

Rural Report

Oregon seeks \$27M for Winchester Dam repair it says resulted in mass death of Pacific lamprey fish

Story by Scooter Brown

October 6th 2023, Douglas County, OR — Oregon officials are seeking more than \$27 million in damages over dam repairs they say killed more than half a million Pacific lamprey fish in what they've described as one of the largest damages claims for illegal killing of wildlife in state history.

In a claim filed in Douglas County Circuit Court on Friday, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife said that recent repairs to Winchester Dam in the southern part of the state resulted in the death of at least 550,000 juvenile Pacific lamprey, an eel-like fish key to local ecosystems and of cultural significance to many Native American tribes in the region. The fish is also listed as a protected species in Oregon.

"The North Umpqua River's diverse fish populations are unique within Oregon and are of considerable social, cultural, and economic importance locally and regionally," the fish and wildlife department said in a news release. "The damages claim seeks reparation for the loss of a valuable public resource."

The complaint was filed against the Winchester Water Control District along with TerraFirma and DOWL, companies that were contracted, respectively, for dam repairs and fish salvage operations.

The department has accused the defendants, among other things, of unlawful killing of fish and negligence. The Winchester Dam was built in November 1890 and is in the National Register of Historical Places. Constructed from large timber cribs, the dam was originally built 4-feet high and in 1907 the dam was raised to sixteen feet. Winchester Dam provided water and electricity for the town of Roseburg until 1923. A former hydropower plant that is now privately owned by the water district's residents, who largely use it for water sports and recreation, according to the complaint. At 133 years old, Winchester Dam on the North Umpqua River is an aging facility that has been experiencing structural decline in the last decade.

These issues include leaking water through the dam face that present additional false attraction flow for migrating fish. Additionally,

the dam needs structural integrity testing per the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) requirements, which is a health and human safety issue.

Environmental groups have long criticized the dam, describing it as an old, disintegrating structure that kills or prevents fish including lamprey and salmon from swimming upstream.

Jim McCarthy, Southern Oregon Program Director of WaterWatch of Oregon, said he hoped the damages claim would mark a turning point for lamprey conservation.

"This is wonderful news for Pacific lamprey which, for too long, have been disregarded and treated as disposable, leading to dramatic declines," he said. "This is a win for Native American tribes which have worked so hard to raise awareness about the importance and value of these fish, and to restore them."

The complaint stems from repairs that the Winchester Water Control District requested last year.

To carry out the repairs, the district received authorization from the fish and wildlife department to temporarily drain part of the reservoir behind the dam and close the fish ladder. This, on the condition that it take steps to salvage and relocate fish and make a "sufficient effort" to ensure that no more than 30,000 juvenile lampreys were killed in the process.

When the water drawdown started on August 7, however, those salvaging efforts were not completed, stranding and exposing thousands of lamprey in the sediment, according to the complaint. Two days later, the fish and wildlife department determined that an emergency salvage operation was necessary and recruited employees from across the western side of the state to assist. At least 550,000 lamprey died as a result, the complaint said.

The incident was raised during recent legislative hearings at the state Capitol in Salem. State Sen. Jeff Golden, the chair of the chamber's natural resources committee, has requested that the departments of Fish and Wildlife, Water Resources and Environmental Quality submit a report to lawmakers in the coming months.

A Twist on a Classic Pie

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- 1/4 cup, plus 2 teaspoons, brown sugar
- 2 refrigerated pie crusts
- 2 teaspoons whipping cream
- caramel sauce

Heat oven to 350 F.

In large bowl, combine apples, sugar, 1 tablespoon cinnamon and lemon juice until apples are covered. Set aside.

In oven-safe, 10-inch nonstick skillet, melt butter. Add 1/4 cup brown sugar and remaining cinnamon; mix until combined. Boil 5-8 minutes.

In same skillet, place one pie crust over brown sugar mixture. Pour apples over pie crust. Cover apples with second pie crust. Cut slits in top to release steam. Brush whipping cream over crust. Sprinkle with remaining brown sugar.

Bake 35-45 minutes until crust is golden brown.

Drizzle with caramel sauce.

Work Out Tips that Keep You Fit & Healthy

Consider these popular ways to disconnect for a short while so you can take on busy days without feeling overwhelmed.

1. Stretch - After hours of sitting, stretching from head to toe can be a good way to get physically active if you're short on time and stuck at your desk. Neck, shoulder, arm, back and leg stretches are all easy ways to stand up and disengage from the computer. Another trick: practice wrist exercises to avoid injury or strain from typing.
2. Go for a Walk - If you have a few minutes to spare, leave the office or your desk at home entirely and head outside for a walk. A stroll through your neighborhood or the city sidewalks can provide the fresh air and physical activity your body craves.
3. Take Five Outside - On hot days when a mid-workday walk might not be the right refresh, skip it and simply find a shady spot to sit down. You can enjoy the benefits of fresh air and sunlight without getting too hot.
4. Rest Your Eyes - Follow the rule of 20s. If you're working a computer job, eyestrain may be a serious concern. Give them a break by looking 20 feet away for 20 seconds

every 20 minutes.

5. Enjoy a Favorite Snack - Push that office chair away from the computer and treat yourself to a bite of something you enjoy. For example, Nestlé rallies nut butter bombs are a perfect cure for those back-to-back video calls, delivering a balance of permissibility and indulgence while helping you rally through your workday. Available in three craveable flavors - raspberry peanut butter, brownie almond butter and salted cashew butter - the chilled delights combine decadent chocolate and smooth nut butter for a rich burst of flavor with no preservatives, artificial flavors or artificial colors.
6. Check in with Friends - Squeeze in a midday chat to catch up with a friend or coworker. Socializing is a feel-good way to take your mind off work even for just a few minutes.
7. Sip an Afternoon Coffee - If caffeine gives you that much-needed jolt to finish out the workday, head to your favorite local shop for a refreshing iced beverage. Pair it with a chilled snack like Nestlé rallies nut butter bombs for a perfect sweet and savory afternoon pick-me-up.

Veterans Corner

SAN DIEGO (AP) — After fighting in Afghanistan, former U.S. Army soldier Mauricio Hernandez Mata returned home with post-traumatic stress, which he says eventually led to getting in trouble with the law and being deported to Mexico — a country he had not lived in since he was a boy. On Wednesday, he and another deported veteran were sworn in as U.S. citizens at a special naturalization ceremony in San Diego.

The two veterans were among 65 who

Deported Veterans Return as US Citizens

have been allowed back into the United States over the past year ago as part of a growing effort by the Biden administration called the Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative to make amends with immigrants who served in the U.S. military only to wind up deported. Hundreds of U.S. military veterans, including some who were charged with crimes such as drunk driving or theft, have been deported over the years in what immigration advocates and others have

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Douglas County Commissioners Issue Proclamation in Honor of Veterans and Military Families Month

Douglas County — The Douglas County Board of Commissioners issued a proclamation on, Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at the Weekly Business Meeting calling upon all citizens of Douglas County to celebrate and honor Veterans and Military Families Month.

The proclamation also recognized and invited residents to honor all veterans on Veterans Day and attend the 68th Annual Douglas County Veterans Day Parade.

The proclamation was presented by Commissioner Boice, on behalf of the Board and acknowledged that, "throughout our history, courageous men and women have donned the uniform of the United States Armed Forces and built a noble tradition of faithful and dedicated service to our Nation, thus we know that the freedoms we enjoy as Americans have been purchased and protected at an incredibly high price."

A copy of the video presentation can be found on the Douglas County Government Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DouglasCountyGovernment>.



The 68th Annual Douglas County Veterans Day Parade

This year's Parade will be in downtown Roseburg on Saturday, November 11, 2023, beginning at 11:00 am.

The Douglas County Veterans Day Parade has a long-standing tradition of honoring our veterans on the Veterans Day Holiday and has been held in Roseburg every single year since 1955. The worthy and steadfast tradition has a well-earned title as "Oregon's Greatest Veterans Day Parade."

This year the Grand Marshals for the Douglas County Veterans Day parade will be National Guardsmen, as well as Gold Star Families.

