

October 21, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Scott White  
[scott.white@klamathdrainagedistrict.org](mailto:scott.white@klamathdrainagedistrict.org)  
(541) 510-6311

**Salmon Sightings in Klamath Drainage District Emphasize Urgency for Fish Screens  
Ignored for years, KDD’s call for protection for family farms and fish becomes urgent with  
Chinook spotted in canal.**

**Klamath Falls, OR** – Last week, Klamath Drainage District (KDD) staff witnessed large dark masses below the surface of the water in the Ady Canal. Upon further inspection, those dark masses surfaced the water exposing their fins. On Friday, October 17th, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) confirmed that the fins were those of Chinook salmon. To date, salmon have been spotted from the head of the Ady Canal all the way down to the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge).

Scott White, the General Manager for the district said, “It’s a very exciting time. However, I never want to have to say, ‘I told you so.’ But dang it, I told you so,” he said with frustration. “It’s been nine years since the KPFA was signed and none of the promises made to farmers in that agreement regarding reintroduction of species have been upheld.”

White is referring to the Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement (KPFA) which was signed in 2016 by the United States, the State Governments of Oregon and California, and multiple Klamath Basin stakeholders. Specifically, White refers to Section II.B.2a and b that commits the federal and state parties to support funding “entrainment reduction facilities” for Klamath Project contractors (water users). There have been no fish screens installed under the agreement to date.

“We have been warning folks of this day for years and begging for support and very little has been done beyond lip service,” White continued. “Are you paying attention, now? A lot of effort and dollars were put into dam removal and restoration—now let’s see that fish are protected the way the KPFA intended.”

Although there have been no screens installed under the terms of the KPFA, KDD and Family Water Alliance (FWA) are forcing movement on the installation of five screens on turnouts in the Ady Canal. KDD has been working closely with the FWA, the Bureau of Reclamation and the ODFW on a \$4.5 million multi-screen project that will assist in keeping these fish from going down turnouts where they don’t belong.

“While it’s exciting for everyone to see salmon in the Upper Basin and even in our district, we need to protect our landowners as well as the fish for this to be successful,” said KDD Board Member and district farmer, Scotty Fenters. “These screens should have been installed already to do just that.”



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## KLAMATH DRAINAGE DISTRICT

4240 Hwy 39 | P.O. Box 1090 | Klamath Falls, OR 97601

O: (541) 884-1739 | F: (541) 887-8263

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Since the early days of dam removal, KDD has been working hard with other stakeholders, especially the Yurok Tribe, on salmon restoration projects on its private lands and its private facilities. The screening project complements KDD's plan to connect the river to the Refuge permanently. The project could provide access to thousands of acres of wetland habitat for the benefit of fish, fowl, and farms. The concept, known as "Replumbing the Klamath" or the "Lower Klamath Lake Reconnection", includes water security for Klamath Project water users, which results in habitat for fish and birds in the heart of the Pacific Flyway. White said, "These salmon sightings prove the concept and define a secure future of balance and sustainability for all interests in the Klamath Basin."

KDD owns all the district's delivery infrastructure and want to remind everyone to respect private property, particularly for safety reasons.

"It's an exciting time on the district for fish and bird watchers. We get it," said White. "We frequently invite tours on our waterfowl-rich lands," he said, citing to the popular annual Lower Klamath Renaissance Tour. "We are working on ways that we can be more accommodating to the public, but we have more work to do. Please be patient with us, but more importantly, please respect our landowners' private property."

*Klamath Drainage District (KDD) is a 27,000-acre district located in southern Oregon bordering the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge in California. KDD proactively works to improve distribution and delivery of its scarce water resources including recycling over 35,000 acre-feet through its recently installed recirculation pumping plants. Of this recycled water, most is reused to grow crops, but a percentage is used for other growers outside of the district and used for habitat improvement and other refuge purposes. KDD is home to the one of the largest concentrations of bald eagle in the lower 48 states and prides itself on the tremendous wildlife viewing opportunities it provides.*

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