



Whiskey's for Drinkin', Water's for Fightin'

Science, Politics and Dam Deconstruction in the Klamath Basin

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What role does science play in identifying solutions for environmental problems?

Controversy in the Klamath Basin

Debate in the Basin

Dilemmas in the Klamath have roots dating back to the 19th century: droughts throughout the 1900s and early 2000s have left the Basin dry and the region economically hurting. The current debate was initiated by PacifiCorp Energy's decision to remove four of the seven hydroelectric dams it owns along the Klamath River.

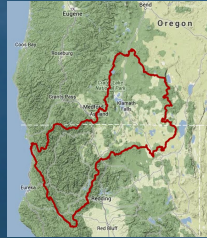


Figure 1: The Klamath River Basin



Figure 2: The four dams up for removal- J.C. Boyle, Iron Gate, Copco 1, and Copco 2

The Settlement Agreements

Aware of the strong opposition to dam deconstruction, PacifiCorp made an attempt to reach out to those who would be affected by the removal. After a series of 80 public meetings, over 40 key parties signed the Klamath Settlement Agreement (KSA). The final KSA comprises three separate agreements:

1. The Klamath Basin Recovery Agreement (KBRA)
2. Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSa)
3. Upper Klamath Basin Agreement (UKBA)

The National Environmental Policy Act

The provisions outlined by KSA include federal land transfers and federal funding for the KBRA, so the agreements require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

- yields an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Purpose and Need Statement: *the proposed action should achieve volitional fish passage for salmonid species in the Klamath River*
- removal of the four dams was the best way to achieve this goal

The Five Problems

1. legislation is not designed to incorporate the nuances of environmental issues
2. the federal agencies are too focused on their agency goals to judge whether or not they are relevant and helpful
3. the history of neglect of those without power that is not adequately recognized in the NEPA process
4. the stakeholders that make up the parties in debates are atypical, making the the dispute unprecedented and the outcome unpredictable
5. under NEPA, the EIS shifts emphasis primarily toward the volitional passage of salmonid species

Science, Nature and Politics

A Faltering Mechanism

The perception of science as removed from and uninfluenced by politics reinforces the nature/culture binary and estranges practitioners in the fields of science and politics. As such, the federal system of environmental solution-making is not capable of effectively addressing environmental issues and this central misconception has led to the adoption of scientific standards that idealize objectivity without accurately accounting for politics' role in shaping the way science is practiced and used.

Warped Perceptions

Classic understandings of nature/society, values/facts, and science/politics as necessarily separate must be disavowed.

- allow current frameworks to relinquish heavy reliance on *disinterested* discourses
- incorporate *interested* discourses more rigorously
- move away from post-politics and reintegrate conflict

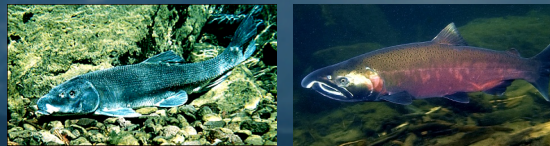
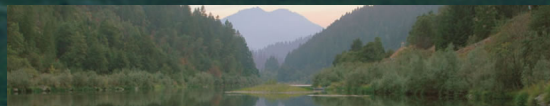


Figure 3 and 4: Listed threatened Klamath Basin species sucker (left) and coho salmon (right)

Figure 5: The Klamath River



Manifestation in the Klamath Basin

This trouble with the federal system of environmental problem-solving is reflected in the way that environmental problems have manifested in the Klamath Basin.

- Proceedings in the Basin used facts to falsely discount all but one plan of action
- Purpose and Need statement was defined by an agency that idealizes objectivity,
- the debate is focused on dam removal outcomes relative to salmonid species and not sociological, economic, political, and more minute environmental effects

Resources

Selected Works

Latour, Bruno. 2004. *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
Latour, Helen E. 1980. Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry. *Am. Sci.* 22. 2. Princeton University Press.
Powers, Kyle, Pamela Baldwin, Eugene H. Black, and Betsy A. Coady. 2005. *Klamath River Basin Issues and Activities: An Overview*. GRS Report for Congress. Walker, Peter A. 2005. "Political Ecology: Where is the Policy?" *Progress in Human Geography* 29 (1): 73-83.

Images

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http://oregonprogress.oregonstate.edu/files/oregonprogress.oregonstate.edu/files/9009000/public/issue/winter2014/klamathmap.pdf?file-T-uw60_S
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<http://www.klamathriver.com/images/river2.jpg>

Latour's New Constitution

Latour's Bicameral System

Latour's new bicameral system is one way to re-imagine environmental solution-making

- actors not confined by their expertise and instead can wear many different hats

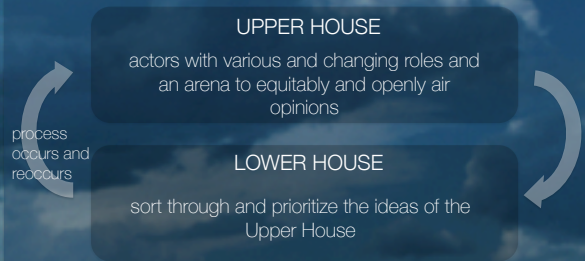


Figure 5: Latour's bicameral system, what he refers to as "The New Constitution"

The Five Solutions

Latour's system:

1. ... turns a procedure that typically valorizes science and scientific expertise into a process that does not hold the knowledge or opinion of any one participant over another
2. ...requires that agency goals and jobs be redefined to reflect the introduction of new multitudes and types of actors
3. ...is a way to recognize and emphasize what power relations have been misrecognized or ignored
4. ...makes these unexpected types of interactions commonplace
5. ...moves away from a system based on the separation of interested versus disinterested disciplines

Political Ecology Praxis

The categorization of research itself as a political act is becoming an increasingly difficult classification to defend, so the question remains, is there a way for political ecology to have a meaningful impact on the systems it critiques? Political ecology, even with all its issues, has so much to offer that its lack of application to such complex situations is inexcusable. While it is just a first attempt, applying Latour's framework on a real and current environmental issue provided proof that exercises like these can provide surprisingly useful results. Working out how Latour's system can be used in the Klamath Basin is a way to concretely apply political ecology theory in the policymaking process and make real recommendations for systematic change.