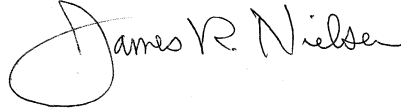


SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2000-34

- *The following State and Federal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.*

TO: **Brigadier General Strock** **COE-NPD**
 William Branch **COE-Water Management**
 Cindy Henriksen **COE-RCC**
 Doug Arndt **COE-P**
 Col. Randall J. Butler **COE-Portland District**
 Lieut. Col. W.E. Bulen, Jr. **COE-Walla Walla District**
 J. William McDonald **USBR-Boise Regional Director**
 Judith Johansen **BPA-Administrator**
 Greg Delwiche **BPA-PG-5**



FROM: **James R. Nielsen, Chairperson, Salmon Managers**

DATE: **November 21, 2000**

SUBJECT: **Ives Island**

SPECIFICATIONS: Immediately increase flow at Bonneville dam to a minimum of 150 Kcfs as requested in SOR #2000-33.

JUSTIFICATION:

Current field survey data indicate that chum salmon spawning is being negatively impacted by the present operation of the federal hydrosystem, specifically by the provision of flow at Bonneville Dam. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife field crews sampled around the Ives/Pierce Island complex on Monday, November 20, 2000. They observed approximately 140 live chum near the entrance to the Hamilton slough. Of these fish, about 100 had exposed backs due to low water in the area. Eight dead chum were observed, three of which were females that died prior to spawning. The field crew observed fourteen dry redds and thirty more that were in danger of being exposed. An additional fifty chinook were observed in the area.

The mainstem flows established in the Biological Opinion for chum salmon do not accommodate situations where the creeks are not accessible because of low precipitation. NMFS staff advised us on November 20, 2000 that the creek areas looked extremely poor for fish passage on the previous day. (NMFS had accompanied BPA staff to the Hanford Reach area and when returning to Portland had conducted an aerial survey of the Ives/Pierce/Hamilton area.) SOR #2000-33 advised the Action Agencies that the present operation of the federal hydrosystem is limiting chum salmon habitat availability in the Ives Pierce islands channel,

Hamilton Creek, the I-205 mainstem springs seep area (one mile upstream of the I-205 bridge on the Washington shore), and the mainstem Columbia River at the confluence of St. Cloud Creek. At current mainstem flows access to Hamilton Creek is limited and the mainstem spring/seep areas near the I-205 Bridge are inaccessible. Chum salmon are attempting to spawn in the areas along the Washington shore near the mouth of Hamilton Creek. While this area is desirable for spawning, it is limited in area and both chum and chinook are competing for space that was primarily used by chum based on previous observations. Duncan Creek is freely accessible to fish passage through the dam, but the mud berm at the mouth may limit entry at these low mainstem flows.

Flows at Bonneville Dam during the November 20, 2000 survey ranged between 127 and 134 Kcfs. These flows together with concurrent low tidal stages have resulted in shallow water depths. Looking ahead, these low tidal stages are expected to reach their lowest points on Thursday and continue through the weekend. As we advised you in SOR #2000-33, flows during this time period should be 150 Kcfs to avoid impacting chum spawning. Consequently, this request is for the immediate implementation of SOR #2000-33. In addition to the water in Grand Coulee Reservoir we estimate that there is an additional 280 KAF of water available in Chief Joseph between the present elevation of 954.1 feet and the minimum pool elevation of 930 feet that could be used for flow augmentation. If for any reason this request cannot be implemented we request a written response from the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation documenting their reasoning.