



Vision. Passion. Community.

**Trinity Lake
Revitalization Alliance, Inc.**
Trinity Center, California

July 25, 2012

Don Reck
Bureau of Reclamation
Northern California Area Office
16349 Shasta Dam Blvd.
Shasta Lake, CA 96019

**RE: Comments on the 2012 Lower Klamath River Supplemental Flows Draft
Environmental Assessment (DES) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

Dear Mr. Reck:

The Trinity Lake Revitalization Alliance (TLRA) respectfully submits the following comments into the record of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR) 2012 Lower Klamath River Supplemental Flows Draft Environmental Assessment (Klamath DEA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

TLRA is a community-based, non-profit organization representing approximately 795 property owners, 900 residents, and 7 forest communities adjacent to Trinity Reservoir north of Trinity Dam.

The Trinity Lake Revitalization Alliance is opposed to the Klamath DEA and FONSI due to these deficiencies:

- USBR claims that the supplemental flows have no significant impact without providing a complete cumulative analysis and without "thresholds of significance" definitions.
- The proposed supplemental flows are not granted to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR) in Judge Wanger's April 4, 2003 ruling
- The Klamath FONSI does not reference any published, defensible scientific study or data showing that the preventative release of 48,000AF is needed.
- The Klamath DEA does not reference any published, defensible definition of the trigger threshold to be used for the emergency release of 44,000AF.

USBR claims that the supplemental flows have no significant impact without providing a complete cumulative analysis and without “thresholds of significance” definitions

TLRA is extremely disappointed by the blatant omission from the FONSI of any socioeconomic impact analysis from the supplemental flows on the communities above Trinity Dam. We continue to be frustrated by USBR's continued failure to recognize impacts of Trinity River restoration projects and water allocation on North Trinity Lake communities.

The economic vitality of the Trinity Reservoir communities is solely dependent on eco-tourism. And this eco-tourism is directly tied to water-based lake recreation and fishing.

The combined 92,000AF from the preventative and emergency flows will reduce Trinity Lake water elevation by at least seven feet. This drop in reservoir elevation will likely make many boat ramps unusable, thereby greatly inhibiting public access and tourism.

Even late in the tourist season, this lake elevation drop will impact the fragile economy of the North Lake area.

Even more concerning is the Klamath DEA/FONSI's downplay of the probability that Trinity Reservoir will not refill in 2013. In USBR's own words, the Trinity Reservoir has only a 15% chance of refilling each year (USBR, Interim CVP-OCAP).

If the 2013 statewide water year is a repeat of 2012, then a low reservoir elevation plus the demand for Trinity Reservoir water by statewide water users and power producers could be devastating to the North Lake communities. Our communities are just starting to recover from the reservoir mismanagement in 2008 and the following drought that led to two years with only one boat ramp in the water.

At a minimum, the USBR should develop mitigation measures to reduce the negative economic impact on the North Lake economy. Suggested mitigations are 1) set a 2012 net-neutral reservoir elevation by reducing Trinity Reservoir exports to the Sacramento River equal to the supplemental flows to the Klamath River; 2) provide financial restitution to North Lake businesses for loss of revenue due to reduced late-2012 and possible 2013 lake elevations; and 3) as a longer term, permanent mitigation, implement the extension or relocation of Trinity Reservoir boat ramps to allow safe public access during low water elevation events.

The proposed supplemental flows are not granted to USBR in Judge Wanger's April 4, 2003 ruling

On page 2, the Klamath DEA implies that Judge Wanger's 2003 ruling allows the USBR to use up to an additional 50,000AF of water to prevent a recurrence of the 2002 salmon die-off in any year. However, the ruling specially says, on page 74, that the additional 50,000AF of water is for 2003 *only*. The ruling does not give the USBR the authority to use supplemental flow releases in subsequent years.

The Klamath DEA does not contain, or reference, a published, defensible scientific study or data showing that the preventative release of 48,000AF is needed.

Both the USBR and Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) have been pushing for sound science in all restoration decisions and projects. However now, the USBR is asking the public to trust them that the supplemental flow will prevent a fish die-off at the risk of economic loss and increased electric power costs.

The lack of transparent science behind the plan for additional flows to the Klamath River makes the plan appear to be politically motivated, not environmentally needed.

Even though the Trinity River Division Central Valley Project Act of 1955 (P.L.84-386) says that "the Secretary is authorized and directed to adopt appropriate measures to insure preservation and propagation of fish and wildlife...", the Secretary has a responsibility to the public to justify and defend any measure with science.

Triggers should be established for the preventative supplemental flow release. Other conditions that result in high fish mortality, such as lack of holding pools, such also be mitigated.

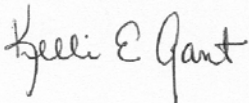
The supplemental release must be defensible and not subjective.

The Klamath DEA does not contain a published, defensible definition of the trigger threshold to be used for the emergency release of 44,000AF.

On page 6 of the Klamath DEA, no definition of the emergency releases trigger threshold is provided. No science study is referenced to support any threshold number.

In closing, TLRA asks that the USBR eliminate the deficits in the Klamath DES/FONSI, define and implement mitigation measures, and use science, not politics, when making decisions that impact the public.

Sincerely,



Ms. Kelli Gant, president
Trinity Lake Revitalization Alliance