

Iron Gate Reservoir drawdown begins

January 28, 2024



Recently, the Klamath River Renewal Corporation, a 501c3 nonprofit founded in 2016, initiated the drawdown process by opening the low-level outlet tunnel in the Iron Gate dam.

Drawdown of the JC Boyle and Copco reservoirs will begin next week.

The process slowly drains the reservoirs over several weeks.

Communities downstream including Klamath will begin to start seeing changes in the coming days as an estimated 17-20 million cubic yards of sediments at the three dams start being removed, according to the KRRC.

The process of the drawdown is occurring under the watchful oversight of the Environmental Protection Agency and KRRC consultants. The EPA has determined the sediments to be non-toxic, consisting of dead algae, assorted gravels and fine clay particles.

Mark Bransom, chief operating officer of the KRRC told The Pilot, “The drawdown strategy is different than what people have seen in the past removal of other dams. There was no (explosive) blast at this dam, instead

we had the opportunity to use existing infrastructure which allows us to precisely control the volume of water going down river, limiting downstream impacts,” Bransom said.

Water clarity will take approximately 24 months to return to pristine clarity.

Dam(s) removal is expected to begin mid-year and be completed by Autumn of 2024.