

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

Science, Politics and **Dam Deconstruction**
in the **Klamath Basin**

Honors **Defense** Kelsey Kahn May 2015

Outline

Guiding Questions

Thesis Statement

Argument

- Environmental Law, Federal Agencies and Water Law
- The Klamath Basin Water Rights Controversy
- Objectivity and Disinterested and Interested Disciplines
- Political Ecology and Post Politics
- Latour's Bicameral System
- The New Constitution in the Klamath Basin

Discussion

Take Away



Guiding Questions

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

Can theory play a part in the evolution of the federal environmental problem solving system?



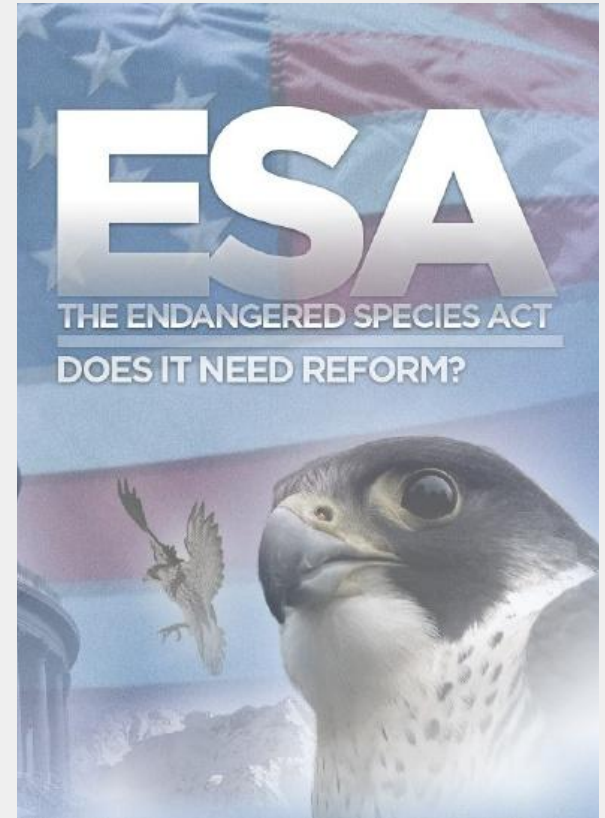
Thesis Statement

The system used to provide solutions to environmental dilemmas is not capable of effectively addressing environmental issues. Current methodologies focus on disinterested discourses like the hard sciences and neglect the parts of problems that do not have fact-based solutions.

Political ecology theory can be used to reimagine this system.

Environmental Law

- Environmental law is a relatively new field
- Common law of nuisance
- Environmental legislation based off of scientific analysis
 - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
 - Clean Water Act (CWA)
 - Endangered Species Act (ESA)



Federal Agencies



Management Agencies

- Concrete action
- Consider outside factors when taking action
- Scientific integrity
- Bureau of Reclamation & Fish and Wildlife



Science Agencies

- Only produce “reliable information”
- Not involved in policy action
- Objectivity and peer review
- U.S. Geological Survey

The Klamath Basin Water Rights Controversy

- The Klamath Region as a case study
- Prior appropriation
- Short nose sucker and coho salmon listed as threatened under ESA
- 2001 drought brought water rights disputes to a head



The Klamath Basin Water Rights Controversy ^{ctd.}

- PacifiCorp chose to take down four dams (ESA & CWA)
- Klamath Settlement Agreements (**KSA**)
 - Klamath Basin Recovery Agreement (**KBRA**)
 - Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (**KHSA**)
 - Upper Klamath Basin Agreement (**UKBA**)



The Klamath Basin Water Rights Controversy ^{ctd.}

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Yields EIS that is guided by 'Purpose and Need' statement
- Issues with NEPA
 - Positive environmental impact
 - Transparency
 - Role of the USGS



ctd.

The Klamath Basin Water Rights Controversy

The five problems:

1. Legislation and nuances of environmental issues
2. Federal agency focus
3. History of neglect
4. Atypical stakeholders
5. Emphasis on empirical solutions



Objectivity

- Scientific methodologies as a way to silence political concerns
- Critiques of objectivity
- Eradicating values
- Acknowledging rather than ignoring values

“In general, we have no better way of producing knowledge about the natural world than doing science.”

Heather Douglas

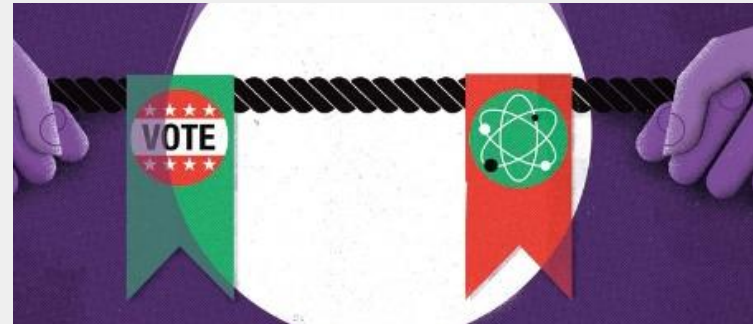
Disinterested & Interested Disciplines

Disinterested Disciplines

- Truths are truths no matter the social context
- Reliance on empirical data and facts
- Choice A, not choice B, will best achieve goals of C
- Hard sciences

Interested Disciplines

- Speech acts to defend specific interests
- Focus on values and morality
- Politics



Political Ecology & Science/Nature/Politics



- Science/nature/politics
 - seen as necessarily separate
 - nature only knowable through sciences
- Political Ecology
 - Social/environmental systems and power relations
 - Political ecology as a useful tool

Post Politics

- Managerial approach to government
- Value-free speech given more respect
- Frauds:
 - a. use of values to discount facts
 - b. use of facts to discount all but one plan

“If we concede too much to facts, the human element in its entirety tilts into objectivity and becomes a countable and calculable thing.”

Bruno Latour

Latour's Bicameral System

Old Constitution

HOUSE OF NATURE

where science, facts and disinterested disciplines reside

where politics, values and interested disciplines reside

HOUSE OF SOCIETY

New Constitution

UPPER HOUSE

actors with various and changing roles and an arena to equitably and openly air opinions

process
occurs and
re-occurs

sort through and
prioritize the ideas of the
Upper House

LOWER HOUSE

The New Constitution in the Basin

The Settlement Agreements

- 'Collective' made up of all stakeholders and any other people or entities involved
- Open negotiations
- Sorting out
- Continuing process



The New Constitution in the Basin

ctd.

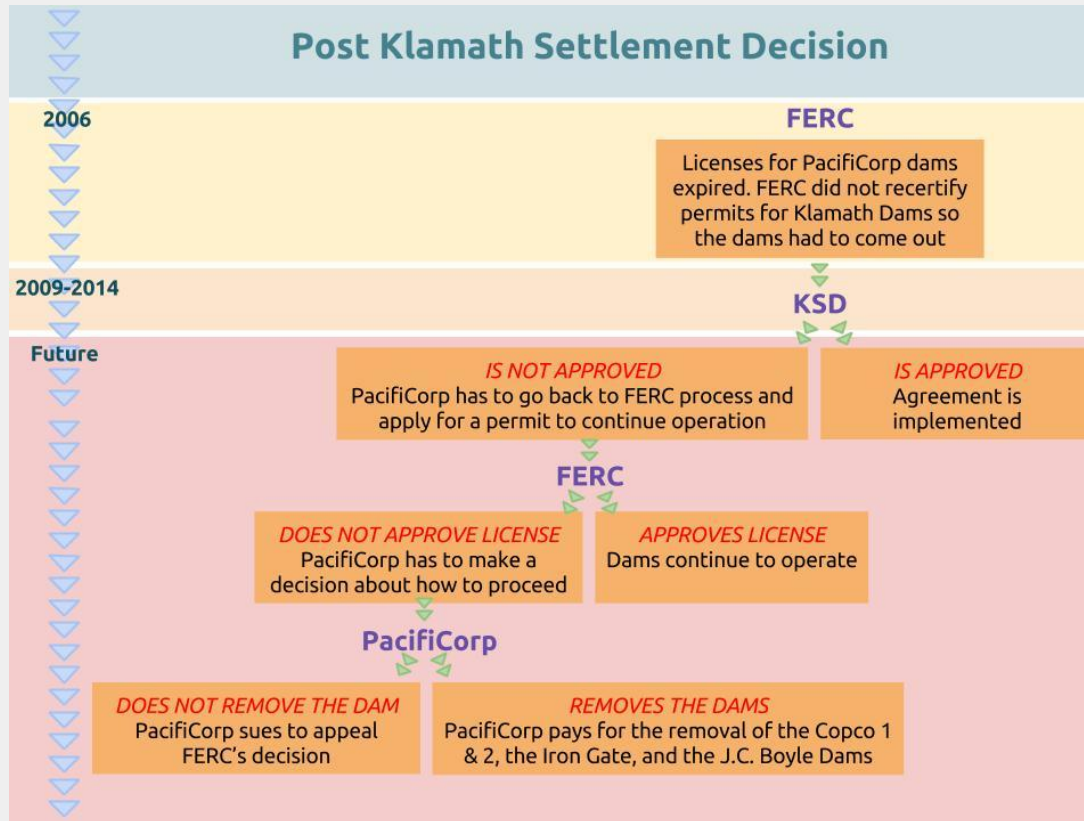
The five **problems**:

1. Legislation and nuances of environmental issues
2. Federal agency focus
3. History of neglect
4. Stakeholders atypical
5. Emphasis on empirical solutions

The five **solutions**:

1. Process does not hold the knowledge or opinion of any one participant over another
2. Agency goals and jobs redefined
3. Recognize power relations
4. Unexpected interactions commonplace
5. Moves away from interested versus disinterested disciplines

Discussion



Discussion

ctd.

- Latour's system
 - Just the beginning
 - Addressing the five problems
- The success of the Klamath Settlement Agreements
- NEPA as a faltering mechanism

The choice to move forward with the removal of the dams "is too important to leave any stone unturned."

Dennis Lynch

Take Away

- The relationship between science, nature and politics
- Power as a tool to perpetuate an image of powerlessness
- Political ecology praxis

“What is to be done with political ecology? Nothing. What is to be done? Political Ecology!”

Bruno Latour

A landscape photograph featuring a green field in the foreground, a body of water, and mountains in the distance under a blue sky with large white clouds. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the sky, containing the word "Questions" in white text.

Questions