

Bulletin

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Service finalizes Environmental Assessment for construction of Klamath Falls National Fish Hatchery

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released the final Environmental Assessment (EA) for construction of the proposed Klamath Falls National Fish Hatchery in Klamath County. The Service also signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) determination that the full hatchery build-out alternative will not significantly affect the quality of physical, biological, or human resources as outlined in National Environmental Policy Act guidelines. As a result, an environmental impact statement on construction of the proposed hatchery is not required.

The release of the final EA comes after a public comment period and consideration of all comments received regarding the draft EA on the hatchery proposal. The new hatchery facility would produce shortnose and Lost River suckers, both listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The shortnose sucker (*Chasmistes brevirostris*) and Lost River sucker (*Deltistes luxatus*) were listed as endangered in 1988. Both species are long-lived freshwater fish found only in a few lakes in the upper Klamath Basin of southern Oregon and northern California. Since 2001, both species of sucker have declined between 60 and 75 percent.

The 2013 Sucker Recovery Plan called for the development of a controlled propagation program when sucker populations had declined by 75 percent. Recent estimates indicate shortnose sucker are likely to go extinct within the next 40 years and Lost River suckers will reach critically low levels in 50 years. In 2016, the Klamath Basin Sucker Assisted Rearing Program began rearing both species in captivity to counteract these trends. Early results indicate this could be an effective recovery tool. However, in 2019, a species status assessment concluded that increased rearing capacity is needed to achieve recovery goals.

Construction of the hatchery facility supports the annual production goal of 60,000 juvenile suckers for release in Upper Klamath Lake to bolster declining wild sucker populations in an effort to prevent their extinction.

The FONSI, final EA and supporting references are available online at:

<https://www.fws.gov/klamathfallsfwo/news/news.htm>

To request a hard copy of the FONSI and final EA, please contact:

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