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**KLAMATH RIVER**  
**Utility amenable to**  
**removing 4 dams**

- [Glen Martin, Chronicle](#)  
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In a move that could  
boost the Klamath  
River's depleted

salmon runs, a utility company announced this week that it is willing to discuss removal of four hydroelectric dams on the river's upper reaches.

The announcement by dam owner PacifiCorp has implications beyond the Klamath. The commercial salmon season was slashed in California and Oregon this year because of low numbers of salmon returning to the river.

Fishermen fought the federal decision to curtail the catch because offshore waters are teeming with salmon from the Sacramento River. But because fish from the two river systems mingle in the open sea, regulators maintained Sacramento salmon could not be caught without further endangering Klamath salmon.

The four dams, which are scheduled for relicensing this year by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, are considered obstacles to reviving the runs. Water collects in pools behind the dams and warms in sunlight. Warm water is lethal to salmon and also spurs growth of toxic blue-green algae.

Removing the dams could expand spawning habitat for the Klamath's chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead trout.



In a news release, PacifiCorp President William Fehrman said the company was swayed by the concerns of Indian tribes that live along the Klamath and rely on the fish for food.

Until this week, the company had not indicated any willingness to remove the dams. But Fehrman said PacifiCorp now is "not opposed" as long as its power customers are safeguarded and company property rights are guaranteed.

In another Klamath development, salmon fishermen have filed a lawsuit accusing the National Marine Fisheries Service of using poor science in setting Pacific Coast salmon quotas for the 2006 season.

Ben Platt, a spokesman for the Salmon Trollers Marketing Association of Fort Bragg, said the lawsuit was filed Monday in federal court in Oakland. The suit claims federal officials used erroneous data to set the extremely restrictive salmon quotas fishermen are now working under.

Platt said his group wants an injunction that would allow trollers to catch more fish. The season ends in October.

NMFS spokesman Jim Milbury said Thursday that the agency had not yet seen the lawsuit and could not comment on it.

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