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Press Release: For Immediate Release
**Resighini Rancheria Questions Secretary Salazar on Upper Klamath Basin
Endangered Species Act Enforcement**

On March 26 the Resighini Rancheria sent a letter to Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar asking for justification of actions taken by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that allowed the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to eliminate endangered populations of Lost River and shortnose sucker fish in Tule Lake in April 2010, less than three months after the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement was signed. These fish, which were historically very important to Native Americans, have been listed under the federal Endangered Species Act since 1988, and more recently under the California Endangered Species Act.

The Resighini Rancheria letter also raises questions about recently proposed Critical Habitat for these fish, which eliminates consideration of Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Lake. In combination, the two actions give the appearance that Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement implementation has already begun, and that it has compromised Federal and State Endangered Species Act enforcement. The letter asks the Secretary to provide alternative justification for these actions because they do not seem to be scientifically supported or sanctioned by authorizing legislation.

Since the Lost River and shortnose suckers are also listed under California Endangered Species Act, and Tule Lake is in California, the decision by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to allow the Bureau of Reclamation to remove the suckers may be in violation of the California law. The letter requests information regarding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game consultations on the removal of endangered suckers from Tule Lake. Because there appears to be a lack of good faith in enforcement of the Endangered Species Act, we are also asking that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation provide evidence of compliance with the terms and conditions of the 2008 Biological Opinion on suckers and Klamath Project operation.

Chairman Don McCovey summed up concerns in his letter to the Secretary: “While we have never relied on suckers as a food source, they have always been important to us because they are indicators of the health of the Klamath River as a whole. We feel that if the suckers cannot live, the Lower Klamath River cannot be healed and salmon and we, as a people, will perish with them.”

The Resighini Rancheria is a federally recognized Tribe located within Del Norte County at the top of the Klamath River estuary. For links to more information, see www.KlamathER.org.

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