

# Environmental injustice, Art and Activism on the Klamath River Basin

Brittani R. Orona (Hupa)

Ph.D. Candidate in Native American Studies with a Designated  
Emphasis in Human Rights  
University of California, Davis

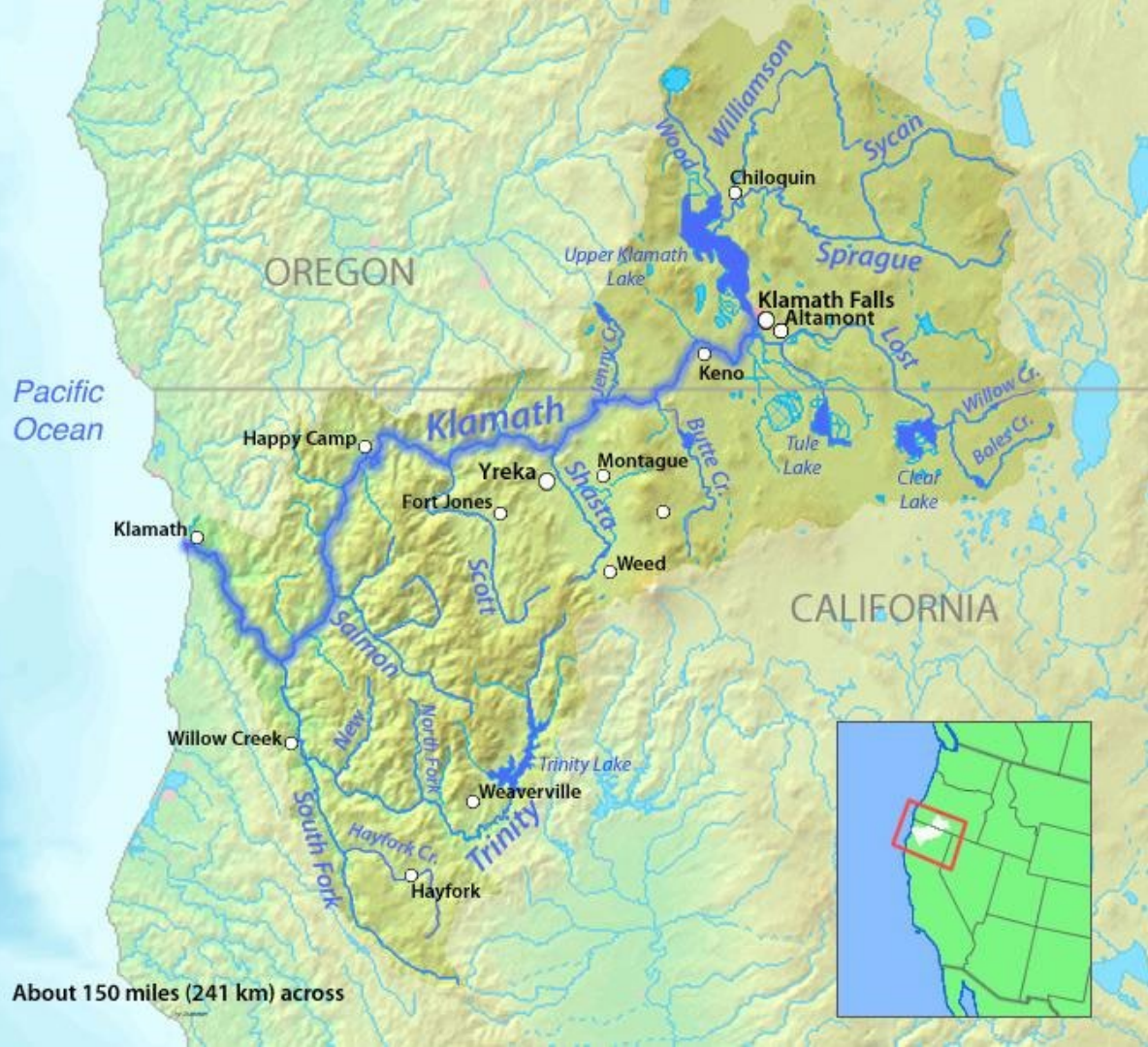
# The Klamath River as Home

Tribes (Hupa, Yurok, Shasta, Karuk, Klamath) of the Klamath River and its tributaries (Trinity, Salmon, etc.) depended on the basin for cultural and physical renewal

- Ceremonial dances take place along the sites near the river;
- Fishing is a community event-families fish for Chinook, coho salmon, steelhead and Coastal Cutthroat trout, green and white sturgeon, and pacific lamprey
- ta'na:n-na:niwe:sile'n or hun' (Trinity River, as a power one should pray to)

# Tribes on the Klamath River Basin





About 150 miles (241 km) across

# Problems on the Klamath River Basin

- Mass diversion of Klamath water to Oregon farmers and ranchers via four dams (J.C. Boyle, CorpCo 1 & 2, Iron Gate) create dangerous water conditions on the Klamath River and its tributaries
- In 2002, diversion created toxic, over-heated water that led to a fish kill. 77,000 mature Chinook and Coho salmon died on the rivers.
- This was the catalyst for major activism effort, led by the Klamath Justice Coalition, to remove the dams

# A THREATENED RIVER



Dip net fishing in the early 1900s



The Karuk dip net fishery at Ishi Pishi Falls is one of the last surviving traditional fisheries in America.



Salmon cooked traditionally over a fire pit.



Karuk dip nets are made the same way today as they have been for thousands of years



Early European settlers present a trophy sized salmon fished out of the Upper Basin at the turn of the last century



European settlers brought a new culture that also grew to depend on a healthy Klamath Fishery



**Iron Gate Dam**  
river mile: 190  
constructed: 1962

**Copco Dams 1 & 2**  
river mile: 198.6 & 196.8  
constructed: 1917 & 1925

**Fall Creek Dam**  
river mile: 192  
constructed: 1903

**J.C. Boyle Dam**  
river mile: 225  
constructed: 1958

**Keno Dam**  
river mile: 233  
constructed: 1931

**Link River Dam**  
river mile: 254  
constructed: 1921








Scene from a Klamath Tribal village in the Upper Basin after a successful day



Anglers search for an elusive steelhead

## DAMMED TO EXTINCTION

-  Unreachable fish spawning areas
-  Steelhead trout likely displayed the most widespread distribution in the Upper Klamath Basin of all the salmonids. Today, trophy sized redband trout still reside in the Upper Basin, evidence that steelhead could once again thrive there.
-  Coho salmon once spawned in the tributaries of the Upper Klamath Basin.
-  Chinook salmon once spawned in the main stem and tributaries of the Upper Klamath Basin.
-  Extinct salmon runs - Spring run chinook were once the most abundant type of salmon in the Klamath. Today they are extinct in the project area and nearly gone from the entire river system.

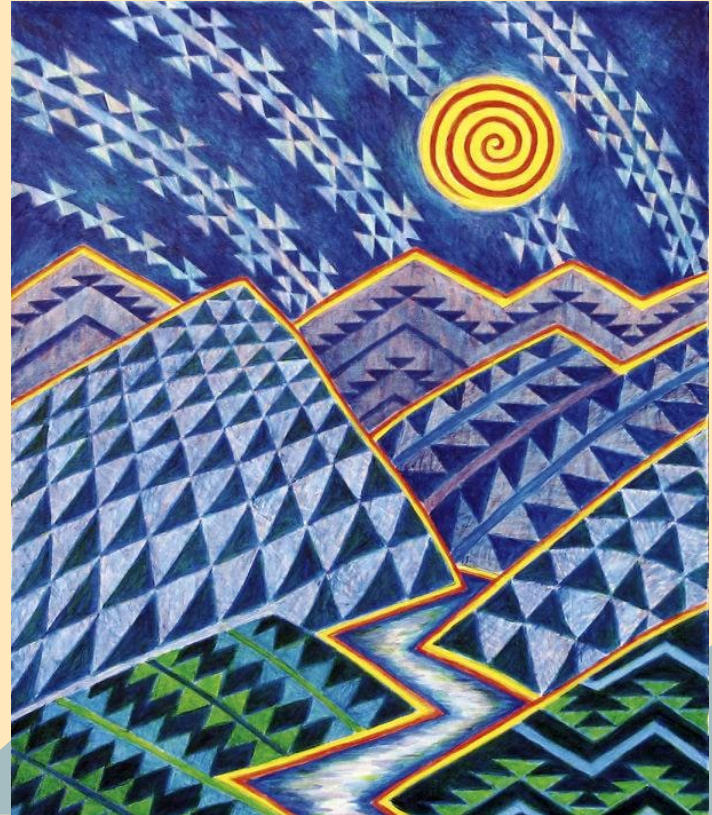
# Visual Sovereignty



# Paintings from the Klamath River Basin

Prolific and world-renowned artists have come from the NorthCoast and Klamath River:

- Julian Lang (Karuk/Shasta)
- Lyn Risling (Hupa/Yurok/Karuk)
- Brian Tripp (Karuk)
- George Blake (Hupa/Yurok)
- Brittany Britton (Hupa)
- Rick Bartow (Wiyot)
  
- To name a few....





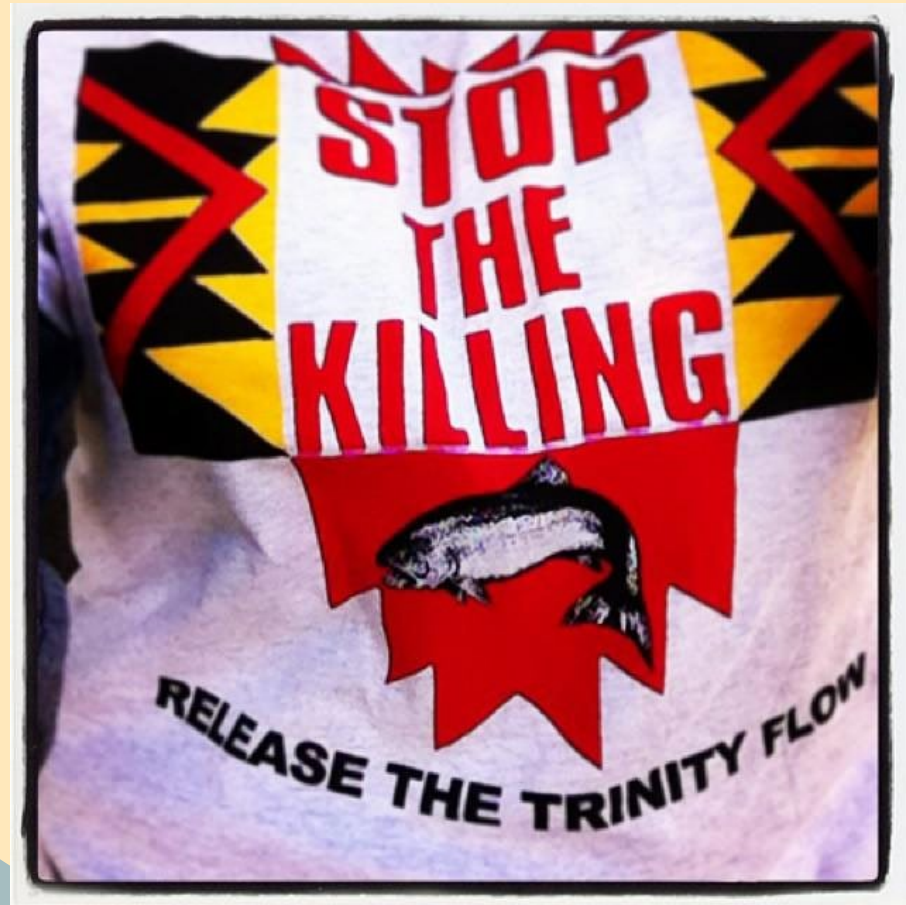
Peeshkéesh Kun'ahookritihva,  
Klamath River As Their Guide  
*Julian Lang, 2013*



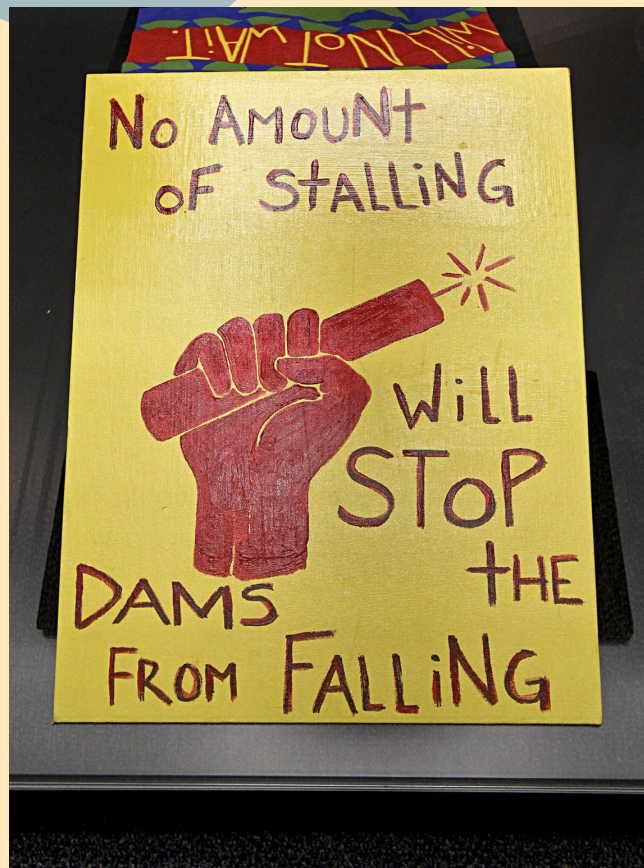
# Ephemera

from the Klamath River  
Activism Movement/NOGO

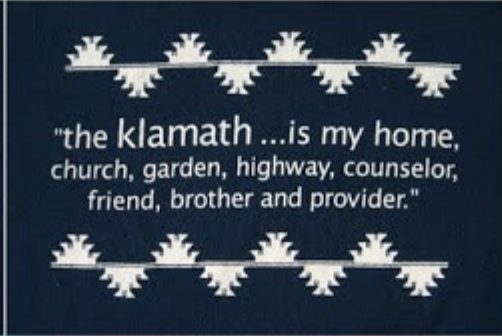
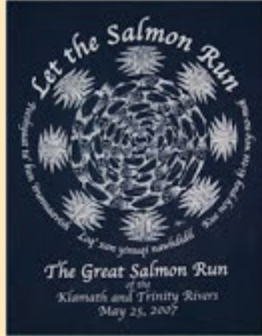








**Annilea Hillman (Yurok tribal member and Klamath Justice Coalition activist)**



# Photography

from the Klamath River  
Activism Movement

