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## Crooked River Restoration and Water

January 16, 2019

LTE Submission: Bureau's Failure Jeopardizes Crooked River Restoration

In 1961 Bowman Dam sacrificed Crooked River flows to store 155,000 acre-feet of water in Prineville Reservoir. While Congress declared these stored waters were primarily for irrigation, local irrigation districts would eventually only claim about half.

Meanwhile, the dam and irrigation diversions decimated the Crooked River, sparking a struggle for the roughly 80,000 acre-feet of unclaimed stored water to restore fish populations.

Finally, a compromise was struck: The 2014 Crooked River Collaborative Water Security Act. This compromise gave first dibs to irrigation districts with pre-2012 Bureau of Reclamation water contracts, the City of Prineville got water to offset new groundwater pumping, and fish got the unclaimed 80,000 acre-feet of water.

Importantly, under the Act, the Bureau must release this water for fish and also provide these fish flows from Prineville Reservoir to Lake Billy Chinook.

Unfortunately, years later, the Bureau has failed to ensure these fish flows stay in the river, meaning water promised to fish under federal law is being diverted onto irrigators' fields. Why is this happening? Despite plenty of rhetoric in the basin about following collaborative pathways, and this collaborative bi-partisan legislation, local irrigation districts have convinced the Bureau to hold off on protecting this water instream.

It's time for the Bureau to stop obstructing the restoration of the Crooked River. This deal was brokered four years ago, the irrigators and the City of Prineville have their water. It is time for the Bureau to follow the law and ensure that the fish get their water.

—John DeVoe