Most of the environmental law and policy matters discussed on Legal Planet–especially over the past few months–have dealt with natural resource crises, environmental rollbacks, hostile political actors and actions in Washington, D.C., etc. So let me take this opportunity to share an upbeat and inspirational environmental story in these otherwise troubled environmental times.

In 2022, after literally decades of debate and negotiations, an historic agreement was forged among numerous actors–a major hydroelectric energy company, environmental activists, commercial fishers, several Native American tribes and the Governors of California and Oregon. The goal? To remove four large hydroelectric dams built over the last century on the northern reaches of the Klamath River straddling the California-Oregon border. The result? To allow the Klamath to revert to something approaching its natural condition as a free-flowing river.

The 20th century is often (and accurately) referred to as the American West's "big dam" era. While those dams helped promote Anglo settlement of the West, a more reliable water supply and economic prosperity for many, the dams, reservoirs and related water infrastructure caused enormous environmental damage to fisheries, broader ecosystems and indigenous people's cultural and religious practices.

By contrast, the 21st century is shaping up as the era of dam *removal*. It's been reported that in 2024 alone, 108 dams in 27 states were torn down–generally for the purpose of environmental restoration.

But ***the single largest dam removal project in the history of the United States*** was also completed last year, when all four of the Klamath River dams were finally removed and the Klamath allowed to flow unobstructed for the first time in over a century.

Earlier this month, the New York Times published a detailed and thoughtful article chronicling this remarkable environmental saga. A closely-related Times story, published last summer when the last of the four Klamath dams was being removed, can be found here.

As it happens, the U.C. Davis School of Law's California Environmental Law & Policy Center and its Tribal Justice Project have for months been developing a live program on the Klamath River dam removal saga. It's titled, "Success! Removing the Klamath Dams," and will take place this Tuesday, April 1st, from 4:15-6:15 p.m. in room 1301 at King Hall (the U.C. Davis law school). This event will feature three

expert speakers who will discuss and analyze the Klamath dam removal project from quite different perspectives:

- **Scott Williams**, a senior attorney with the law firm of Berkey Williams who spent literally decades negotiating the Klamath dam removal project on behalf of several Klamath River Basin tribal nations;
- **Dr. Brittani Orona**, an enrolled member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe who currently serves as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of History at U.C. Santa Cruz, and who will join the U.C. Davis Department of Native American Studies as an Assistant Professor this Fall; and
- **Professor Rob Lusardi**, a freshwater research ecologist and conservation biologist at U.C. Davis, where he also serves as Associate Director of the campus' Center for Watershed Sciences.

Interested members of the public in Northern California are welcome to attend this free event in person. And the program will be recorded, posted on the California Environmental Law & Policy Center's website (https://law.ucdavis.edu/academics/centers/environmental) and available for online viewing approximately 10 days after the live event.

The environmental restoration of the upper Klamath River Basin remains a work in progress and will take several more years to fully accomplish. But it's a story of effective environmental advocacy, persistence, determination, and political consensus-building. We can all take comfort and satisfaction in such a consequential (and unprecedented) "good news" environmental saga.