

The Bulletin

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Dead in the water: Serious fish kill consumes the Klamath River

BY ALEX SCHWARTZ

Herald & News (Klamath Falls)/Report for America

WEITCHPEC, Calif. — As it enters the Yurok Reservation, the Lower Klamath River is as picturesque as it gets. Clear water rushes over gentle rapids, framed by verdant hills and a cerulean sky. An untrained eye would never notice the devastation beneath the surface — save for the tiny fish floating lifeless in the water.

Over the past several weeks, an outbreak of the parasite *Ceratonova shasta* has

ripped through young salmon throughout the lower reaches of the Klamath watershed. Driven by high temperatures and low flows out of Iron Gate Dam, the disease is resulting in what the Yurok Tribe is calling a “catastrophic” fish kill.

Last week, nearly every single juvenile salmon trapped by researchers and fisheries staff was infected with *C. shasta*, and a majority of them were dead.

“This feels like failure,” said Yurok Vice Chairman Frankie Myers. “It feels like some real, deep failure.”

The alarm began sounding around the beginning of April, when spore concentrations of *C. shasta* measured at six monitoring sites along the river between Iron Gate Dam and Tully Creek, in the heart of the Yurok Reservation, began to climb. The number of spores per liter of water (considered concerning once it reaches between five and 10) went above 70 at the Beaver Creek site, in the heart of the infectious zone downstream of Iron Gate Dam.

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Alex Schwartz/Herald & News

The Yurok Tribe is enduring what it calls a “catastrophic” die-off of juvenile salmon on the Klamath River. Unlike other fish kills, this one is occurring throughout the lower watershed, not just in the hotspot for fish parasite *C. shasta* downstream of Iron Gate Dam.

NEIGHBORHOOD JOYRIDE



Photo by RYAN BRENNECKE • The Bulletin

With a snack in her hand, 16-month-old Georgia Freeman sits back and takes in the sights as her father, Chad Freeman, uses a remote control to drive her battery-operated car through a grassy area while exploring their Bend neighborhood Saturday. The pair took advantage of a lull in the rain showers to get some fresh air. Rain and a chance of thunderstorms are forecast through Monday with a high of 65 degrees.



800,000+

The number of acres of state forestlands that are managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry

Forestry board moves quickly to find a state forester — and prove its own effectiveness to lawmakers

BY TED SICKINGER

The Oregonian

The state Board of Forestry met Thursday to discuss hiring both an interim and permanent leader for the troubled Oregon Department of Forestry, even as legislators discuss taking that authority away from the board because of its ineffective oversight of the agency.

State Forester Peter Daugherty submitted his resignation two weeks earlier, after years of financial and management problems at the forestry

department, tensions on the board, and deep frustration at the Legislature and the governor’s office over their inability to force changes.

Sens. Kathleen Taylor, D-Portland; Jeff Golden, D-Ashland; and Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, have introduced a bill that would strip the authority to hire and fire the state forester from the seven-person volunteer board and give it to the governor’s office, subject to Senate confirmation. Senate Bill 868 would also give the state forester the authority to appoint

a deputy and assistant state foresters subject to the board’s approval.

Forestry policy is some of the most controversial in Oregon, and whom ever is hired as interim and permanent leader of the agency will have a full plate. The agency has faced consistent cash flow problems since at least 2015 due to its mushrooming wildfire costs and inability to quickly invoice and collect hundreds of millions of dollars in receivables, mostly from federal agencies.

The agency’s management of more

than 800,000 acres in state forestland has also been the subject of consistent controversy, with an ongoing tug of war over harvest levels and conservation commitments. A slow-moving, and in the eyes of critics, ineffectual revision of the agency’s state forest management plan has laid those conflicts bare, as did a Linn County jury’s award of \$1 billion to rural counties that receive harvest revenues from state forests because the agency failed to maximize timber harvests since 2001.

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TODAY'S WEATHER



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High 65, Low 41
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