



Photo by Nicholas J. Loos, courtesy of Urbana Ross

Representatives of tribal committees earlier this month toured the Pelton-Round Butte hydroelectric dams, where the Confederated Tribes, through Power and Water Enterprises, and Portland General Electric are developing a multi-million dollar fish passage system. According to the plan, the system, involving a 273-foot tall tower that will draw in water from Lake Billy Chinook – will be in operation next spring. Once in operation, the system is expected to reopen 226 upstream miles of river to salmon and steelhead migration, which has not existed since the dams were built in the 1960s. On the recent tour were representatives of the tribal Water Board, the Land Use Planning Committee, the On-Reservation Fish and Wildlife Committee, and Natural Resources.

EPA finds Klamath River impaired by toxic algae

(AP) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has listed toxins from blue-green algae as another pollutant of the Klamath River behind the hydroelectric dams that Indian tribes, fishermen and conservation groups want removed to make way for salmon.

The algae toxins in the Iron Gate and Copco reservoirs now must be considered along with other pollutants by the California Water Board as it considers whether to grant the Clean Water Act certification needed by the Portland-based utility PacifiCorp to get a new operating license for four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath.

“Now PacifiCorp will have to clean up the toxic algae in the Klamath River,” said Klamath Riverkeeper Regina Chichizola, whose lawsuit against EPA led to reconsideration of the issue. “The state will have a hard time giving them certification.”

The EPA finding did not point to the dams as the source of the algae toxins. That is an issue for later consideration. But it did note that toxins were found at unhealthy levels in the reservoirs behind the dams, and not in the river downstream. Low levels have been found in fish, but not enough to warn people against eating them.

Maintaining that the algae has been found in the river since before the dams, PacifiCorp spokesman Paul Vogel said the utility company did not anticipate the toxins being a significant problem to getting clean water certification.

“We see it as a part of the process, and it is certainly an issue we study,” Vogel said. “We are looking at it and take it very seriously.”

The California Water Board is waiting for a specific proposal on modifications to the series of dams straddling the Oregon-California border before going ahead with the environmental analysis on certification, said board spokesman Bill Rukeyser. “The state of California is

fairly concerned about the toxins from blue-green algae on the Klamath,” Rukeyser said. “Our Northcoast Regional Water Board has had to post the reservoirs and portions of the river for those toxins. That has been a concern of ours for several years.”

Alexis Strauss, EPA water division director for the Western states, said she did not think the algae toxins by themselves would prevent clean water certifications, but she noted they come on top of problems with warm water temperatures, low dissolved oxygen, and nutrients from agricultural runoff.

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Library staff invites all community members to stop by and browse through the growing book collection.

There are computers

available for Internet access, as well as daily newspapers.

The library is conducting a survey to find out how to best serve the Warm Springs community.

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For more information, call 553-3462 or send an e-mail to lsmith@wstribes.org

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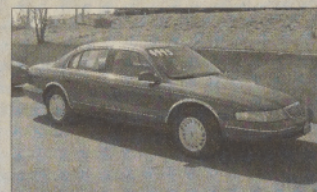
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