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**FORMER OREGON STATE SENATOR PRODUCES FILM TO DOCUMENT AND  
ADVANCE LARGEST ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROJECT  
IN U.S. HISTORY**

**“A River Between Us” Depicts How 42 Adversarial Organizations Came  
Together to Conserve the Longest, Most Controversial River in America**

Portland, OR – Former Oregon State Senator and one-time gubernatorial candidate [Jason A. Atkinson](#) today announced the release of *A River Between Us*, a documentary film that brings to light a bitter, century-old, sociopolitical battle over water rights and the historic coalition that rose to end it, driving the largest conservation project in American history.

“We created this film to be a cinematic call to action on behalf of the largest restoration project in American history,” Atkinson said. “Our goal for it is to provoke the White House into taking part in it.”

[\[Watch the trailer here.\]](#)

Focused on the Klamath River Basin, which is comprised of nearly 16,000 square miles east of the Cascade Range stretching from southern Oregon well into northern California, *A River Between Us* captures the end of nearly a century of “water wars” in the region, wherein farmers, Native Tribes, local and regional industry, and environmental activists have been pitted against each other for rights to the Klamath River, the longest river in the United States.

“Water is the oil of our times,” Atkinson said. “A limited, precious natural resource. Sadly, the era of water wars has just begun, particularly in the West.”

Since the first dam was built on the Klamath in 1918, the river and its surrounding communities have been embroiled in political struggles for water use, with PacifiCorp's four dams at the center of the matter. In addition to the sociopolitical damage caused by their presence, the dams are responsible for an overall scarcity of water, florescent green algae beds, dying fish, birds, cattle and crops, and vast destruction of life and livelihoods—a situation entirely caused by the actions of humans.

“These dams provide no water for irrigation, and only one produces any significant energy,” Atkinson said. “Their primary purpose is symbolic. Some see them as signifying freedom and prosperity, but others think of them as representing poverty and demise. These opposing views have defined this controversy for generations.”

Atkinson and co-producer Jeff Martin, an award-winning documentary filmmaker ([\*Lord, Save Us from Your Followers\*](#)), shot the film over two years along the entire Klamath River, conducting 70 individual interviews throughout Oregon and California with farmers, who need the Klamath's water for irrigation; Pacific Power, who manages the dams; the Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust, who problem-solve for water use; historic and modern fishermen; members of the Native Tribes who have lived and worked along the Klamath for centuries; federal, state and local politicians; and environmental advocates.

The coalition that comes together over the course of the film is made up of 42 different – many historically adversarial – organizations. But as the disparate groups put aside their differences to sign a landmark agreement of compromise, the collective movement begins an entirely new approach to conservation, one that views community as a crucial part of the natural habitat, where people are an extension of the river, rather than its controlling interest.

Well beyond a grassroots movement on the riverbed, Atkinson and Martin plan to use the film to raise awareness of this crisis for the purposes of starting a national dialog that will be heard from Requa, California, all the way to Washington, DC. “We want to make this critical situation familiar to people who take a subway to work every morning,” Atkinson said.

For more information visit: <http://ariverbetweenus.com>.

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