INSTREAM

The newsletter of WaterWatch of Oregon — Winter 2002/2003

What's Up?

Potatoes and onions don't belong on the Klamath National Wildlife Refuges. Birds do. Please remind Congress of this distinction. Details on the back page.

What's Inside?

A member of the Yurok Tribe examines dead salmon in the Lower Klamath River, in California, on Sept. 21, 2002. Approximately 33,000 salmon died due to low river flows. Photo by E.J. Finney.

KLAMATH SALMON DIE-OFF STUNS TRIBES

It was the worst environmental tragedy to strike the Northwest in decades. In mid-September a salmon kill of mammoth proportions left tens of thousands of bloated white bodies rotting on the banks the Klamath River. The gruesome sight of the die-off was staggering, and the stench was overpowering. Low river flows, combined with common bacteria, killed half a generation of chinook salmon in a few days' time.

But more tragic than the fish kill itself were the events that led up to it, and the policy of delay and denial adopted by the Bush Administration in its wake. "This was a man-made fish kill," said Bob Hunter, WaterWatch's Southern Oregon staff attorney. "All summer long conservationists, fishermen, and Native Americans warned the Bush Administration that this could happen, and they ignored us."

No group was more affected by the Klamath fish kill than the Native American families who make their homes along the lower river and its tributaries. For thousands of years, fish have been at the center of Native American culture in the Klamath Basin. Many Native American families still depend on subsistence fishing as their primary source of income. Poverty is rampant, with some families lacking basic amenities like telephones and electricity.

The Tribes' treaties with the U.S. government guarantee them rights to a healthy fishery — and with the rights to fish come the rights to the water needed to support them. Unfortunately, time and time again federal and state water managers have ignored these promises.

In an interview on the salmon kill in an Oct. 11th article in the *San Jose Mercury News*, Sue Masten, chairwoman of the Yurok Tribe, stated the problem plainly. "The very survival of our people depends on the survival of that fishery. We hold the senior position with water, and those rights have been ignored with every management decision."

Across the West, water is distributed under a

see KILL, page 9

WaterWatch is a river conservation organization devoted to restoring and protecting natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work in the courts, state and federal agencies, and the legislature to ensure that enough water is left in our rivers to sustain the fish, wildlife, and people who depend on them.

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STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by Kate Vandemoer, executive director

"Man-made fish kills are hardly a new phenomenon in the Klamath Basin, and real people suffer because of them."

Call me a radical, but I think fish need water. I also think that once you make a promise, you ought to keep it. But judging from the tragic deaths of 33,000 salmon in the Klamath River in September, it appears many of our state and federal water managers skipped those particular classes in biology and ethics.

The fish kill was no accident. It was the result of the Bush Administration strangling water releases into the Klamath River down to a trickle, and decades of mismanagement by federal water agencies, as well as the Oregon Water Resources Department and its California counterpart.

Man-made fish kills are hardly a new phenomenon in the Klamath Basin, and real people suffer because of them. This kill affected the Yurok, Hupa and Karuk tribes, who depend on salmon for subsistence fishing. A few years ago the Klamath Tribes suffered when several thousand Lost River and short nosed suckers (known as Qapdo and C'wam to the Tribes) were killed due to low water levels and pollution in Upper Klamath Lake. Though over a hundred miles of damaged river separate the two kills, both are the result of poor federal and state water management.

I worked in the Klamath Basin several years ago as a representative of the Department of the Interior, and had an opportunity to learn first-hand the workings of the federal Klamath Irrigation Project. I also came to understand the role of tribal water and fishing rights, and the mountain of research, dating back years, showing that more water was needed to recover threatened and endangered fish in the basin. These studies were the "best available science" that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) used in 2000 to conclude that the management of the massive Klamath Irrigation Project was jeopardizing the continued existence of endangered suckers and threatened coho salmon.

But apparently "fish need water" is not the sort of science the Bush Administration likes to hear. Instead of accepting this reality, last summer Interior Secretary Gale Norton hired a National Research Council (NRC) committee to "review the science behind the NMFS and USFWS opinions." But the committee may have been asked the wrong question: instead of

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WaterWatch Sues the State Over Groundwater Mitigation Rules

The Deschutes River is one of Oregon's most beloved and protected waterways. Instream water rights are in place on the river to preserve river flows needed for threatened fish, wildlife, river recreation, and scenic values. A citizen initiative also designated the Lower Deschutes as a state scenic waterway, and the river receives further protection as a federal Wild and Scenic River.

All of these safeguards are a testament to how significant and precious the Deschutes River is to the people of Oregon. However, the state Water Resources Commission (WRC) and its Department (WRD), are doing their utmost to create loopholes in these legal protections to facilitate sprawl development in Central Oregon.

The state's historic failure to manage the water resources in the Deschutes Basin to protect this spectacular river system has already created a crisis there. For decades irrigation diversions have taken a heavy toll on the Deschutes, and today Central Oregon's booming population growth is causing the demand for water to skyrocket.

With river protection laws barring new diversions directly from the river, many developers have sought permits to tap underground water sources. However, in the Deschutes Basin groundwater and surface water flows are connected — meaning that when someone pumps groundwater from a well, it eventually depletes surface water flows.

photo by Lana Young

"Putting the Water Resources Department in charge of protecting the Deschutes is like putting the fox in charge of the hen house."

— Karen Russell, WaterWatch —

Faced with a growing environmental problem, and political pressure from developers, the WRD was charged with drafting groundwater pumping rules that protect river flows. The rules are supposed to offset, or mitigate, the damage new pumping will do to the river. But unfortunately, instead of adopting strong rules that protect the Deschutes, the state has accepted a loophole-ridden scheme that actually makes matters worse for the river.

"These rules are supposed to protect the Deschutes River from groundwater pumping," said Kimberley Priestley, WaterWatch's senior policy analyst. "But they do the opposite, they only serve to make it easier to get water rights and reduce river flows."

In November, WaterWatch and a coalition of conservation groups, businesses, and individuals (represented by Chris Winter of the Cascade Resources Advocacy Group), filed a state court challenge alleging that the new groundwater pumping rules violate the State Scenic Waterway Act and the Instream Water Rights Act, as well as several other water laws. The goal of the lawsuit is to send the state back to the drawing board to draft new rules that actually protect the river.

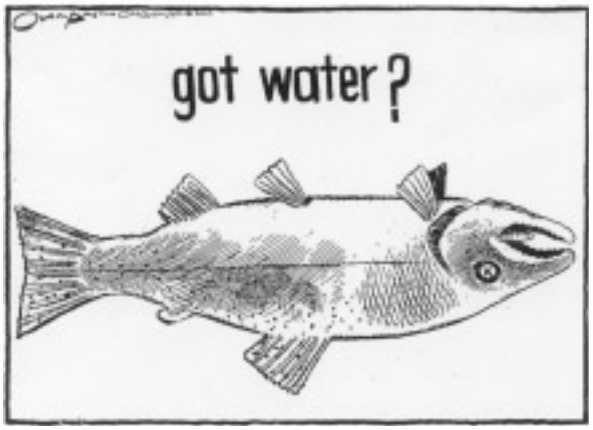
"It has become clear that putting the Water Resources Department in charge of protecting the Deschutes is like putting the fox in charge of the hen house," said Karen Russell, WaterWatch's senior staff attorney.

"We can't sit by and allow the WRD to ignore river protection laws on the Deschutes simply because they find them inconvenient," concluded Priestley. "If the WRD won't protect the water flows that give life to the Deschutes, they won't protect the Clackamas, the Rogue, the McKenzie, or any other scenic waterway in Oregon."

NEWS BRIEFS

New Elk Creek Dam Scheme a Threat to Salmon and Steelhead

Although construction of the dam on Elk Creek, a key salmon spawning tributary of the Rogue River, stopped in 1987 with the dam partially built, various parties continue to dream up schemes to throw more money at the project. Rep. Greg Walden of Oregon recently managed to get a rider attached to the House of Representatives Energy and Water Appropriations Bill that would force U.S. taxpayers to fund a permanent "salmon trucking" scheme at the dam. Under the plan, fish would be trapped at the base of the dam and driven around it in trucks.



Cartoon courtesy of Jack Ohman

The language in the rider would prohibit the Corps of Engineers from adopting a cheaper and more effective alternative - notching Elk Creek Dam to allow free passage of both water and salmon. Money has already been set aside to notch the dam, but the rider diverts these funds into the costly "trap and haul" alternative, simply to preserve the structure of an incomplete and unused dam at the expense of threatened salmon. After this money runs out, taxpayers would continue to be stuck with the bill — forever.

In September, WaterWatch and fifty other conservation, commercial and recreational fishing organizations sent a letter to Senator Gordon Smith asking him to oppose this scheme. The bill is now before a House-Senate Conference Committee, where negotiators will be looking to Oregon's Senators for guidance. The letter urges Senator Smith to contact the Senate Conferees and urge them to strike the rider.

"Down on the Rogue River fishermen have long joked that Elk Creek Dam's only purpose is to kill fish," said Bob Hunter of WaterWatch's southern Oregon office. "If this amendment passes there may finally be a second one . . . a giant sinkhole for American tax dollars."

You can view the letter to Sen. Smith at www.waterwatch.org/elkcreekletter.html - and then send your own to: Senator Gordon Smith / United States Senate / Washington, DC 20510.

Central Oregonians say "Thumbs Down" to Cogentrix

Citizen activism triumphed in Central Oregon this fall, stopping a 980-megawatt natural gas fired power plant that was proposed on land adjacent to the Crooked River National Grasslands. Conservation groups, labor unions, ranchers, hunters and others opposed the plant because of potential impacts on Central Oregon's environment, including the Deschutes and Crooked Rivers. WaterWatch, working with groups such as STOP Cogentrix and the Sierra Club, opposed the associated groundwater applications that would have withdrawn more than 8 million gallons per day of groundwater to operate the plant. In October the Energy Facility Siting Council voted to deny an extension for Cogentrix's "notice of intent", a move that essentially killed the project.

Sandy River Agreement Reached

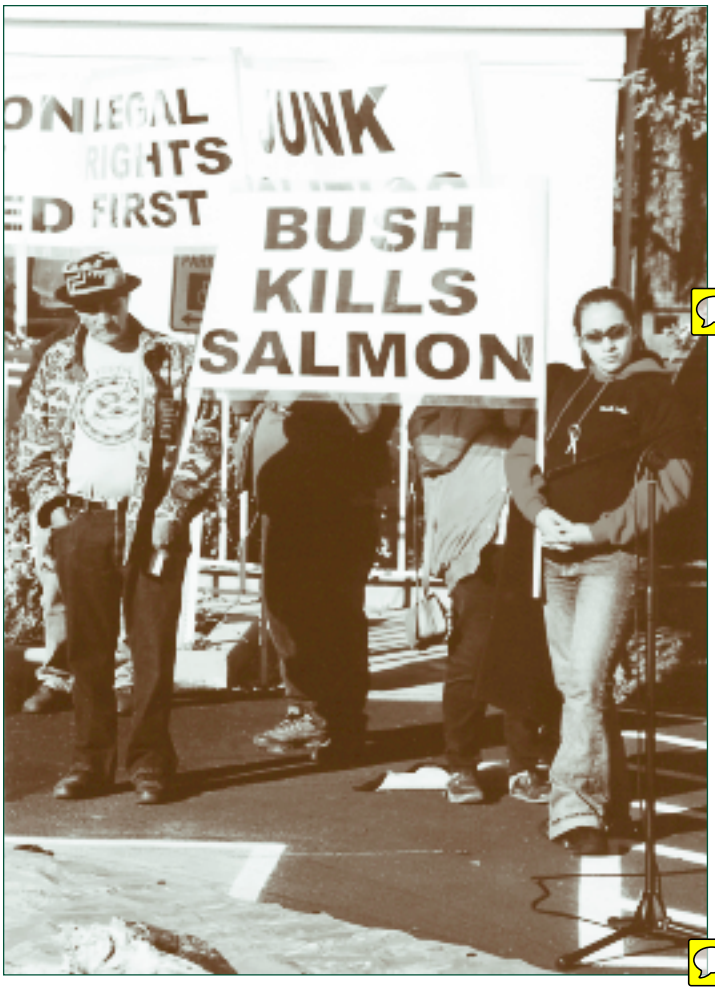
The free flowing character of the Sandy and Little Sandy Rivers is closer to protection now, thanks to a recent agreement that will create a new instream water right on the river. WaterWatch, in concert with American Rivers and Keith Jensen of Alder Creek Kayak Supply, Inc., successfully negotiated an agreement with Portland General Electric (PGE) to ensure that water currently diverted from the Sandy River and the Little Sandy River for power production will be protected instream.

The deal is part of a series of agreements relating to PGE's decision to surrender its license for its Bull Run Hydroelectric project and to remove the Marmot and Little Sandy dams. The instream agreement will result in up to 600 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water protected in a segment of the Sandy River mainstem below Marmot Dam and up to 200 cfs of water in the Little Sandy River and a portion of the Bull Run River.

WaterWatch Supports Steens Mountain Streams Protection

This past summer WaterWatch took action to support applications for instream water rights in two small creeks within the new Steens Mountain wilderness area in southeast Oregon. Home and Threemile Creeks flow through the wilderness area and down into the Catlow Valley, and are a critical component of the scenic and recreational values of the wilderness. Both creeks provide critical habitat for native redband trout and tui chub, which are listed by the state as sensitive species and also have "Special Status" with the Bureau of Land Management.

WaterWatch also opposed a proposal by Roaring Springs Ranch to capture flows in the headwaters of Home Creek for flood irrigation and livestock watering. The ranch, represented by former Oregon Water Resources Department director Martha Pagel, proposes to build a 40-foot tall earthen dam, which not only threatens downstream habitat for these sensitive fish, but would also flood wetland meadows that are important foraging and rearing areas for several species of wildlife. WaterWatch was joined in these appeals by The Oregon Natural Desert Association and Oregon Trout.



Yurok Council Member Richard Myers, left, and his daughter mince no words when protesting federal water policies in the Klamath Basin. The demonstration — with representatives of the Yurok, Hoopa and Karuk Tribes, as well as environmental groups — took place in Klamath Falls on Oct. 11th, 2002.

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reviewing the "science behind the opinions," the committee attempted to answer if it was "certain that more water would recover the fish."

Though the interim review by the NRC concluded more research was needed to form solid conclusions (and the review itself has been harshly criticized by other scientists), irrigation interests and the Administration seized on the results to declare that fish don't need water. It became the basis of the 10-year water management plan that began this spring, and resulted in the 33,000 dead chinook, coho, and steelhead in the Klamath River.

But while I am outraged by the scientific shenanigans of the Bush Administration in the Klamath Basin, I am more troubled by how the water rights of Native Americans continue to be ignored. The salmon that died in the Klamath River, and the suckers that have died in past years in Upper Klamath Lake, are more than just abstract losses on some giant environmental spreadsheet. They represent the economic and cultural lifeblood of Native American communities throughout the basin - communities that have treaties with the United States government guaranteeing them rights to healthy fisheries, along with the water needed to support them.

These communities do not receive crop insurance or federal subsidies. By law they should be at the top of the chain for water, but instead they have been shortchanged time and time again by federal and state water managers. And now it seems the Bush Administration is hellbent on continuing this shameful tradition. And that stinks worse than the rotting carcasses of thousands of salmon on the banks of the Klamath River.

RIVER PROFILE: The Wallowa

Local citizens are working together to protect this dramat

High in the remote alpine lakes and meadows of the Eagle Cap wilderness area in Northeastern Oregon, the Wallowa River originates as a series of small streams that tumble out of steep canyons, coalescing to form the Wallowa River, which then rushes quickly out of the mountains in a northerly direction. The river is temporarily captured by the Wallowa Lake Dam before spilling into the Wallowa Valley near the town of Joseph and heading northwest toward its confluence with the Grande Ronde River, some 35 miles downstream. The lower ten miles of the Wallowa River are classified as Wild and Scenic, and is the gateway to the Wild and Scenic portion of the Grande Ronde. The Wallowa River is the largest tributary of the Grande Ronde River.

The geology and hydrology of this part of Oregon is complex and unique. The Wallowa Mountains, from which the river originates, are considered one of the most geologically diverse mountain ranges in the country. They consist of thick layers of basalt volcanic rock, sedimentary rocks with embedded fossils, and barren, sharp granitic peaks. Glaciers carved and scoured the landscape in the last 10,000 years, producing the characteristic u-shaped valleys, ridgetops, and extensive amounts of sand and gravel typical of glaciated terrain. Extensively fractured rocks contribute to numerous springs and seeps in the mountains, and water that falls in the mountains can move through these fractures to supply springs, streamflow and ground water in lower valley. In fact, much of the summer streamflow in the Wallowa River originates from springs and seeps.

The Wallowa River flowing below the Wallowa Mountains. Photo by David Jensen.

The climate of this region is also complex, a mixture of the northern Rocky Mountains to the east and the Cascades to the west. Snowfall in the highest elevations can amount to 400 inches annually, while precipitation in the lower elevations ranges from 40-70 inches. The summer climate is characterized by intense thunderstorms brought on by the funneling effect of valleys running east-west and north-south. One such thunderstorm in the summer of 2002, in the Wallowa River drainage above Wallowa Lake, produced a mudslide that overran a Boy Scout camp and turned the normally clear water of t color of chocolate milk. The name "Wallowa" is guage of the Nez Perce T structure of stakes set in a triangle which support a network of sticks, or baskets called "lacallas," and placed in a stream for catching salmon. Ideal salmon habitat, including rocky stream channels, overhanging branches and vegetation deep pools, and cool water, contributed to large historic salmon returns. Steelhead, sock-eye and chinook were al native to the river.

Historically, the Wallowa the Joseph band) of Nez pied the steep canyons i Ronde basin during the to the open country alon the summer. There was land occupation betwee Umatilla Tribes. These la ered "ceded" territories tribes retain hunting and rights have been constru meaningful only if there fish to harvest. Both trib ration in the Wallowa ar tems as essential to their

In 1996, the lower 10 m River was designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers s tion preserves the outsta scenic and recreational r Wallowa. The river corri for threatened and endan eagles and peregrine falc

WALLOWA RIVER FACTS

Size - relatively small for Oregon, about 3 percent the size of the Deschutes
Length - 50 miles
Watershed area - 49,300 acres
Average annual flow - 496,300 acre feet (the average annual flow of the Deschutes River near Culver, OR, is 672,000 acre feet).
Average daily flow - 685 cubic feet per second (one cubic food per second, or one cfs = 26,930 gallons per hour)
Rapids - Class I and Class II

ic river, which tumbles out of the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

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The name "Wallowa" describes a structure of stakes set in a triangle that was placed in a stream for catching salmon.

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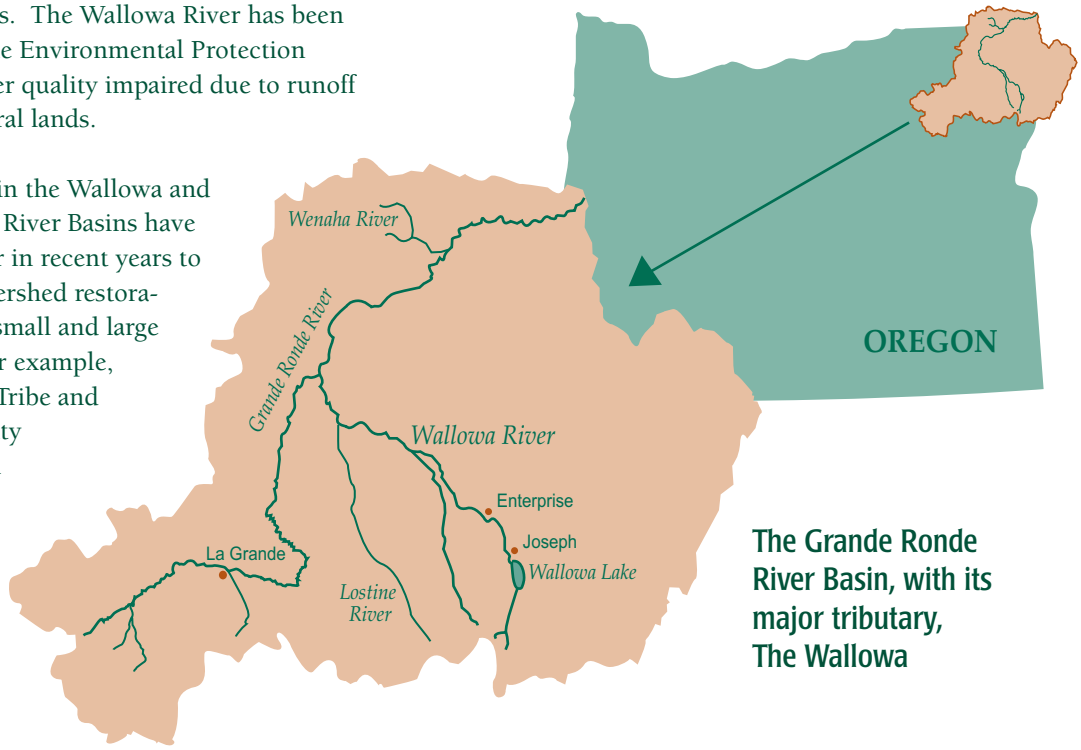
cons, and is a wintering
range for elk, mule deer and white deer. The Wallowa offers significant fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, boating (including an extended whitewater boating season), and a state park for camping.

Despite its diverse history, the Wallowa faces serious problems today. Columbia River mainstem dams, Snake River Dams and the construction of Wallowa Lake Dam all contributed to the drastic decline of salmon stocks in the Wallowa Basin, as did water diversions and land use practices, hatcheries and other activities. Extensive logging, followed by grazing and agricultural development, weakened stream channels, disrupted riparian vegetation and caused extensive erosion. Water diversions and groundwater pumping close to rivers and streams reduced flows in the summer and fall months. The Wallowa River has been classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as water quality impaired due to runoff from agricultural lands.

Many citizens in the Wallowa and Grande Ronde River Basins have joined together in recent years to undertake watershed restoration efforts of small and large magnitude. For example, the Nez Perce Tribe and Wallowa County collaborated in 1999 to produce a salmon recovery plan and multi-species habitat recovery plan. Currently, collaborative efforts are underway in the Wallowa River involving a wide range of habitat and water management activities designed to restore the river corridor while maintaining the rural character of the region.

What Water Watch is Doing:
A tributary of the Wallowa River, the Lostine, was featured in our Legally Dry report, which focused on how state laws permit the over-appropriation of Oregon's rivers. We will continue to push for water conservation measures to be adopted by both irrigation and municipal water suppliers in the basin (such as the city of Joseph). We are also watchdogging permits in this and other river basins in Oregon, and pushing for reforms in state water laws, including the need to measure and report all water uses. WaterWatch will continue to support on-going collaborative and private efforts in water conservation and streamflow restoration in the Wallowa River Basin.



The Grande Ronde River Basin, with its major tributary, The Wallowa

ACTIVIST PROFILE

Len Mathisen: Wisdom Borne of a Lifetime of Work in the Deschutes

WaterWatch member and long-time Bend resident, Len Mathisen, has been involved in Deschutes River issues for over 50 years — both in his professional career and as a volunteer.

After graduating from Oregon State University in 1939 with a degree in fisheries management, Len hit the ground running by spending a year doing biological surveys for 40 lakes and reservoirs in the Deschutes National Forest. Then, after serving in the Army in World War II, and spending a few years studying the Lower Umpqua River, Len moved back to Bend in 1950 to serve as regional supervisor for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Central Region.

As regional supervisor, Len immersed himself in a myriad of water right issues — from the setting of minimum streamflows, to evaluating the beneficial or detrimental impacts of essentially any project that would affect the river. As controversial issues hit his desk, his main goal was to make sure the river was treated fairly. In some cases, it was — for example, when a proposed dam for Benham Falls was defeated. In other cases, it wasn't. The Pelton Round Butte Hydroelectric Project, which blocks salmon and steelhead from their habitat in the Crooked, Metolious and upper Deschutes Rivers, was built despite much opposition.

"State engineers, Water Resources Boards, Commissions and Departments have long made decisions detrimental to the Deschutes River and its fish. With WaterWatch in the basin, the river just might have a chance."

— Len Mathisen —

In addition to his paid work in the basin, Len has devoted countless hours to protecting rivers and fish. He has served on the County's Deschutes Mitigation and Enhancement Committee, as well as on the advisory boards for ODFW's and Central Oregon Irrigation Districts. He also was a dedicated participant during the long four years that migitation for new groundwater pumping was discussed in the Deschtues Groundwater Steering Committee. In addition to these activities, Len is a long-time member of WaterWatch, Trout Unlimited and the Coalition for the Deschutes. An avid flyfisher, Len's inspiration has been the trout, steelhead and salmon that call the river home.

Most recently, Len joined in a lawsuit brought by WaterWatch and a coalition of river related businesses, conservation groups and concerned citizens (see story on page 3) alleging that the state's new groundwater pumping rules violate the State Scenic Waterway Act , Instream Water Rights Act, and several other water laws. The lawsuit may send the state back to the drawing board to draft new rules that actually protect the Deschutes River.

Len joined eagerly because, as he puts it, "legal minimum flows, and the public interest in these flows, have been ignored, misinterpreted and misrepresented over the past 100 years." Len also joined because he feels it unjust that the WRD and its Commission "deliberately ignored the Scenic Waterway Act and the Instream Water Rights Act on the Deschutes River, in spite of the fact that the public overwhelmingly voted in support of the river in 1970 and 1983. And in spite of the concerns of ODFW, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Bureau of Land Management."

A lifetime of work in the basin provides Len with a unique perspective on the importance of WaterWatch's advocacy there. "During most of my 50-plus years of 'frustration', there was no WaterWatch," says Len. "There was no non-profit legal organization willing and able to represent the public interest. State engineers, Water Resources Boards, Commissions and Departments have long made decisions detrimental to the Deschutes River and its fish. With WaterWatch in the Basin, the river just might have a chance."

KILL, continued from page 1

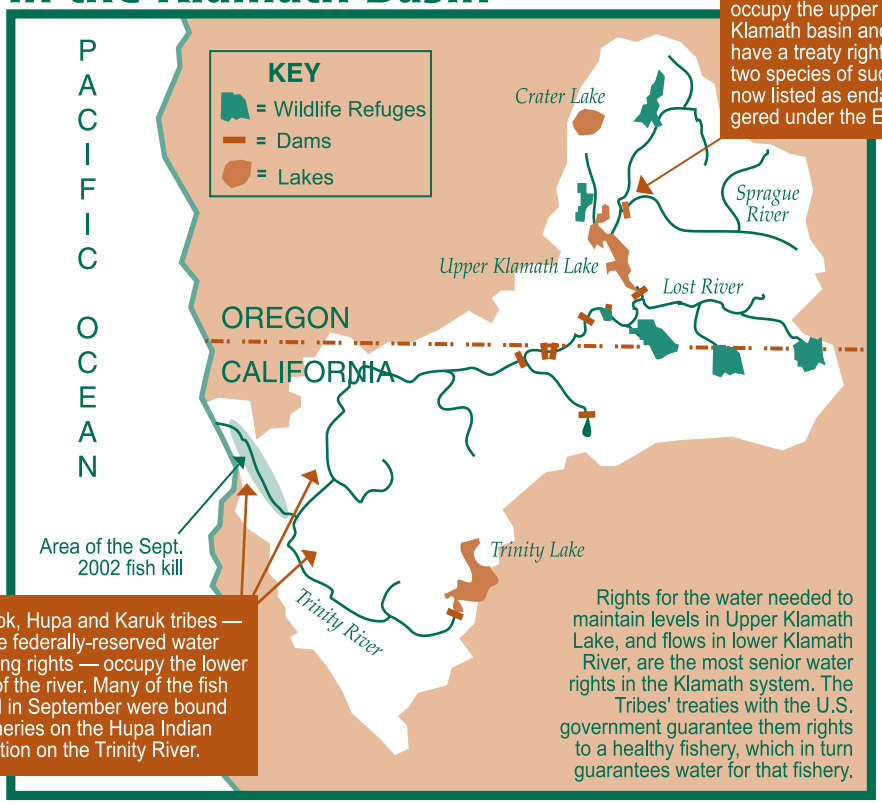
system of laws that give the first person to use water from a river the legal right to do so forever. The next person in line gets what is left, and so on until there is nothing left to distribute. The health of a river, and the fish and wildlife it supports, is often an afterthought.

But where do Native Americans fit in this system? According to several court rulings, when Tribal treaties with the U.S. Government preserve natural resources for indigenous people, they also preserve the water needed to support them. While earliest irrigation water rights in the Klamath Basin date back to the late 1800's (and the massive Klamath Irrigation Project water rights are from 1905 or later), the water rights of Native American Tribes date back to "time immemorial."

The Klamath Tribes, whose ancestral lands lie on the Oregon side of the basin, have won several legal battles over the water needed to meet their treaty rights to healthy fisheries of Lost River and shortnose suckers (known as Qapdo and C'wam to the Tribes.) The Tribes also have a treaty right to a salmon fishery which was annihilated by the dams that blocked salmon from returning to the upper basin.

But despite their legal victories, and their status at the top of the priority system for water in the Klamath, Native Americans still find themselves battling for a share of the basin's scarce waters. While the Bush Administration maintained 100 percent water deliveries for high desert irrigation in the basin this summer, river flows were slashed to 25 percent less than last year — a critical drought year. Water levels in Upper Klamath Lake, home to the endangered Qapdo and C'wam, were drained to bare minimums, and even the refuges were left with too little water for their basic needs.

Native American Tribes in the Klamath Basin



"The fish kill was like kicking a hornet's nest. It has bought us all together — the tribes, conservationists and fishermen." - Bob Hunter

"What we have learned in the last year is that in the Klamath Basin, politics trump science, logic, and what is morally right," said WaterWatch executive director Kate Vandemoer. "We've seen the Bush Administration turn science on its ear to say that fish don't need water, knowing full well that they could devastate Native American communities in the process."

The staggering fish kill has served as the catalyst for a new alliance of conservationists, fishermen, and Native Americans. Native Americans have joined, for the first time, in an endangered species lawsuit seeking to overturn the Bush Administration's lethal flow regime for the Klamath River. Outrage over the kill also led California Congressman Mike Thompson, who represents the lower river, to join the lawsuit.

"In some ways the fish kill was like kicking a hornets' nest," said Bob Hunter. "It has brought us all together, Tribes, conservationists, and fishermen. We have put the Bush Administration on notice that we will not surrender in our fight to restore and protect the fish and wildlife of the Klamath Basin."

INSIDE WATERWATCH

Rogue Flyfishers' Steelhead Championship Tournament Reels in $2000 for WaterWatch

As advertised in the last issue of Instream, the Rogue Flyfishers held their annual Steelhead Championship Tournament on October 5th. This major annual fundraiser for the Flyfishers was a great success, netting over $6,000 for the Flyfishers — $2,000 of which they very generously donated to WaterWatch!! The event drew 36 anglers (a mixture of WaterWatch and Rogue Flyfishers members) in 18 boats. The largest fish, at 28 inches, was caught by the president of the club, Bill Rittenhouse. Rittenhouse fished from a boat rowed by Bob Hunter, staff attorney for WaterWatch. Other highlights from the Tournament included Gary Farnham catching the most inches, and Steve Godshall as the oarsman whose rowers caught the most inches.

The dinner and auction following the tournament drew over 100 people and featured Hunter speaking about the history and connections between the Flyfishers and WaterWatch, which dates back to the founding of WaterWatch. Tom Simmons was an active member of the Flyfishers beginning in the 1970s, and took part in the club's conservation projects to enhance water quality, fish passage and habitat. Following his restoration work with the Flyfishers, Simmons, along with his wife Audrey, wanted to increase and protect instream flows in Oregon's rivers. This led them to found WaterWatch in 1985. Since then, a variety of projects have linked the Flyfishers and WaterWatch.

A very special thanks goes to WaterWatch and Rogue Flyfishers member John MacDiarmid. John was the main organizer of the Tournament this year, and agreed to do so if WaterWatch received the first $2,000 raised by the event.

Bob Hunter with Bill Rittenhouse, president of Rogue Flyfishers, and the winning fish.

WaterWatch WebSite is New and Improved

In January WaterWatch will launch a new and improved website! Still located at the same address, www.waterwatch.org, our website is getting a much-needed facelift, courtesy of Michael McDermott of Retifex Design Group (www.retifex.org). Michael has donated many hours of his time to redesigning and streamlining the site, so that it will not only be much nicer to look at but also easier to use. WaterWatch is very grateful to Michael for all his work.

The content of the site is being updated too: now you will find more detailed information on WaterWatch campaigns, along with a new press archive, so you can follow WaterWatch and our issues in the news.

Another exciting new feature is a page especially for kids! This new page will contain information on water conservation and pollution, including tips for saving water, math problems & a science experiment, as well as links to other kid-friendly websites. Other new features will continue to be added over the next several months. Meanwhile, please send any website-related comments or ideas to molly@waterwatch.org.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Help WaterWatch Stay the Course During Oregon's Recession

As a WaterWatch member, you know the importance of natural river flows, and you know how poorly water is managed in Oregon and throughout the West. The staggering fish kill in the Klamath is a striking example of how low flows and the mismanagement of our water resources are endangering our state's wild fish populations.

As a member, you know that **WaterWatch is working in the Klamath Basin to find a more balanced approach to water management**. We are also working to protect the Deschutes River and its tributaries from the effects of Central Oregon's burgeoning population growth and the demand it is putting on the area's water resources.

As a member, you know that **WaterWatch works to find solutions to the state's water problems.** We do this through encouraging conservation and efficiency for municipalities and irrigators, working through legal and policy avenues to force state and federal agencies to protect Oregon rivers, and working in coalition with tribes, commercial fishing groups, recreationists, farmers, and other conservation groups.

And as you may also know, many non-profit groups, including WaterWatch, are facing difficult financial times due to this year's economic downturn. WaterWatch is very grateful to our members for your past support.

We hope that in this challenging time we can count on you for your continued support of our work with a special gift. Our work cannot continue without the generous contributions of our dedicated members.

Please consider giving a little extra this year to ensure that we can continue protecting Oregon's rivers and streams. Just fill out the enclosed envelope and send it in with your special gift. Or if you want to support WaterWatch all year long, fill out the form below to donate monthly. Thanks in advance for your generous support.

HELP PROTECT OREGON'S RIVERS ALL YEAR LONG! BECOME A RIVER PARTNER BY DONATING EACH MONTH TO WATERWATCH

"YES! I want to be a RIVER PARTNER. I agree to donate the following amount each month:"

_____ $10 _____ $15 _____ $20 _____ $25 $ _____ other

I prefer to donate by one of the following methods:

1. AUTOMATIC BANK TRANSFER: I authorize WaterWatch to receive the above amount from my checking account on the fifth day of each month, and I am enclosing a VOIDED check for bank coding purposes.
Signature: _____ Date: _____

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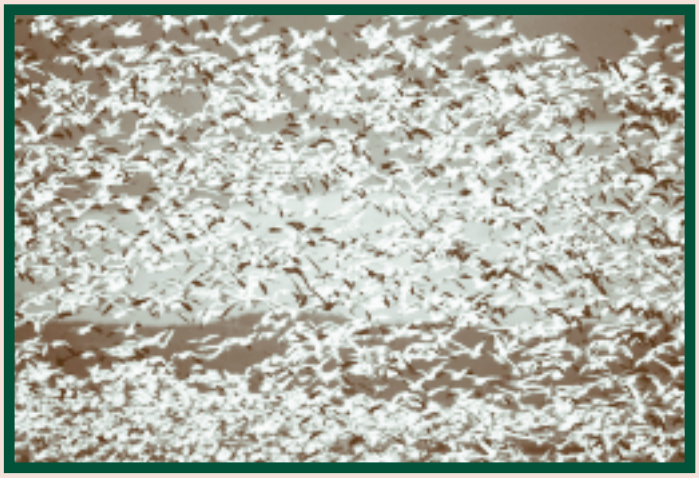
Return this form with your voided check to: WaterWatch, 213 SW Ash, Suite 208, Portland, OR 97204.
And thank you for joining RIVER PARTNERS!

WATERWATCHER
Bulletin Board

Help Get Potatoes Off the Klamath National Wildlife Refuges!

In one of the few places in America reserved for wildlife habitat — mere fragments of the hundreds of thousands of acres of lakes, streams, and marshes that once blanketed the Klamath Basin — how can potatoes and onions have priority over waterfowl for water? That's a good question for your congressional representative. Two of the six National Wildlife Refuges that dot the Klamath Basin in southern Oregon/northern California — the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath — are forced to support commercial agriculture on land that was set aside for eagles and herons. Large-scale farming operations drain up to 60,000 acre-feet of water per year for potatoes and onoins — water that could otherwise go to support fish and wildlife. And these crops get their water before any is delivered for waterfowl. Worse, much of the water they do recieve is contaminated with pesticides, fertilizers, and animal wastes.

TAKE ACTION: WaterWatch and other conservation groups are fighting in Congress and in court for more responsible management of the Klamath Basin's refuges, but we need your help. Please contact your congressperson now and encourage them to speak up for the Klamath, and to help phase out commercial farming on the refuges. For more details to help you write your letter, see the WaterWatch web site at: www.waterwatch.org To contact your congressional representative, call (202) 224-3121, or visit the WaterWatch web site at www.waterwatch.org/legislators.html



Waterfowl block out the sky above the Klamath wildlife refuges.

THANKS TO ALL THE DEVOTED DEFENDERS OF THE DESCHUTES!

WaterWatch thanks all the people and organizations who weighed in on the state's Deschutes groundwater mitigation rulemaking. Nearly 300 individuals and organizations wrote in to urge protection of the Deschutes, and 200 people showed up for a hearing in Bend in April – the overwhelming majority urging protection of the river. The abundant public input resulted in an unprecedented *three* revisions of the rules. Though the final product still doesn't do enough to protect the Deschutes, river activists have put the Water Resources Department on notice that they expect to state to do more to protect our rivers and streams.

WATERWATCH

PROTECTING NATURAL FLOWS IN OREGON RIVERS

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