess riders as they board. "Because, if you've got a rider that's going, you kind of question, well, are they intoxicated? Then, they don't ride," she said. "We can't have it driving that many miles because you never know what you're going to get if you have someone that's riding that is going to be volatile. And, so, it's, it's pretty much the choice of the bus driver. It is their bus. That's their workplace.

So, whatever happens, it's under them what happens is what happens." Carson explained that bus drivers also make decisions about road conditions, passenger safety, and all manner of operations.

Back on the bus, the sun is up, and the radio chatter fills the cabin. Damrow welcomes several young men on the bus as we drive through Chiloquin. The men greet Damrow as if they have always known her. One young man named Jansen Harrington decides to speak to me.

"I've been a passenger in this bus for about a year now," he said. "You know, Pat is a great driver. They're very consistent. They text me, you know, like they give out their personal numbers, just in case,

because I work nine to five in the Stronghold. And you know, they've been here for me since, since the day I started. If the roads are too bad, they'll shoot me a text, and they'll say, 'Hey, you know, like the bus is running a little bit late.'"

As the bus stops in front of the Klamath Tribes Administration building in Chiloquin, I thank Damrow for allowing me to share the ride and disembark the bus. She warmly thanks me for riding and shakes my hand. I walk off the bus and watch as it slowly makes its way back to the road. The bus pulls onto the highway, and I watch it as the noise of the snow tires fades away, and I start humming, "The people on the bus go bump, bump, bump. All over town."

Klamath Tribes Public Safety Department News

The Klamath Tribes Public Safety Department is making significant progress in its mission to protect and serve the Tribal community while upholding the values and traditions of the Klamath people. With several key initiatives underway, we are poised to achieve new milestones that will strengthen public safety and enhance Tribal sovereignty. A top priority is finalizing a dispatch contract with 911 communication services, expected before the end of 2024. This agreement will enable seamless collaboration with emergency services, ensuring faster response times and improved coordination during critical incidents. We are in the final steps of hiring two Fish and Game Officers and two Police Officers. These roles are essential to our mission of enforcing tribal laws, protecting treaty rights, and maintaining the safety of our community. We encourage tribal members to apply and

join our growing team. In addition, the department is looking forward to the completion of our Public Safety Building, which is on track to be finished by the end of spring 2025. This facility will serve as a central hub for our operations, providing the infrastructure needed to support our expanding services. A significant step in solidifying our department's authority will take place in January, when we will once again propose the SB412 and Torts Claims Ordinances. These ordinances represent the final steps in granting the department complete police powers and authority. Once adopted, they will formalize our ability to fully enforce laws, protect our people, and collaborate with other jurisdictions. As we prepare for these important developments, we remain committed to transparency and community involvement. The Public Safety Department is more than a law enforcement agency; it is a reflection of the culture, sovereignty, and values of The Klamath Tribes. We thank the



James Moore is the new Klamath Tribes Chief of Police.

community for its ongoing support as we work toward building a safer and stronger future for everyone. Together, we are ensuring that public safety is not just a goal but a lasting reality.



Construction Contractors Board Prep Course and Exam (available in English and Spanish)

This two-day class will help students prep for and take the CCB exam required for initial contractor certification in Oregon.

Smart Start-Up (In-Person and Zoom formats) (available in English and Spanish)

This two-hour workshop will cover all the basic steps ANY small business needs to do to get up and running. After this class free business advising with experienced advisors is offered.

Hiring Your First Employee

Need to hire your first employee but not sure where to start? This two-hour beginner-friendly course will help you navigate the rules and regulations governing the hiring process in Oregon.

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803 Main Street, Suite 200
 Klamath Falls, OR 97601

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Oregon Small Business Development Centers are funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, and by the Oregon Business Development Department. Programs and services are provided to the public on a non-discriminatory basis. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance.

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FRIDAY DRAWINGS
 JANUARY 3-31 • 6PM-9PM

Jan 3 Win up to \$500 CASH!	Jan 10 Win up to \$750 CASH!	Jan 17 Win up to \$1,000 CASH!	Jan 24 Win up to \$2,500 CASH!
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Jan 31
Win up to \$5,000 CASH!

Beginning Wednesday, January 1 at 8am, earn one drawing entry for every 10 points. Drawings every half hour. May only win once per day.

THURSDAYS OF FORTUNE

FREE PLAY KIOSK

JANUARY 2-30
 10AM-6PM

Win up to \$250 Free Play!

May only redeem once per day.

FOOTBALL FEVER FRENZY

SUNDAY HOT SEATS

JANUARY 5-26 & FEBRUARY 2-9 • NOON-4PM

Jan 5 - Feb 2: Win up to a 65" TV & \$100 CASH!
 Feb 9: Win up to a 65" TV, 2 Recliners & \$300 CASH!

May only win once per day.

Rolling in Riches

FRIDAY DRAWINGS

FEBRUARY 7-28
 6PM-9PM

WIN UP TO \$750 CASH!

May only win once per day.

Love Struck

LOOT KIOSK

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14
 10AM-6PM

VALENTINE'S DAY

Win various jewelry!
 Earn 50 points up to two times and go to the kiosk to swipe your card to receive your prize.

May redeem up to two times per day, day.

RED HOT SUNDAY

HOT SEATS

SUNDAYS
 FEBRUARY 16 & 23
 NOON-4PM

WIN UP TO \$300 CASH!

Winner will spin the Prize Wheel to determine prize.
 Drawings every half hour.

May only win once per day.

AND OTHER EXCITING PROMOTIONS!

Klamath Tribes Language Director holds classes at Oregon Tech

Klamath Tribes Language Director GeorGene Nelson introduces students to tribal languages and culture

By Christopher German
Klamath Tribes News

If you traveled the world, you could hear 100 different languages. That's because language is one of the key elements of a culture. But for generations, the Klamath, Yahooskin-Paiute, and Modoc tribes were denied the freedom to speak their language, and the Klamath Tribes are working to fix that.

GeorGene Nelson, Director of the Klamath Tribes language department, led that effort in a November program she hosted for students and faculty at the Oregon Institute of Technology.

The group met three times this fall to hear a presentation about the Native languages of the Klamath Basin area. Students were taught various subjects, such as days of the week and months of the year, with a focus on vocabulary and using the language in conversation.

Nelson said one of the best parts of her job is teaching Natives who have never been able to introduce themselves in their native tongue to say their names. She noted that generations of natives were abused in boarding schools that were treated more like military units as far away as Florida for speaking their language. She said that the abuse was so effective that when they returned to their homes, they were incapable of conversing with their grandparents.

Nelson recounted one story she heard from her grandfather. When he was a boy, her grandfather was forced to watch a student who used his native name, "run the line.



GeorGene Nelson, Klamath Tribes, Director of the Language Department, held a class on the Tribal languages at the Oregon Institute of Technology in November. (Christopher German/Klamath Tribes News)

"Running the Line meant going through a line of children who each had a paddle to be beaten.

The process of removing children from tribal families continued until the 1970s, resulting in a total eradication of fluent native speakers. Nelson explained that there are currently no fluent native speakers of the Klamath language alive; however, this presents certain opportunities as they work to restore the language.

"One of my friends brought me an animal with big eyes from Australia and asked me how to say it in Klamath," she said, speaking in the OIT class. "I asked her what it ate, and they told me candy." She said the challenge of deriving new

words for modern things like cell phones keeps the language alive and makes learning fun.

The students who attended each drew a number of lessons from the day. One student, Merrick Tambil, said, "Everything I learned today was new. I had never gone to a language preservation workshop before.

Nelson said saving the language is hard work but well worth doing. "I think that events like these are important so that we can share about our language, our culture, who we are as people, and they're here visiting in our homelands," she said, "and so they know a little bit more about the people who've been here since time immemorial."

How the Creator Fed the Klamath People

The creator was watching over his people on Klamath Lake from his spot above Barkley Springs. At the time, a big black snake was swimming up all the rivers winding down through the basin and killing the people. The people asked the creator to stop the snake, and the creator agreed and went to battle the snake.

The creator warred with the snake and threw him down three times, each time creating an island in Klamath Lake at the site where the snake landed. Finally, after the long battle, the snake was killed.

The creator then took the snake back up the mountain and cut it into a million pieces. The creator believed that since the snake fed on the people, the people should then feed on it, and cast a million pieces of the snake into the lake, where they became millions of c'waam to feed the Klamath people.

Klamath Tribes Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Ad Hoc Committee

The Klamath Tribes Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Ad Hoc Committee, is dedicated to addressing the devastating crisis of MMIP within our community. This committee represents a critical step toward safeguarding our people and honoring the memory of those who have been lost.

Our Purpose

The MMIP Ad Hoc Committee will focus on:

- Enhancing collaboration between Tribal, local, state, and federal agen-

cies through the development of formal agreements (MOUs).

- Collecting and analyzing data to identify trends, barriers, and gaps in resources while respecting the privacy of individuals and families.

- Seeking funding opportunities to expand resources, strengthen investigations, and support prevention efforts.

- Providing training for identifying and preventing human trafficking at key locations, including Kla-Mo-Ya

Casino, Crater Lake Junction, the Sleep Inn Hotel, and Tribal Health facilities.

A Call to Action

We cannot address this crisis alone. The committee will work hand in hand with community members, families, and survivors to ensure that no voice is unheard. Your input, stories, and support are vital to creating a safer future for our people.

Our Commitment

The Klamath Tribes Ad Hoc Committee is committed to

raising awareness, improving resources, and fostering a culture of accountability and care. Together, we will take meaningful steps to protect our community, honor our lost loved ones, and ensure justice for those who have been harmed. We encourage all Tribal members to join us in this important work by staying informed, participating in public discussions, and supporting the initiatives of the MMIP Ad Hoc Committee.

Stay Connected

Updates on the committee's progress, training opportunities, and ways to get involved will be shared in future newsletters and community meetings. Together, we can make a difference.

Respectfully, The Klamath Tribes MMIP Ad Hoc Committee
Sarah Bates, THRP IILead
Human Resources Generalist
P.O. Box 436 Chiloquin, OR.
97624(541)783-2219 sarah.bates@klamathtribes.com <mailto:sarah.bates@klamathtribes.com>

Lampreys

From front page

fluids. They are found on every continent except Africa and Antarctica. “In the Klamath Basin, Pacific Lamprey are native to this watershed,” he said. “But within the Upper Klamath Basin, we also have a variety of other lamprey species, and one of the more awesome little facts about the Upper Klamath Basin is that it actually hosts the most species of lamprey out of any other watershed on the planet.”

The non-anadromous Upper Klamath Lake lamprey is an undescribed parasitic species largely restricted upstream of Upper Klamath Lake, feeding on the blood and tissue of koptu and c’waam suckers, redband trout, Blue Chub, and Tui Chub. There’s also a species called the Klamath River lamprey found in Upper Klamath Lake. “This species is distributed throughout the Klamath Watershed from near the mouth of the Klamath upstream to tributaries of Upper Klamath Lake,” Ortega explained. “It is a non-anadromous species, but they are voracious. “They are highly parasitic; they pepper salmonids and anything else they can get their mouth on,” Ortega said. “So, when we first observed salmon entering Spencer Creek in the upper basin after dam removal, we noticed a lot of lamprey wounds on these fish, and the likely candidate is the Klamath River lamprey downriver.”

He said there are diverse run times of Pacific lamprey



Upper Klamath Lake lamprey (Undescribed species) A highly parasitic species. Out-migrating juvenile Upper Klamath Lake lamprey.



Larval Stage or Ammocoete (all species)

Every lamprey species has a toothless larval stage. Ammocoete larva bury into the sediment and filter feed the water column. Note the lack of eyes. (Photos courtesy of Jordan Ortega)

in the Klamath Basin, a unique aspect of the species that is not generally found throughout its range. “We have early maturing and early entering lamprey,” he said, “and we also have late maturing, late migrating lamprey, and so that’s kind of similar to the summer versus winter steelhead life history, or to the fall and spring Chinook life history, in which adults will enter the river early on with undeveloped gonads, or they’re not sexually mature yet, and then they’ll sexually mature in the river, whereas the other life history will be sexually mature when they enter the river, and they’re basically ready to spawn.”

Though not a first food of the Native tribes of the Upper Klamath Basin, lamprey were a food source, but not a primary source like suckers and trout. “I’d say what’s most common is, or what’s most commonly understood, is that Pacific lamprey was (and still are) the principal lamprey that Indigenous peoples used as a food source, but other lampreys were used as well, and actually, a more recent harvest of these happened at the Chiloquin Dam,” Ortega said. “I’ve heard from various tribal members that they remember as kids going down to the dam and seeing all these eels, and then they would collect and harvest them.” He added that Pacific lamprey is a traditional and vital food source for the Yurok Tribe in California, and it is harvested each year in the lower Klamath River.”

He cited another lamprey, not a Pacific lamprey, but an Atlantic sea lamprey, which is also a popular dish in many European countries. “I think it’s more of just an unusual type of

fish that people find visually unpleasant, and that’s why many people talk about them not being very tasteful,” he said. Ortega tried lamprey when a tribal member smoked one and offered it to him. “I was pleasantly surprised to find it very tasty, a combination of salmon and sardine, with a similar texture to salmon,” he said.

Pacific lamprey-like Chinook salmon in the Klamath Basin were impacted by the four dams on the Klamath River, which blocked their migration routes to tributaries in the Upper Klamath Basin. With the dams removed, Ortega suspects Pacific lamprey will migrate upstream to explore newly available habitats. However, two obstacles impede their migration to the Upper Klamath Basin – the Link River and Keno dams. “They were not built for lamprey passage,” Ortega said. “Lamprey do not like 90-degree angles. And so, a lot of times, fish ladders will have



Miller Lake lamprey (*Entosphenus minimus*) This species is highly parasitic.



Pit-Klamath Brook lamprey (*Entosphenus lethophagus*) This species is non-parasitic.

these long troughs that have these kinds of cement boxes in them, and they’re very angular. They’re squared off. Salmon can jump over one box to the next, through the trough, but the lamprey has a harder time navigating those angled surfaces.”

But there may be an easy fix to the problem. “I was just informed on this the other day from a lamprey expert in California who’s done a lot of work on lamprey passage,” he said, “but apparently, you can basically stick a glorified PVC into the bays, and if there are any passage issues, they can navigate that PVC pipe and get from bay to bay. Lamprey passage is something that people are concerned about at Keno and Link River dams, and there are currently efforts to assess the structures, understand what needs to be done, and implement what needs to be done, such that lamprey passages is good.”

Ortega said there are four or five species of lamprey (depending on who you’re speaking with) in the Upper Klamath Basin, and they generally have healthy populations. However, as the Pacific lamprey begins entering the waterways in the Basin, they could have a tough time finding a niche in habitats upstream of Upper Klamath Lake with all the already well-established lampreys.

“It’s similar to redband and steelhead trout, two species vying for niche habitats in the Upper Klamath Basin,” Ortega said. “And, so, we might see something similar with Pacific lamprey where there’s just a lot of niche competition, and they may struggle to gain a foothold up here, but downriver, in the Spencer Creek area, you have a much lower diversity of lampreys, so there’s more niche availability for them.”

He’s hopeful the Pacific lamprey will make it to Spencer Creek, given the lack of niche

competition and the fact that there are no dams in the way. “But when you overlay Keno and Link River dams and all the species of lamprey in Upper Klamath Lake, I think it just suggests that who knows what will happen,” he said.

Like suckers, Ortega said lampreys are tough fish and have survived and thrived in Upper Klamath Lake, despite poor water quality. He said lamprey are plentiful in the Upper Klamath Basin waterways, likely millions in number, and they play an essential role in the ecosystem’s health. “They actually have two critical ecosystem services, which is why we need to protect them,” he said. “One of which is the filter-feeding larval stage. And, so, they’re filtering out detritus, harmful chemicals, and things out of the water columns – similar to mussels that also filter and clean the water column.”

“The second service,” he continued, “is that it provides upstream spawning migrations and brings marine or Upper Klamath Lake-derived nutrients up into these really nutrient-poor parts of the landscape because, like salmon lamprey die after they spawn, and that’s going to fuel the base of the food chain, which is going to drive better growth for all sorts of different things, from bugs to fish to birds to everything, trees, riparian zones.”

Ortega said the lamprey in Upper Klamath Lake could be viewed as a kind of “keystone species” because of the ecological benefits derived from its activities, and for this reason, it must be acknowledged as an important species to protect and research. “I think you could argue that there’s an ecologically specific definition for a keystone species that has numbers and thresholds,” he said, “but I think everything matters, right? At some scale or some level, you could probably argue that negative ecosystem responses would happen by removing a species like lamprey.”

Outdated Dams

From front page

“Some modifications could improve the passage efficiency for adult salmonids and lamprey but could further inhibit sucker passage by increasing water velocities at the fishway entrance,” it was stated in the memo. “Additional, lamprey-specific remediation will be required to ensure lamprey entering the fishway has a viable path upstream.” Pagliuco said that smaller fish could still use the ladder as it is and that \$1.9 million in funding was awarded to ODFW to conduct a feasibility study on how to improve the fish ladder at the Keno Dam. He also suggested that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) was not given much in the way of instruction on how to manage the dam when PacifiCorp transferred ownership, and much of the equipment needed to operate the dam was removed by the power company when they turned the keys over to BOR.

The Link River Dam, which was built in 1921, has been under the ownership of the

BOR since that time, and the Keno Dam, constructed in 1966 to replace the Needle Dam, was transferred to the BOR on July 30 of this year from PacifiCorp. The transfer was part of the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA), created to remove the four downstream Klamath River dams without Congressional approval. Unlike the Link River Dam, the Keno Dam holds no water but supports the Link River Dam to stop flooding downstream.

The BOR said in a written response to the Klamath Tribes News that “Reclamation received the 2023 ODFW memo that you are referencing. Unfortunately, we are not able to make any comments on the contents of that memo. We are also not able to comment on any ongoing actions being pursued by the Bureau at this time.”

To add insult to injury, water quality in Lake Ewauna and Upper Klamath Lake could further impede migrating fish. ODFW fish biologist for the Klamath Basin, Ben Ramirez, stated, “This is true for some of the years, but for salmon that are migrating in the fall



The Link River Dam is viewed from Conger Heights Park. On the far bank, the fish ladder and control house above it can be seen. (Christopher German/Klamath Tribes News)

and winter (like the current Chinook salmon in the basin), the water quality is not going to be a hindrance. The main issue would come with spring-run Chinook salmon that reach the upper basin later in the spring when the water quality may start to deteriorate. That means that for spring-run Chinook to succeed, they would need to leave the ocean and migrate up early in the spring to make it through the lake before the water quality becomes an impediment.”

However, due in part to poor seasonal water quality in Upper Klamath Lake, populations of c’waam and koptu are struggling to survive and are on the verge of extinction. The Ambodat staff have yet to observe any of the fall Chinook above Spencer Creek. The winter run of coho salmon also remains below the Spencer Creek dam.

Changing any water flow on the Klamath River could also have significant implications for area businesses like Columbia Forest Products. Pagliuco said the property issues above the Keno Dam mean that even a small change in water level can have big implications for the tightly knit network of businesses along the river.

However, a solution to the Keno Dam problems is not close. ODFW District Manager for Klamath and Malheur Watershed, Phillip Milburn, said nothing will happen for at least a year, and with c’waam and koptu facing possible extinction within five years, one wonders why this wasn’t addressed sooner.

Milburn said in an email response to the Klamath Tribes News that a grant to investigate the Keno Dam will not arrive until early 2025, and the evaluation process will take the next year to complete. “At the end of the community engagement process,” Milburn explained, “We anticipate the workgroup will advance a recommendation of a preferred alternative. Once a preferred alternative is identified a 30 percent engineering design will be developed, then the hard work of garnering the support and funding for implementation will begin. However, the final decision on implementation will rest with BOR as the dam owner.”

The Klamath Tribes staff of Ambodat maintain an ever-present eye on the waterways looking for salmon. Through a collaborative partnership between the tribes, the ODFW, and other partners, observers have employed a variety of monitoring strategies to better understand the distribution, abundance, and life history of any salmon that make it past the dam. They have also released 10,000 experimental Chinook smolts to better understand habitat use and identify passage or water quality barriers.

“We are hopeful to participate with the state of Oregon in performing a feasibility study to find the best solution for Keno Dam,” said Alta Harris, the interim director of Ambodat, “and we are hopeful that solution will include removal, but we want it done in the

best way for the system and for future generations of fish.”

According to Harris, when the Keno Dam and Link River Dam were built, the builders dynamited large chunks of the existing reef that created Upper Klamath Lake. If the dams were to be removed without the reef’s restoration, the result would be an inevitable demise for some fish species by continuing the river. What’s more, the extensive network of drainage ditches that run throughout the basin would all have to be refilled to restore the massive marsh that once existed and protected the lake’s water quality.

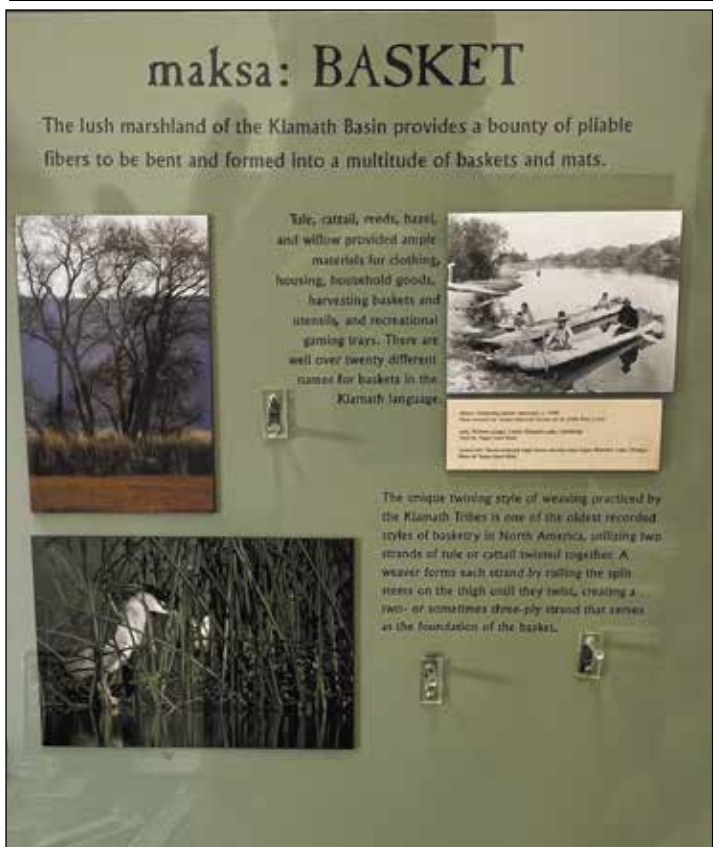
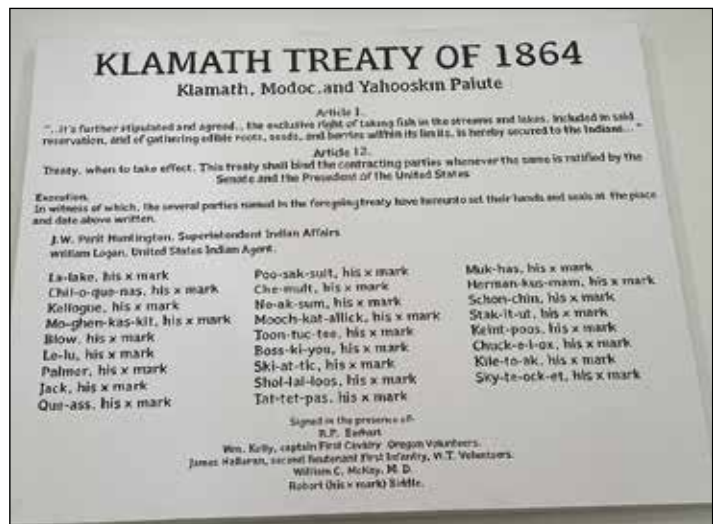
While the fall run of Chinook exceeded expectations this past year, coho returns are also impressing fish biologists. The Klamath Tribes continue to work with ODFW and numerous other partners to continue recovery efforts of anadromous species in the Upper Klamath Basin and restore the watershed once heralded as the Everglades of the West. And while the upper tributaries of the Klamath Basin, including the Sprague, Wood, and Williamson Rivers, are thought to be ideal spawning habitats for the newly arrived salmon, the fact remains that poor water quality in the Upper Klamath and Lake Ewauna combined with out of spec fish ladders and outdated designs of the two remaining dams, pose challenges to resolve these problems, and the clock is ticking down to come up with solutions in time to save c’waam and koptu from extinction.




The Keno Dam fish ladder is in question regarding its ability to accommodate migrating salmon. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)



The new Chiloquin gymnasium is taking shape. Construction is expected to be completed by the start of the 2025 school year. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)



In the new courthouse, tribal narratives are on display, providing historical notes of the Tribes' past. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)



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Denise Martinez
541-880-2243
ce@klamathcc.edu



Wetlands are already being formed at the Agency Barnes site, and initial dredging is being conducted. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)

Agency Lake Levy Break

From front page

up into higher elevations. And those will change as you flood and dry them out, and the lake elevation fluctuates.”

Amelia Raquel, regional biologist for Ducks Unlimited overseeing the project’s construction, said phase one construction, including internal restoration work, was completed in November, and external breaching to connect the site with Upper Klamath Lake began in December. BCI Contracting Inc., out of Portland, Ore., was hired to excavate.

Ducks Unlimited has been working with Klamath Tribes, Trout Unlimited, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife for over a decade to see this project come to fruition. Raquel said she is thrilled to be part of such a massive restoration effort. “Ducks Unlimited is involved in wetland restoration projects all across the country, and for us, this is probably the largest inland wetland restoration project, at least on the West Coast. So just that statement alone is pretty amazing to be a part of, and it’s exciting to be part of a project that is done at a scale that I think can actually make a difference.”

One of the prime functions of reconnecting the lake is reintroducing tannins from the marsh into the Upper Klamath Lake. Tannins enter the water through decomposing vegetation. When dead leaves, rotting wood, and other plant

materials decompose, tannins are released and can leach into groundwater and surface water sources. The tannins create tannic acid and are also thought to darken the water. This combination of effects reduces the frequency of algal blooms due to the darker water and the higher acidity, which reduces the incidence of harmful bacteria or fungi in the water. Both effects were cut off when the marsh was diked and drained, and with its reintroduction, water quality in the lake is expected to improve.

Johnson stressed that this is no magic bullet and the work left to be done is immense. However, he said the 14,000 acres will have an immediate and lasting effect on water quality. “It will just be a source of those tannins that currently the lake is somewhat starved for,” he said. “Now, that doesn’t break the nutrient cycle. We still have to do all of the restoration work in the Sprague and in the Williamson, in the woods, and those upland areas to reduce the direct inputs of phosphorus in particular, but phosphorus, nitrogen, and other nutrient sources. But having those tannins is going to be a short-term boon to the overall water quality, or at least that’s our hope and expectation.”

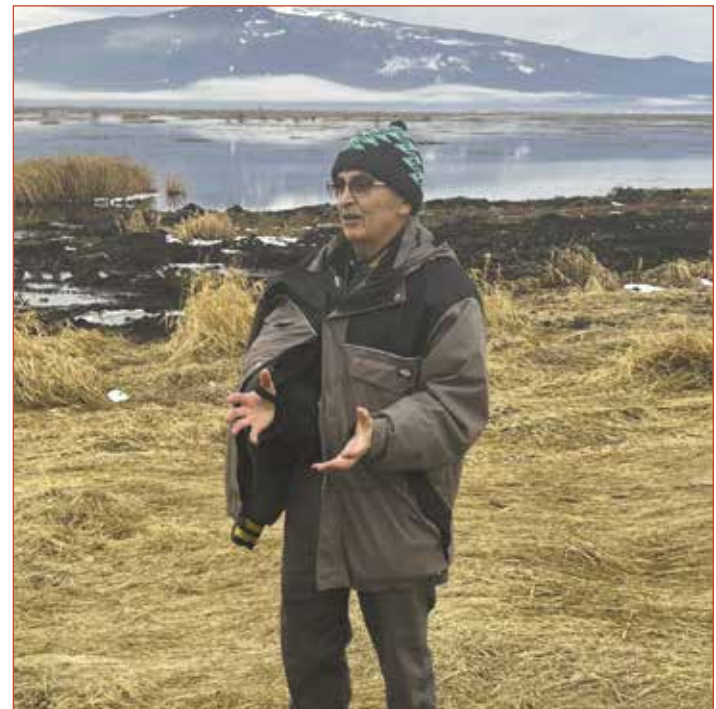
As to the prospects for the c’waam and koptu, Johnson stated, “We do have intention to make some hatchery releases there, as I believe the Klamath tribes do as well to better understand that dynamic. Now, it should be excellent juvenile

rearing habitat, and so we’re very hopeful that this will be a place where, when we make those reintroductions from the hatcheries, that too can see some success and survival, and it will effectively double the amount of nearshore lake fringe rearing habitat available in Upper Klamath Lake overall.”

“If the arrival of salmon back in the Klamath River is any indication of how fast we can expect the results to be seen, this spring, we should see some pretty amazing things coming back to our lake,” Raquel said, “I think wetlands generally rebound pretty quickly once they see water, so I suspect we’ll start seeing the wetland vegetation re-establish within the site, and then see the invertebrates and the birds and the fish kind of find it and be really productive.”

“Knowing that this is historically what this system was and what these species evolved under,” she continued, “I would expect that providing those conditions, the species know what they need, and you know they’ll find them.”

At a ceremonial event held on Dec. 20 by the Klamath Tribes, members of the Tribes attended along with other people involved in the project. Klamath Tribes Chairman William Ray Jr. reflected on the significance of the wetland restoration, speaking shortly after the ceremony. “I would have to say that connection is that I don’t think it was ever a disconnect,” he said. “I think it’s more of a liberation back



Klamath Tribes Chairman William Ray Jr. speaks at the Dec. 20 Agency-Barnes project site ceremony. (Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes News)

to where we once used to be, and when I was a boy growing up, to see the dredge that was on 24/7 that was reclaiming it into farmland and taking all this marsh, these wetlands, away, and then now seeing it restored. So, we’re coming back full circle, and that’s what that means for liberation because we’re seeing our ecosystem return to how it once was and how productive it could be. And this is the first step in this Agency-Barnes for us to move in that direction, along with other projects.”

He explained that the marsh is also an integral part of the history of the Klamath Tribes to the marsh, an integral part of the culture, and a subsistence provider of Natural Resources essential to the life and ways of the tribes.

“That’s why we were called “?ewksiknii” people of the marsh, people of the lakes,” he said. “We are very tied to the water as a people. That’s why over half our diet was made up of fish. Sure, we used all the resources, but a big part of our diet was the plant life. That’s why wocus was such an important part. It’s the only place in the whole world where you have the two-horn mono, and that was for processing the wocus seeds, and that’s how important that food source was. In order to have wocus, you’ve got to have water, and without it, then you don’t have the rest of the aquatic species of tules, pulpus. The wocus was a big part of all that healing and filtering the water to make it clean and produce good water quality.”