



# Regional News

Energy news from the West

## County Seeks to Tap Renewable Project in Alaska

Officials in Whatcom County, Washington, have asked the federal government for permission to study whether the county should participate in a \$125 million renewable energy project in Alaska.

The Bellingham, Washington, Herald said the county asked for a preliminary federal permit to do environmental and engi-

neering studies that could cost \$1.1 million, leading toward tapping Swan Lake, north of Petersburg, Alaska, by drilling a hole in the lake bed and running a pipe into a power generation station.

The pressure of the high-elevation lake has a high potential to generate a large amount of energy, according to County

Executive Peter Kremen.

Kremen called the potential project “visionary,” which could lead to more renewable sources for the county and an economic development initiative that would entice businesses to move there for cheap electricity.

Canada recently built a \$400 million transmission line near the Alaskan bor-

der to allow the power to be sent to the United States and Whatcom County in the northwestern part of the state.

If the project is feasible, the county might try to pass a bond to build the Alaska generation plant, providing enough green power to offset the use of 15 million gallons of diesel fuel. ■

## California Declares War on Invasive Pike to Protect Salmon

California’s Department of Fish and Game is poisoning Lake Davis, near the Sierra Nevada community of Portola.

The goal is to kill the northern pike, but it will kill many other fish, too.

California officials are in the midst of a \$17-million operation to prevent the invasive pike from working down the water system, getting into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and killing endangered salmon, reported National Public Radio.

The state tried to eradicate the pike a decade ago



*The northern pike*

by setting off explosives in the lake, electrocuting the fish and poisoning. It was highly controversial—and the pike came back.

Nobody knows how the northern pike reached Lake Davis from its native waters, but the guess is a Minnesota resident or a

local who missed fishing for the feisty pike imported it.

Lake Davis is in the Sacramento River watershed, which drains into an ecologically fragile delta, which is home to many endangered species.

Critics say the poison

being used—rotenone—will kill anything with gills, including pike, trout, catfish and even aquatic insects.

But Ed Pert, who leads the pike eradication project, says it is the only alternative to eliminate the invasive species.

In the town of Portola, criticism of the approach has been muted. Sara Bensinger, owner of a bait and tackle shop near the lake, said the fish and game department assured residents they will plant many new fish to replace those lost. ■

## Oregon River Dam Replaced With New Diversion Technique

A concrete diversion dam on the South Fork Klaskanine River in Clatsop County, Oregon, has been replaced with a newer technique that uses rocks in various formations to allow fish passage and water diversion.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife says the new style

of diversion reduces impact to fish, fish migration, natural stream functions, boaters and other stream uses, while requiring less maintenance by the water user.

A state-of-the-art screen was installed at the location in the project, aimed at benefiting chum salmon, chinook, steel-

head and cutthroat trout.

Fish and Wildlife is using a combination of boulders, logs and root wads to reduce stream-bank erosion, enhance fish habitat, maintain river stability, help withstand large floods and maintain channel capacity.

The dam is owned by Clatsop County and is

used for rearing fish. The project is a cooperative effort between several state, federal and private groups.

“This diversion technique has the potential to become more widely used as a solution for fish passage issues at other diversions in the state,” said biologist Troy Laws. ■