

Welcome to the
premier edition
of the
Basin Ag News!

All stories and
content for this
publication
arranged for
and/or prepared
by the Klamath
Water Users
Association.

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BASIN AG NEWS

JANUARY 2023

When is the Klamath Bull & Heifer Sale not a sale?

*the answer....*Saturday night at
6 pm and Sunday morning at 10
am when it turns into a wild
extreme action...

February 2-5, 2023
Stock Dog Trials
Bull Sale
Trade Show daily
Barrel Racing
Stock horse classes
Tasty food

RANCH
RODEO

Friday
Horse Show 8 am
Stray Gathering 2 pm
2 Man Ranch Horse 3 pm
Calcutta 5 pm
Team Branding 6 pm

Saturday
Womens Ranch Rodeo Reversed
Team Roping 9 am
Open and Youth Barrel Race noon.
Open, Youth and Womens Ranch
Rodeo Trailer Loading 4 pm
Ranch Rodeo Calcutta 6 pm
Ranch Rodeo 7 pm
**NEW Jackpot Ranch Bronc
Riding after rodeo Saturday night only**

Sunday
Ranch Rodeo continues 10 am



Photo of Kody
Lovgrenn by Mary
Williams Hyde

A special attraction is the Western States Ranch
Rodeo Association **8 Second Whisky 40 pt Tour
Stop Ranch Bronc Riding.** The winner gets extra
cash and extra points!

Klamath Bull & Heifer Sale February 2-5, 2023 Full Schedule of events page 3

To better serve the local community
welcome to *Basin Ag News*, a new monthly publication
with content created and controlled
BY THE AG COMMUNITY!

Send your story ideas to BASIN AG NEWS Coordinator, Moss Driscoll, Klamath Water Users Association, and
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2701 Foothills Blvd., Klamath Falls, OR 97603

Something For the Whole Family at the Klamath Bull & Heifer Sale



Morgan/Ricksger Family from Winter Brook Cattle Company receiving top honors with the Supreme Champion Bull award from Sarah Kellom of Northwest Farm Credit (recently changed to AgWest Farm Credit.) The bull was purchased by Taco Bell of Klamath Falls, Steve Declerck.



2022 Klamath Bull Sale action



Ranch rodeo action is always fast and furious. With the exception of women's steer stopping and bronc riding, teams compete for the top spot. Photos by Gina Janelli.

Forget the rain, snow, and ice for a couple of days and come out to the smell of leather and livestock, rapid-fire auctioneers, pounding hooves, kids, cowboys, and cattle dogs.

Since 1960 the first weekend in February in Klamath Falls has been marked by the Klamath Bull & Heifer Sale, showcasing the finest bulls and breeding heifers in the Northwest. Yet it's become far more than just a livestock auction – it's evolved into a 4-day, jam-packed series of competitions, demonstrations and displays that make it the premier winter attraction in the Klamath Basin.

Taking place Thursday, February 2, through Sunday, February 5, the Klamath Bull Sale has become an annual draw for the ranching and farming community, providing entertainment, education, and a great venue to sell livestock.

According to Stan Gorden, chairman of the Klamath Bull Sale Committee, the event started as a way to bring quality bulls to cattlemen in the Klamath Basin and improve the quality of livestock raised locally. But in recent years, the annual event “made the transition, to not only providing top-quality breeding livestock for producers, but inclusive entertainment and education for the whole family.”

“It's a good, wholesome, family event,” Gorden said. “It is an ag event, but it's also an event for the betterment of our community.”

All events take place at the Klamath County Event Center, including a Western trade show and silent auction running through the weekend. Local vendors as well as some from as far away as Nevada and Canada will have displays of Western clothing, food, and ranch supplies. Many of the vendors are returning favorites according to Chris Worden, a committee member.

Competitions begin Thursday, with the stockdog trials. Friday's action includes a stock horse show in the morning, and ranch events in the afternoon, including 2-man ranch horse and stray gathering, capped off by the Klamath County CattleWomen's tri-tip BBQ dinner and team branding starting at 5 PM.

Saturday's highlights include team roping and barrel racing in the morning, the bull and heifer sale at noon, and ranch rodeo starting at 6 PM, followed by a new “jackpot” bronc riding event. The rodeo continues Sunday morning, rounding out the festivities.

Saturday's auction is expected to include 140 bulls and upwards of 20 replacement heifers. The bulls sold are in their prime at two years old and have been raised as breeding livestock. In addition to Angus, breeds at the auction will include Charolais, Chianina, Hereford, Lim-Flex, Shorthorn, and Simmental.

As always, the event is a fundraiser for the Klamath County Cattlemen's Scholarship Program, which supports youth from the Klamath Basin majoring in a range of concentrations from agriculture to animal science, as well as related trade skills.

The cost for Saturday night's rodeo is \$10 at the door, with seniors 62 years and older and children 12 and under free.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



February 2-5, 2023

Western Trade Show—9:00 AM Every Day

THURSDAY February 2

- 7:00 Stockdog Handler's Meeting – *Event Center*
- 7:30 Stockdog Trials – *Event Center*
- 9:00 Weigh in Bulls – *Bull Barn*
- 12:00 CattleWomen's Silent Auction Opens – *Event Center*
- 1:00 BQA—Beef Quality Assurance Class—*Blue Building, Hall 2*
- 4:00 Stockdog Trials – *Event Center*
- 6:00 Calcutta Stockdog – *Event Center*
- 6:30 Stockdog Finals – *Event Center*

FRIDAY February 3

- 8:00 Youth Reining/Boxing, Snaffle Class, Bridle Class, Ranch Horse Class – *Event Center*
- 9:00 Grade & Sift Bulls & Heifers – *Stilwell Arena*
- 9:00 CattleWomen's Silent Auction Open – *Event Center*
- 2:00 Stray Gathering – *Event Center*
- 3:00 2–Man Ranch Horse – *Event Center*
- 5:00 CattleWomen's Dinner – *Tickets available*
- 5:00 Calcutta Open/Youth/WRR Team Branding* – *Event Center*
- 6:00 Open/Youth/WRR Team Branding* – *Event Center*

SATURDAY February 4

- 9:00 CattleWomen's Silent Auction Open – *Event Center*
- 9:00 WRR Reversed Team Roping* – *Event Center*
- 10:00 Barrel Race Sign Up – *Event Center*
- 11:00 Barrel Racing Time Only's – *Event Center*
- 12:00 **63rd Annual Bull & Replacement Heifer Sale**—*Stilwell Arena*
- 12:00 KBS 4D Barrel Race – Youth & Open – *Event Center*
- 4:00 Open/Youth/WRR Trailer Loading* – *Event Center*
- 6:00 KBS Ranch Rodeo Introduction & Calcutta* – *Event Center*
- 7:00 KBS Ranch Rodeo Performance* – *Event Center*

FOLLOWING RODEO: ★ NEW★ Jackpot Bronc Riding*

SUNDAY February 5

- 10:00 KBS Ranch Rodeo Performance* – *Event Center*

* WSRRA sanctioned events

Schedule subject to change - follow website for most up to date info.

Bull Sale Chairman

Stan Gorden · 530.515.3995

Cattle Manager

Andra Wessel · 541.281.2180

Rancher Days Events:

Becky Hirschbock · 541.891.5102

Amy Carey · 916.261.2970

Ranch Rodeo

Colton Campbell · 541.891.0374

Amy Carey · 916.261.2970

Print Design

Tami Thompson · 530.249.5669

Trade Show Vendors

Sarah Kellom · 541.281.3443

Stockdogs

Katrina Damon 541.538.0318

Auctioneer

Eric Duarte · 541.533.2105

Pedigrees

Matt Macfarlane · 916.803.3113

Advertising & Sponsorship

Chris Worden · 541.591.0967

Web Design

Cameron Duncun



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Ranchers Connecting Ranchers

FEBRUARY 2-5, 2023

Klamath Falls, OR



- ◆ 63rd Annual Bull Sale
- ◆ Replacement Heifer Sale
- ◆ Western Trade Show
- ◆ KBS Ranch Rodeo*
- ◆ Jackpot Bronc Riding*
- ◆ Ranch Events
- ◆ Stock Dog Trials & Finals
- ◆ CattleWomen's Dinner
- ◆ Barrel Racing
- ◆ Stock Horse Show

* WSRRA sanctioned events

For details on Event Center admission go to:

www.klamathbullsale.com

541-274-1499

Check us out on FaceBook at:

Klamath Bull Sale



(916) 806-1919

2022 Cattlemen's Scholarship Recipients

Mission: The proceeds of this sale go to assist in the education of our youth through the Klamath County Cattlemen's Scholarship Program. Thank you for your part in helping us to educate the next generation of Agriculturalists.

If you have graduated from a Klamath Basin high school or homeschool program and are majoring or working towards a career in an Ag related field, we encourage you to apply for the Klamath Cattlemen's Scholarship. We would like to help you pursue your goals and your future in agriculture.

For details and eligibility or to download the application, scan the code at the right then click view pdf at the bottom.



Curtis Sweat

Graduate of Lost River High School

Enrolled at Klamath Community College

At a young age Curtis learned 4-H and FFA were more than just having an animal. With 4-H and FFA Curtis was provided with the opportunity to grow, achieve goals, and work with amazing people. He is currently attending Klamath Community College and on the path to becoming an electrician in the ag industry.



Kayce Little

Graduate of Home School Program

Enrolled at Oregon State University majoring in Agribusiness

Showing horses for 9 years and cattle for 3 years in 4-H is where my love for the agriculture industry started. I loved competing with my horse and steer and meeting the high quality, and hard working people in our community. I can't wait to see where career goals take me, the endless opportunities that agriculture has to offer, and giving back to my community in the near future.



Sabine Graetsch

Graduate of Henley High School

Enrolled at Oregon State University majoring in Veterinary Medicine

"Growing up, I enjoyed working with livestock. I was fascinated by their anatomy, disease, and behavior. I still love learning more about animals and disease, so much so that I have decided to make a career out of it. When I am not working or studying, I enjoy hiking with my dogs, trail riding, cooking, and horticulture. Growing up in the Klamath Basin has helped me to realize what the field of agriculture has to offer. In the future I hope to own and/or work in a rural veterinary clinic."



Kekoa Taipin

Graduate of Henley High School

Enrolled at Texas Tech University, majoring in Animal Science, concentration in Animal Production

I am currently a senior at Texas Tech University, Gordon W. Davis College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, studying Animal Science with a concentration in Animal Production. I have been involved in the agriculture industry for many years. I have participated in FFA and 4-H mainly showing livestock across the nation and I hope to pursue a career in the Agriculture industry, working with swine and ruminant animal production and reproduction.

2022 CattleWomen's Scholarship Recipients

To learn more and apply for the CattleWomen's Scholarship go to our Facebook page @ Klamath County CattleWomen.



Sabine Graetsch - \$3,250

Graduate of Henley High School

Enrolled at Oregon State University majoring in Animal Science - BioHealth/Pre-Professional

"I decided that I wanted to become a veterinarian at a very young age. The agricultural community that I grew up in is supportive, encouraging, tough, and gritty. I cannot wait to have the opportunity to give back to all the great people that have helped me in my life. Supporting their livelihoods through veterinary medicine will be my way of giving back."

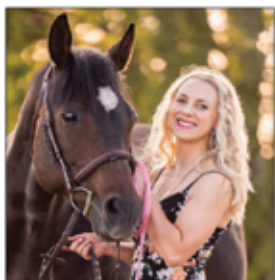


Ashley Garatea - \$2,250

Graduate of Henley High School

Enrolled at Western University of Health Sciences pursuing a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine with a Large Animal Interest

"My dream of becoming a veterinarian stemmed from my upbringing and background in the animal agriculture industry. I worked on production facilities, feed research facilities, as well as in a meat production and processing facility. These experiences were invaluable and gave me true passion for serving rural communities involved in animal production."



Elizabeth Cheyne - \$1,250

Graduate of Bonanza High School

Enrolled at Oregon State University Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine

"When I was young, the appreciation and awe I felt towards my vets' ability to treat my animals drove me to want to do the same thing and continues to this day. I grew up on a farm in rural southeastern Oregon, around my grandfather's cattle and nearby dairy farms. This life long experience has shown me the importance of the livestock industry and the veterinarians that support it."

Growing the Next Generation of Agriculturists

For Stan Gorden, long-time member of the Klamath County Cattlemen’s Association and chairman of the Klamath Bull Sale Committee, making the Klamath Bull Sale successful has always meant more than selling livestock and providing family-friendly entertainment. As a former professor of agriculture science at Shasta College, Gorden wanted to make the event an opportunity to educate youth who are the future of agriculture.

“Growing the Next Generation of Agriculturists” is now the mission and slogan for the Klamath Bull Sale, with all proceeds going towards Klamath County Cattlemen’s Scholarship Program.

Along with students in college majoring in agricultural fields, recent scholarships have gone towards trade skills, such as electricians that support agriculture in the Klamath Basin. “I don’t know any rancher or farmer that doesn’t have to wait a week or two to get a certified electrician out to their place,” said Gorden, who grew up ranching near Gerber Reservoir and now runs the family business. “These folks are part of the community that keep the agricultural industry here in the Basin running.”

The Klamath County Cattlemen’s Associations has taken a similar pragmatic approach to the scholarship program. “We really don’t have a set number of applications we plan to award each year,” according to Gorden, “We review each of the applications and collectively decide how many candidates we want to award and at what levels.”

In 2022, four students were awarded funding through the scholarship program, to pursue studies at Oregon State University, Texas Tech, and Klamath Community College.

In addition to the scholarship program, Klamath County Cattlemen’s Association also supports local FFA and 4-H programs and donates many of the panels, gates, and other equipment that the Klamath County Event Center uses throughout the year.

For Gorden, it’s all part of the Cattlemen’s Association’s purpose to grow and promote the future generations of ranchers and farmers. “Come out and you’ll be amazed at the support, year after year, we are a cattle community.”



Grace Kliever at the 2022 Klamath County Fair. Photo by Diane Keith

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An exciting new competition is coming to

Klamath County. Livestock judging is more than a century-old competition that is taking the nation by storm. Livestock judging is a competition that evaluates an animal, such as cattle, swine, sheep, and goats, characteristics and makes a comparison to other animals and the ideal standard of that particular class. After evaluating each animal individually, a ranking is assigned to that class. These up-and-coming judges on the judging teams are instrumental in helping guide industry standards. Livestock judging originated with the purpose of helping train young producers how to evaluate their personal livestock better. That intent has now grown into an industry with career-ready skills that high school 4-H/FFA students to Animal Science majors can develop while gaining their degrees.

Klamath County 4-H is excited to offer this new and exciting judging club and team to the Klamath Basin. Under the guidance of collegiate judge Mikayla Duchi, 2023 will be an exciting year to try this unique opportunity. “Mikayla Duchi is our new half-time Educational Program Assistant for Klamath County 4-H. Her main focus will be education

programming to include Juntos¹ and other agricultural education offered to our local schools. We are very excited to have someone so knowledgeable about livestock that is dedicated to youth education,” said Traci Reed, Klamath County 4-H Youth Development Coordinator. Why Livestock Judging? Livestock judging puts our young agriculturists in a position to enhance their decision-making capabilities and provide opportunities to defend those decisions through oral reasons. It will encourage our youth to debate their choices and reason with their peers in a respectful and positive way. Participating in oral reasons will provide the framework for public speaking skills, character building, integrity, and honesty. It will also allow our youth to network with other individuals and producers who share similar interests.

The basis of the club will be an afterschool education program open to all interested Klamath County 4-H (not including clover buds) and FFA member. Understanding there may be FFA students that want to be involved on their chapter’s livestock judging team, the goal of the program is to assist advisors with this and provide an opportunity for their students to be involved and get added practice.

The afterschool education program will be held on a weekday and run from spring until school is out (March – May).

The Livestock Evaluation Club will consist of a series of three sessions to be taught and participated in chronological order. Livestock 101 will be an afterschool education program covering (1) What is Livestock Evaluation, (2) Oral Reasons: Note Taking, Format, Transitions (3) Evaluating Beef Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Meat Goat. The second part of the series is

1 Juntos Para Una Mejor Educación Program (Together for a Better Education) works to empower Latinx students and families around education. Juntos means “together” in Spanish, which reflects the program’s core values of engaging the entire family and school partners in the students’ educational goals. Juntos is a multi-component program intentionally designed to transform pathways to higher education for Latinx youth and their families by bringing the participants and educational institutions together. Juntos is unique among college access programs because it engages the entire family with a strong emphasis on cultural responsiveness, while minimizing barriers to participation.

Klamath Irrigation District – Building Our Community Since 1905

Learn more about the District at www.KlamathID.org

Public Scoping Meeting for District Irrigation System Improvements

4pm Tuesday, 7 February 2023, at the Merrill Civic Center

Klamath Irrigation District, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Farmers Conservation Alliance are developing a Watershed Plan – Environmental Assessment to improve water delivery efficiency and help address regional water, fish, and wildlife concerns. Improvements under consideration may be partially funded through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566) and will address water conveyance and operation inefficiencies in District-operated infrastructure.

The scoping meeting will cover proposed improvements and participants will have an opportunity to submit their comments, ideas, and concerns.

To learn more about the project and how to submit a comment, please visit oregonwatershedplans.org or call Farmers Conservation Alliance at (541) 716-6085.

Board of Directors Meeting

10am Thursday, 9 February 2023, at the KID Headquarters’ Office located at 6640 KID Lane, Klamath Falls, OR.

The public may call in at 425-436-6347, using ACCESS CODE 8826661#

In accordance with ORS 192.630 (1) all meetings of the governing body of public body shall be open to the public and all person shall be permitted to attend any meeting except as otherwise provided by ORS 192.610 to 192.690. ORS 192.660 (1). ORS 192.610 to 192.690 does not prevent governing body of a public body from holding executive session during a regular meeting, special or emergency meeting, after presiding officer has identified the authorization under ORS 192.610 to 192.690 for holding the executive session. Any persons with disabilities requiring special services please contact KID’s office at (541) 882-6661

Fill The Lake!!!

Klamath Irrigation District continues to communicate our expectation that Reclamation must meet its legal and contractual obligations to store water in Upper Klamath Lake



Opportunity!!

Klamath Irrigation District

has 3 full-time positions available:

2x Relief Ditch Rider/Maintenance

Assistant Operations / Safety Officer

Open until filled.

Applications and job descriptions are available on our website, LinkedIn and at the KID office

K.I.D. is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Livestock Evaluation 201, set to run from June- September. It will cover live animals and oral reason practice. The final session will be Livestock Evaluation 301: Contests. For club members to participate in session 301, they must complete 101 and 201. However, 301 is optional as it will involve representing Klamath County 4-H at a regional and state level.

Mikayla stated that “I have two motives for bringing the new club to Klamath County 4-H. (1) The experience gained in the club will open doors for college, job opportunities, and networking with members of the livestock industry. As well as provide youth with a better understanding of livestock selection techniques. (2) I have a goal for Klamath County (both 4-H and FFA) to win the State Judging Contest held in September, a title predominantly held and represented at the national contest by Jackson County.”



Mikayla Duchi grew up in Siskiyou County, California, and was actively involved in both 4H and FFA, exhibiting cattle and sheep across the nation. An Alumnus of both Linn-Benton Community College as well as California State University, Chico, Mikayla obtained her Bachelor of Science in Animal Science, where she was also a member of both colleges’ competitive livestock judging teams. Throughout her time at both institutions, Mikayla was heavily involved in running the universities farm sheep and goat unit,

along with various undergraduate research projects, agricultural-based educational seminars, and youth field days.

Given her love for tight-knit, rural communities, Mikayla relocated to Klamath Falls at the beginning of 2022 where she and her fiancé, Klamath County native Noa Taipin, own and operate Taipin Showpigs. Mikayla is passionate about community outreach programs and providing young people with the special kind of high-quality learning experiences that come with being involved in the agricultural industry. In her spare time, Mikayla enjoys attending various livestock events with her family and judging livestock shows across the country.



Mikayla Duchi

Livestock judging became a predominant part of her life during her time in 4-H and FFA. She was a part of two highly competitive judging teams during her undergraduate career. She was one of the five marking members of the 2019 Chico State Livestock Judging Team that ended third in the nation (50 teams competing). The highest-ranking team Chico State has ever had, and one of two teams on the West Coast to break the coveted Top 3 in the past 22 years (Oregon State 2001 Team was the last to do so). That same year, she was named the third overall female collegiate evaluator in the nation and seventh overall individual at the national contest (which comprised of 250 other evaluators from across the country). She was the only contestant representing the West Coast to break the Top 10.

Mikayla has big dreams for her time here in Klamath, and Klamath has open arms to allow her to take our Klamath County 4-H to a new level. To learn more or to enroll in the club, please contact the Klamath County Extension office at 541-883-7131

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4-H Youth Development Programs Inspire Young Agriculturists to Grow

We have all heard the saying, “today’s generation is not what it used to be,” or “Farming, it’s a dying occupation.” But, while we have all heard these phrases, one has to question if that is the case or if we are looking through the right lens.

There is no argument that today’s generation of young adults differs from the generation before them. But when we look closer and remove the preconceived notions of what social media shows us, they are just the same, except with one fundamental key difference, they have technology at their fingertips. Today’s youth have strong voices; they think out of the box, challenge everything, research their thoughts, try new things, and are thirsty for knowledge. As leaders, adults, and parents, we must learn to embrace that advantage and foster an environment to create the next generation of agriculturists. 4-H youth development programs are just the place to do it.

The agricultural community in the Klamath Basin is primarily made up of family farms that have been around for three to four generations. Today’s family farms face the most brutal battle yet, the survival of the next generation of young agriculturists to continue the family legacy or to start their own legacy. Some may ask, “what is the difference between a farmer and an agriculturist?” Absolutely nothing! In fact, according to dictionary.com, the synonym for an agriculturist is (1) a farmer and (2) an expert in agriculture. Whatever you prefer to call them, a farmer or agriculturist, they will have two things in common: both want to feed a hungry nation while caring for the land, and they most likely were involved in 4-H as a child.

Unlocking the potential of our youth to learn, grow, and thrive is at the core of Klamath and Lake Counties’ 4-H Youth Development programs. It is harvesting the vision for all youth to experience a positive, thriving trajectory of development that leads to an adulthood marked by health and well-being, economic stability, social success, and civic engagement. This vision is the heart of being a young agriculturist.

4-H is an international network of educators and highly trained volunteers who help youth find and build on their interests and strengthen their leadership and life skills.

There are science, healthy living, and civic engagement programs backed by a network of 100 public universities and a robust community of 4-H volunteers and professionals. Through hands-on learning, kids build confidence, creativity, curiosity, and life skills such as leadership and resiliency to help them thrive today and tomorrow.

4-H programs and resources are available at home or through local in-person and virtual 4-H clubs, 4-H camps, and in-school and after-school programs. With the support of adult mentors, youth select from a menu of hands-on project ideas to complete. 4-H programs are available for kids and teens ages 8-18. 4-H Cloverbud programs are available for kids ages 5-7.

Adults intentionally support participants to develop habits, mindsets, skills, and knowledge in particular areas. 4-H instructors and leaders teach content and social and emotional competencies, providing opportunities for young people to practice what they have learned. 4-H programs provide a sense of belonging and a supportive learning and development environment. Relationships with learning and development help young agriculturists thrive, even in the face of adversity. 4-H gives youth a voice and space to name their realities and develop solutions.

4-H is an example of a youth development organization that is exploring the science of learning and development and integrating it into their programs and activities.

Today’s generation has the digital world to explore at their fingertips, both physically and virtually. Klamath and Lake counties’ 4-H programs offer

a variety of outlets to inspire our youth, such as Animal Projects, Non-Animal Projects, Membership Leadership Opportunities, Citizenship and Civil Engagement, School Enrichment, and After School programs.

4-H is making a difference in what matters to our community while building resilient communities across the state. We encourage you to support your local 4-H programs. Help us inspire young agriculturists to grow.



Animal Programs offered:

- ☐ Horse: showmanship, snaffle, driving, Trial and In-Hand Trial, English & Western Dressage, Ranchmanship, Cow Working & Roping, Ranch Horse ID Skills, Working Ranch Horse, Gaming Events.
- ☐ Dog: Showmanship, Obedience, Trick & Costume
- ☐ Beef: Showmanship, Market, Ranch Raised, Breed Classes, Dairy Cattle Breed Classes,
- ☐ Goat: Showmanship, Market, Ranch Raised, Breed Classes
- ☐ Swine: Showmanship, Market, Ranch Raised, Breed Classes
- ☐ Sheep: Showmanship, Market, Ranch Raised, Breed Classes
- ☐ Small Animal (Rabbit, Poultry): Showmanship, Market, Ranch Raised, Breed Classes

- ☐ Livestock Judging
- ☐ Archery
- ☐ Creative writing
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Educational displays
- ☐ Legos
- ☐ Videography
- ☐ Clothing & Textiles
- ☐ Business/Entrepreneur
- ☐ Designing Spaces
- ☐ Foods & Nutrition
- ☐ Food Preservation
- ☐ Container Gardening
- ☐ Flowers & Ornamentals
- ☐ Vegetables
- ☐ Herbs
- ☐ Natural Science Exhibits
 - Aquatic Education a Sportfishing
 - Conservation
 - Entomology
 - Forestry
 - Geology
 - Honeybees
 - Marine science
 - Outdoors





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Wildlife Viewing in Klamath Drainage District



Photo of mousing Bald Eagle by Mary Williams Hyde along Township Road



Photo of wildlife-filled field by Chelsea Shearer

In the still of twilight, on a cool, calm, crisp morning; the sound of Canada Geese coming off their roost to go feed in a nearby field echoes across the landscape. Within minutes, as the day begins to make its mark, whistling wings are heard with the accompanying cry of mallard hens, calling for company. As the sun finally pushes over the crest of the Klamath Hills, the valley erupts with countless songs sung by the hundreds of species of migratory birds resting in the area managed by Klamath Drainage District (KDD).

Waterfowl and shorebirds migrating along the Pacific Flyway don’t recognize borders. For them, the term “wetland” is viewed in the literal sense. Land with water on it, particularly when it contains food resources, is potentially suitable habitat, whether it’s a privately-owned field, a drainage ditch, or a national wildlife refuge.

For the last decade, the Bureau of Reclamation’s operation of the Klamath Project has largely been governed by a hydrologic model directing how much water must remain in Upper Klamath Lake for endangered shortnose and Lost River suckers and how much has to be released for threatened coho salmon in the Klamath River. The model also dictates how much and at what times water can go to Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges. There are separate formulas and rules in the model for water going to farms and agriculture. In accordance with the model, over the last three years, just like farms and agriculture, both refuges have received little or no water.

In the absence of adequate habitat conditions in Tule Lake and Lower Klamath, migrating waterfowl and shorebirds have been forced to find it elsewhere. Nowhere is this concretion of wildlife more apparent than in Klamath Drainage District (KDD), which comprises the reclaimed portion of Lower Klamath Lake in Oregon.

Over the last three years, the water used by KDD in the fall and winter, which occurs separate from the Klamath Project under district-owned

water rights, has provided the majority of waterfowl and shorebird habitat in the Klamath Basin. As a result, birders and other wildlife enthusiasts have quickly learned that KDD provides some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities in the Klamath Basin.

Ducks, geese, sandhill cranes, eagles, hawks, and owls are all commonly seen on lands within the district. In addition, coyotes, deer, muskrats, otters, even an occasional mountain lion or bear can be spotted.

According to Scott White, the general manager of KDD, “landowners in the district recognize the importance of wildlife on their lands and take great pride in the close connection between their farming operations and the habitat it provides.”

“While most of the lands within the district are privately owned, we have gotten accustomed to having the public driving around, stopping, and viewing wildlife. So long as people don’t trespass, stay on public roads, are mindful not to block driveways and maintenance roads, and are generally respectful, we are happy to have them visit the district.”

According to White, some of the best places to view wildlife in the district are conveniently located along public roads. “Township Road takes you right through the heart of the district,” according to White, including portion of the refuge within KDD that is known as Area K. The dirt roads along the Klamath Straits Drain are also public land, though White cautioned Reclamation is still irrigating these lands and roads may be blocked because irrigation lines are across the public roadways.

Running along the Oregon-California border, Stateline Road also provides ample wildlife viewing opportunities both in KDD and the refuge. Along Stateline Road one can also see the only water being delivered to the refuge, through the Ady Canal, which KDD owns and operates. These deliveries are helping maintain Unit 2, which is the only area of the refuge presently containing water.



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Pheasant in farm field near Strait Drain Photo by Mary Williams Hyde



Great Blue Heron near Strait Drain Photo by Mary Williams Hyde



Three of over 900 Sandhill Cranes on flooded farm fields this fall. Photo by Mary Williams Hyde



One of many Pelicans that rest and fish in project canals Photo by Mary Williams Hyde



An adult Bald Eagle telling the juvenile Bald Eagle it's not welcome at the dinner table. Photo by Mary Williams Hyde

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KWUA’s Fill-the-Lake Campaign; 2023 Outlook

Have you seen the billboard at the intersection of Washburn Way and South Sixth Street? Perhaps you’ve asked as you we’re driving by, “What does that advertisement mean, ‘FILL THE LAKE’?”

“We’re trying to keep the message simple,” says Moss Driscoll, Water Policy Director for the Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA), whose organization commissioned the billboard. “It’s easy for stakeholders to all prioritize their own needs and for the broader public to see apparent conflict, but everyone benefits when we fill Upper Klamath Lake over the winter.”

Upper Klamath Lake is the largest fresh waterbody in Oregon and has been characterized as the greatest natural storage reservoir in the Western United States. Since 1868 the lake has been a source of water for farms and communities in the Klamath Basin.

Upper Klamath Lake also home to several species of fish that are only found in the Klamath Basin, including two, Lost River and shortnose suckers (called C’Waam and Koptu in the Klamath Tribes’ traditional language), that have been listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) since 1988.

And since the listing of coho salmon under the ESA in 1997, Upper Klamath Lake has also become the principal means of meeting flow requirements in the Klamath River at Iron Gate Dam, sixty miles downstream.

Over the last three years, precipitation in the Basin has lagged well below average, with Klamath Falls receiving roughly half its average annual rainfall. The amount of water flowing into to Upper Klamath Lake has likewise been between 50 and 60 percent of average during this period.

For context, an “acre-foot” of water is the amount of water required to flood a flat acre of land with water to a depth of one foot. Upper Klamath Lake stores approximately 560,000 acre-feet of water, which means that one foot of difference in the lake’s water surface level equates to roughly 100,000 acre-feet of water.

In the spring 2020, the level of Upper Klamath Lake was a whole foot short of filling. In 2021 and 2022, it was two feet short. So altogether, over the last three years combined, the lake has been around 500,000 acre-feet – or nearly the entire lake’s volume – short of filling.

Given the shortages that have occurred, not surprisingly, conflict among the various stakeholders over limited water has dominated the last three years.

Prior to the ESA, daily decisions about how much water to release from Link River Dam were made by local power company employees, largely at their own discretion. “It’s amazing what Copco and its successors used to do to the river,” Driscoll said. “In the spring of 1965, after a 100-year flood required three months of maximum releases from Link River Dam, the power company basically shut the gates for a month and promptly filled the lake.”

“While no one is suggesting that we manage water like Copco or its successors have in the past,” Driscoll said, “we certainly think there is an alternative to having the lake not fill and being short all summer long, especially when there has been so much rain and snow this winter.” In recent days, releases out of Link River Dam have ranged between 300 and 500 cubic feet per second.

On Friday, January 13, the Bureau of Reclamation released a draft document titled the “Klamath Project January 2023 Temporary Operating Procedures” or “TOP”. According to the draft TOP, Reclamation is not reducing releases from Upper Klamath Lake at this time, as its projections show the lake filling to 4,142.4 feet by the end of March, which is characterized as the “TOP goal”.

A water level in Upper Klamath Lake of 4,142.40 feet on March 31, which is approximately a foot below full or 85 percent of capacity.

From KWUA’s standpoint, that’s the wrong goal. “The ‘TOP goal’”, according to Driscoll, “effectively zeros out farms and refuges in the Klamath Project, potentially leaving them without water until as late as June. That plan is of course unacceptable to us. Fields and refuges that are dry don’t grow food for the nation and can’t support the Pacific Flyway.”



Reintroducing Klamath Grown

Klamath Grown, formerly organized as the Klamath Farmers Online Marketplace (KFOM), recently announced it had re-opened its Online Market, which connects consumers with local farmers, ranchers and food producers in the Klamath Basin and southern Oregon.

Klamath Grown’s broad mission is to “bring people together around local food through community engagement, education, improved food access and producer support.”

After several years of operating as KFOM, in 2021, the founding members, Katie Swanson, Kelsie Randall and Rick Walsh, decided to reorganize as a non-profit organization. According to Swanson, who now serves as Klamath Grown’s Director of Community Relations, “We felt that a non-profit entity was more in line with our collective values and one that provides a more sustainable future for the organization.”

The organization’s three core focus areas are:

- 1) education and promotion;
- 2) support and capacity building; and
- 3) food access.

Klamath Grown’s work was recently bolstered by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which will fund a local food promotion campaign, help build capacity for small-scale producers, and support the launch of a “Harvest Box” program, which will source locally grown produce for a weekly subscription program that includes recipes, food preparation and storage tips, and other educational materials.

The Online Market can be found at www.klamathgrown.org. Orders can be made through the website any time between Wednesday 5 PM and Sunday 11:59 PM, and then picked up between 4 and 7 PM the following Wednesday at the Herald and News building (2701 Foothills Blvd.). Klamath Grown accepts payments through credit card as well SNAP/ OregonTrail.

The Online Market offers products from a diversity of local producers and availability varies weekly and fund a localaersseasonally. Fresh produce currently available includes varieties of potatoes, tomatoes, garlic, spinach, and microgreens. Various cuts of meat are also available, including locally raised lamb, pork, and beef. Other products like eggs, honey, herbs, baked goods, and artisan foods are also expected.

Klamath Grown acknowledges that it is not the first organization to support local food systems in the Klamath Basin, but it is the first to make that aim its core purpose. Farmers, ranchers, and food “makers and bakers” as the organization refers to them, are key to this effort. Swanson, who is a farmer herself, explained the broader concept. “The big idea is the more we can work together, the more we can collectively promote the food we create here.”



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Basin Counties Stepping Up

The elected leaders of Klamath, Modoc, and Siskiyou counties are firmly engaged in regional water and environmental policy issues. “Agricultural communities are fortunate to have this kind of dedicated leadership, said Klamath Water Users Association Executive Director Paul Simmons. “The Commissioners and Supervisors are walking the walk.”

According to Simmons, county leaders have met personally, and have ongoing dialogue with leaders at high levels in federal and state government. They have also dedicated hundred of hours to self-education and meetings on subjects ranging from fish biology and fire management to environmental restoration and domestic well mitigation. “All three counties have a common interest in the well being of our citizens. It only makes sense for us to work together, and we have done that very well,” said Modoc County Supervisor, Geri Byrne.

After the federal government’s announcement that there would be zero water through A Canal and the Klamath Project in 2021, the three counties held a joint board meeting, the first such meeting in memory. That led to joint letters from all three counties to federal officials covering a suite of disaster-related issues. “The counties are having an impact,” said Simmons.

Recently, the counties have focused joint efforts on environmental restoration activities. Congress has appropriated large amounts of money, including \$162 million in the 202 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law directly specifically to Klamath, that is available for restoration activities as well as infrastructure.

“The funding is welcome, but there’s a need for a coherent plan in order to produce benefits for the basin. We haven’t seen that plan,” said Klamath County Commissioner Derrick DeGroot.

This past November, Supervisors and Commissioners wrote to tribes in the basin, proposing the formation of an advisory committee of county and tribal governments to recommend wise use of restoration dollars. “Whether it’s the committee we proposed or something else, dollars need to be used effectively. And there must be accountability. The goal cannot be simply to spend the money,” said Siskiyou County Supervisor, Brandon Criss.

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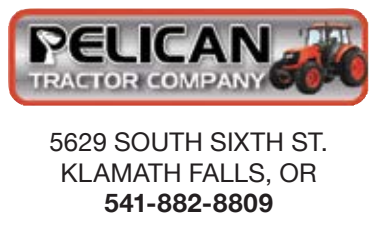
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Tule Lake and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuges went dry for the first time in history last year due to federal water management decisions. The results have crippled migratory bird and local wildlife habitat. Although not as vast as the refuges, KDD lands have continued providing habitat for these species important to the region's ecosystem. What's good for KDD is good for wildlife and the overall health of the Basin. Learn more at KlamathDrainageDistrict.org

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