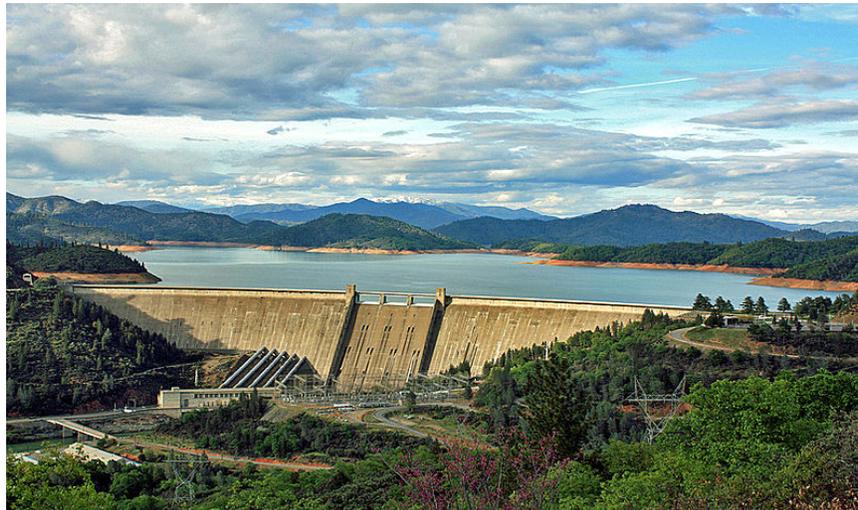




**THE MAGAZINE FOR WEST COAST SPORTSMEN**

## MWD votes to support Shasta Dam raise

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*by Dan Bacher*

*Thursday, December 13, 2012*

The Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California voted Tuesday to include raising of Shasta Dam as one of its "legislative priorities," a move opposed by the Winnemen Wintu Tribe, fishermen and environmentalists.

The Board of MWD voted to support "administrative/legislative actions to remove existing prohibition for state funding to raise Shasta Dam."

Other "State Legislative Priorities" that the District endorsed Tuesday include:

- "Support administrative/legislative action and funding to keep the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan on schedule to advance conveyance and ecosystem improvements to meet the coequal goals of water supply reliability and Delta ecosystem restoration.
- Continue support for implementation of 2009 Delta/water management legislative package.

- Support funding for public share of Delta restoration costs in 2014 water bond."

Armando Acuna, MWD spokesman, explained the reason for the decision to support state legislation backing the dam raise.

"We believe that if there is a dam raise, there should be a state role as well," he explained. "Right now it would be solely a federal project."

The Winnemem Wintu Tribe and their allies oppose the dam expansion for a multitude of reasons. It would flood many of the Tribe's remaining sacred ceremonial sites that weren't already flooded by Shasta Dam.

The dam expansion project, in conjunction with the Bay Delta Conservation Plan to build to build the peripheral tunnels, would also hasten the extinction of Central Valley salmon, steelhead, Delta smelt, longfin smelt, green sturgeon and other fish species.

"This plan to raise the dam has phony economics associated with it," said Tom Stokely, water policy analyst for the California Water Impact Network (C-WIN). "Dam raise proponents claim that most of the benefit would be for the fish (winter run chinook), so the taxpayers would pick up the bill for the project instead of Westlands Water District, who is the real beneficiary."

"Our money is much better spent on local water supply projects to improve regional water self-sufficiency," Stokely emphasized. "These include conservation, recycling, storm water capture and retirement of toxic agricultural lands such as those found in Westlands."

He criticized the use of taxpayer money to "send more clean water to poison ground such as Westlands."

"There is no solution to the drainage problem other than land retirement," Stokely said.

The approval of the dam raise would also set a precedent for removing any protections for state designated wild and scenic rivers and wild trout streams, according to Stokely. The sections of the McCloud River from Algoma to the confluence with Huckleberry Creek and 0.25 mile downstream from the McCloud Dam to the McCloud River Bridge are designated as wild trout waters.

Caleen Audrey Sisk, Chief and Spiritual Leader of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, challenged Bureau of Reclamation and water contractor claims that dam expansion would improve Lake Shasta's ability to provide colder water for the winter-run Chinook, a fish protected under the Endangered Species Act.

She emphasized that the study didn't include any exploration of the possibility of building a water way or "fish swim" around the dam to allow winter Chinook to spawn in the McCloud River above Shasta Dam, as the Tribe and its allies have proposed.

"A bigger cold water pool is not what's best for salmon," she pointed out. "It seems as that is one of the first goals in the EIS. But, where is the study that shows how just building a water way or fish swim around the dam would benefit and increase the numbers of salmon? A fish swim would be cheaper and produce more salmon spawning grounds in already naturally cold water."

Sisk concluded, "An 18.5 foot dam raise would damage or flood about 40 of our sacred sites, and permanently submerge our Coming of Age ceremony site. Help our efforts to protect sacred sites, clean rivers and healthy salmon runs! Tell them you support the protection of Winnemem sacred sites and our freedom of religion!"

Send your written comments regarding the Bureau's proposal to raise Shasta Dam via email to BOR-MPR-SLWRI [at] usbr.gov or by mail to the address below. The Draft Feasibility Report is available on Reclamation's website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/slwri/index.html>.

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For questions, contact Katrina Chow at 916-978-5067 or fax your request to 916-978-5094. To request an electronic copy of the draft documents, contact Louis Moore at 916-978-5106 (TTY 916-978-5608) or by email at [wmoore \[at\] usbr.gov](mailto:wmoore@usbr.gov).

*<http://www.fishsniffer.com/reports/details/mwd-votes-to-support-shasta-dam-raise/>*