



Klamath River Watershed Polluted Waters List “Speak Up for Clean Water”

Impaired Waters List

Every two years, by federal law, California must compile a list of the state’s “impaired,” or seriously polluted, water bodies. These are waters that are now too polluted for activities that Californians used to enjoy, like fishing, swimming, boating or surfing, or that are too polluted to support birds or other wildlife, or that are too polluted to supply drinking water without costly extra treatment. Such activities and habitat benefits are called a waterway’s “beneficial uses.” Under the federal Clean Water Act, every two years the state must: identify impaired waters, identify the pollutants responsible to the extent possible, and design a plan to clean up the waterways so they can be fully usable again. This list of impaired waters is known as the “303(d) list” after Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, which requires the state to develop the list and start the cleanup process. It is among the most powerful tools that Californians have to clean up our rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. The last list of impaired waters was adopted in 2006, and the local Regional Water Quality Control Boards are now updating that list with new information so as to adopt new, “2008 lists” of impaired waters.

The listings that seem most important in the Klamath right now are proposals for toxic algae impairment from Iron Gate dam to Weitchpec, Mercury impairment in Lake Shastina and a disconcerting effort to delist a major tributary to the Salmon River called Wooley Creek which is currently temperature impaired.

North Coast

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Board has released their draft 2008 list of impaired water bodies, updating the information on their 2006 list. It includes several proposed additions to its previous list that will improve water quality in the region. However, these important additions may meet opposition from polluters, and the public’s voice will need to be heard to support them. There may also be delistings that need to be opposed.

Critical Proposed Changes to the North Coast 303(d) list in the Klamath River Watershed:

1. List Klamath River (Iron Gate Dam to Weitchpec)—Toxic Algae ***SUPPORT***
2. List Lake Shastina –Mercury ***SUPPORT***
3. De-list Wooley Creek –Temperature ***OPPOSE***

You are invited to submit comments on the waters that should be included on the 2008 list. The region needs your help to secure the strongest possible list. Please submit your comments, and tell the Board why cleaning up these polluted waterways is important to you.

TAKE ACTION

These are your waters. You know them better than anyone. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board needs to hear from you. See below on how to comment.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board will take your comments on their proposed list until March 20th. To maximize the effectiveness of all of our comments, coordination is key - please work with Klamath Riverkeeper and California Coastkeeper Alliance (CCKA) to coordinate comments on the Regional Water Board’s proposed list, and let your Regional Water Board know that you want clean water in the Klamath River Watershed.

FUTURE ACTION: There are other impaired water bodies that the Regional Water Board has not placed on their draft 2008 303(d) list. ***Please stay in touch with Klamath Riverkeeper!*** We will be working to get these waterways listed on the 2010 impaired waters list:

For more information from Klamath Riverkeeper visit <http://www.klamathriver.org>
For more information from CCKA visit <http://www.coastkeeper.org/> and
http://www.cacoastkeeper.org/impaired_waterbodies/

How to Comment on the 2008 North Coast Polluted Waters List

You are invited to submit comments to the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board on their proposed 2008 list of impaired waters through March 20th. You can submit your comments by mail, or electronically to Matt St. John (address below).

Matt St. John
(707) 570-3762
mstjohn@waterboards.ca.gov

CCKA and Klamath Riverkeeper can help. Contact Tom Lyons at California Coastkeeper Alliance (p: 415-810-2960 or email: tlyons@cacoastkeeper.org) Erica Terence at Klamath Riverkeeper (p: 530-627-3311) or email: erica@klamathriver.org) with questions and for assistance.

This sample comment letter and questions are designed to help coordinate the public's support for clean water:

Sample Comment

Date

Matt St. John, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
phone : 707-570-3762, fax : 707-523-0135, e-mail: mstjohn@waterboards.ca.gov

RE: Comments for the 2008 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments

Dear North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board:

Opening

1. [1-2 sentences] Explain who you are and where you live/work. If you represent an organization, state its name and title, and briefly summarize its mission.
2. [1-2 sentences] Why is water quality important to you? From what experience or activities do you draw your knowledge about water quality in the region?

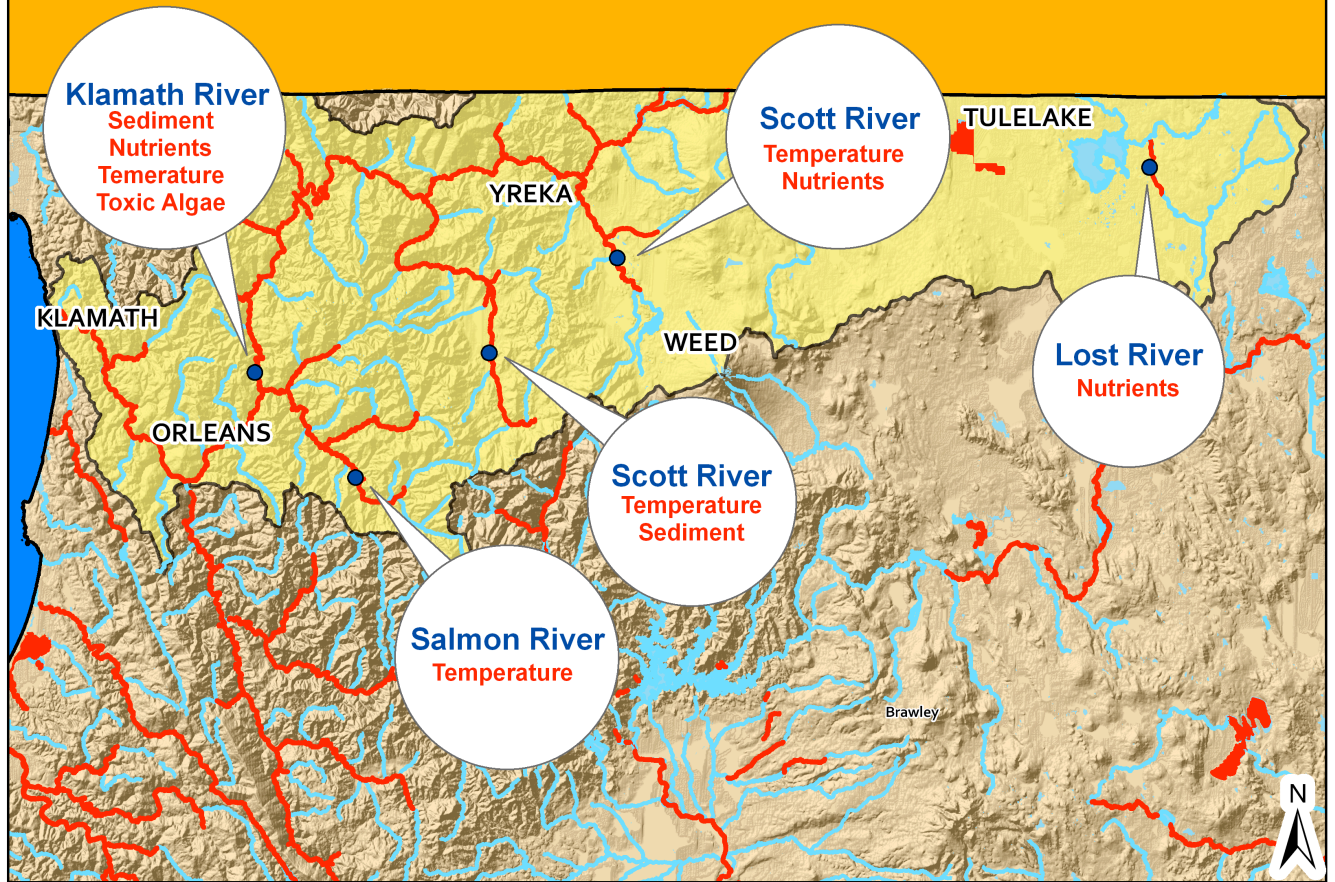
Body

1. What are the beneficial uses that your local waterways on the proposed 2008 impaired waters list (or proposed to be taken off the list) provide for you, your family, your organization, your livelihood? These include fishing, swimming, aquatic habitat, boating, surfing, etc.
2. Why is it important that these water bodies need to be included on the impaired waters list and cleaned up?
3. What evidence do you have that the waterways on the list are “impaired” or polluted? Is the waterway more polluted than in the past? How has it changed?
**Note that anecdotal evidence is useful and powerful – include your personal observations of the waterway over time as applicable, stories of how you or others have used the water in the past. Also, this question is important both for new listings and for delistings that you oppose.*
4. Do you have scientific or monitoring data about the water bodies at issue on the 303(d) list (either to add or take off the list)? What does it show?
5. Are you a fisherman? What is your experience with fish quality, species, health, or size in the water bodies affected?
6. Do you have any other observations or data related to the water bodies being listed or delisted?
7. Do you have photos of the waterway? If so, please include them and note who took them and when; they can be very helpful.

Closing

- Thank the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for accepting and considering your comments.
- Restate name of listings you are supporting, and the delistings that you are opposing.
- Include your name and contact information.

The Polluted Waterways of California's Klamath River Watershed



*Red water bodies reflect the 2006 Severely Impaired Waters 303(d) List