



Klamath Water Users Association
2455 Patterson Street, Suite 3
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603
(541)-883-6100 FAX (541)-883-8893
kwua@cvcwireless.net
www.kwua.org

*Statement of the Klamath Water Users Association
Regarding the Washington Post's June 28, 2007 Article*

The Washington Post's June 27th article "Leaving no Tracks", focusing on Vice President Cheney and the Klamath Basin, did a disservice to history and the Basin's residents. On the one hand it claims that Mr. Cheney gave personal attention in early 2001 to Klamath Basin water policy issues. On the other hand, it fails to report that just a few months later this same administration announced there would be no water for irrigators in the Bureau of Reclamation's Klamath Project – the first time that this water supply had been shut off in the Project's 100-year history. Go back a few years before that to 1994 and you will find that the previous administration furnished full water deliveries to the Klamath Project in almost identical hydrologic and water supply conditions. In fact, the current administration's "10 year plan" resulted in much less water for irrigation than had been provided historically.

Granted, our local irrigation community and many others felt that the administration had, in 2001, been handed some very soft science that led to its decision to cut off the irrigation water to 1400 family farms and ranches. Our community pushed for many months before the cut-off, and after, for an independent review of that science. It was announced at a Congressional field hearing in Klamath Falls in May of 2001 that such a review would occur. There was no opposition to that review being conducted, and the notion suggested by the Post, that the Vice President manipulated the conclusions of the National Research Council, is absurd. Their report speaks for itself, and there is no value in revisiting old arguments, as much as the Post seems to want to do so.

Granted also, there was large-scale mortality of salmon near the mouth of the Klamath River in late summer of 2002. This was a disaster for our down-river neighbors. Disease, warm water, and crowded conditions were contributing factors; and there are credible people with opinions on both sides of the question of whether the Bureau of Reclamation could have averted that disaster by releasing more warm water from Upper Klamath Lake, over 200 miles away. But the readers of the Post's article should have been informed that the flows in the lower river that year were by no means lower than what had been experienced for the previous 100 years.

The Post's article plowed old partisan ground, and has already triggered partisan responses. Some real news in the Klamath Basin is that the administration has just recently imposed the most aggressive fish protection measures legally possible on the

relicensing of hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River, measures so costly that the California Energy Commission has concluded that it would be more economic for the affected business to take the dams out than to leave them in the river to generate power. Some real news is the collaborative multiparty settlement effort now underway in the Klamath Basin involving irrigators, tribes, conservation groups, and dedicated public servants from Oregon, California, and the federal government. This group is about solving problems, a task that is hindered by overtly sensational media. We can only hope the constructive efforts of communities up and down this basin, here, on the ground, can survive the needless diversion caused by the article and the predictable regurgitated editorials that always seem to follow this type of overt political stunt.