

## Recent weather makes case for water storage

Klamath Falls Herald & News  
Published January 8, 2006

The siege of wet weather makes a strong case for off-stream storage - storage that's deep and less likely to lose the tremendous amounts of water through evaporation than large, shallow lakes do. It's also more likely to be able to deliver cold water, if needed to cool the Klamath River.

There's two acknowledgements we should make right away, though:

- The strong start to water year doesn't guarantee that it will continue that way, though the predictions are good. We've had winters in the past that started wet and finished dry.
- As we've said many times before, irrigators in the Klamath Reclamation Project face too much of the responsibility for meeting water needs of the lower Klamath Basin. Though there now seems more awareness - and use - of the Trinity River's potential to help, the Project usually gets first call. (The Trinity enters the Klamath in California about 43 miles from the ocean.) Unless it's been a pretty outstanding water year, local irrigators have to wait each spring to see what the verdict is from the Bureau of Reclamation on how water it will allocate water it controls in the upper Basin. Aside from the issue of fairness, the process can wreak havoc with planning for the coming season.

Water years begin in October, and we don't get many of them that start as well as this one. The Basin is already 2 1/2 inches over the average.

We need to take advantage of those kinds of years.

The answer is not just water storage but deep-water storage.

Basin interests have been pushing for water storage at Long Lake, a dry lake northwest of Klamath Falls, and attracted the interest of the Bureau of Reclamation to study it. It's been estimated it could hold 350,000 to 500,000 acre-feet, and could be as much as 200 feet deep.

There remain lots of questions to be answered about it - scientific, political and financial.

The main thing is to keep the Long Lake possibility moving forward. If Long Lake is feasible for off-stream storage, the sooner water is flowing into it, the better.

### Editorial board

Pat Bushey wrote today's editorial, which represents the view of the Herald and News editorial board. Its members include:

- Publisher Heidi Wright.
- Opinion Editor Pat Bushey.
- In addition, members of the public sit in on editorial board meetings as community advisors. Bushey writes most of the editorials.