

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2001-11

- *The following State and Federal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Oregon Department of Fish & 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**
 Steven Wright **Acting BPA-Administrator**
 Greg Delwiche **BPA-PG-5**



FROM: **Ron Boyce, Chairperson, Salmon Managers**

DATE: **November 15, 2001**

SUBJECT: Tailwater elevation at Bonneville Dam to protect natural spawning of chum and fall chinook salmon at the Ives/Pierce Island Complex and the I-205 seeps.

SPECIFICATIONS: Beginning immediately and continuing until further notice, provide a minimum instantaneous tailrace elevation of 12 feet at Bonneville Dam as specified in SOR #2001-10.

JUSTIFICATION: On October 29, 2001 the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service submitted SOR#2001-10 for implementation beginning November 5, 2001. This SOR reiterates the specification and justification presented in that SOR.

The need for the immediate implementation of the SOR is warranted based on the most recent survey and field observations from the Ives/Pierce Island area. Chum, fall chinook, and coho salmon have been observed staging and spawning in the island area as well as in the creeks. The chum salmon numbers have increased substantially over the past few days and numbers will likely increase significantly in the next few days based on historical data. In the survey conducted on November 5th a total of ten chum salmon were observed, with an additional observation noted on the survey conducted on November 9th, 2001. Yesterday those numbers increased by 54 live chum (12 on the Washington shore between Duncan Creek and Ives Island, 12 at the Pierce Island ranch area, 4 in the Ives/Pierce Island channel break and 26 below Hamilton Creek) and 8 redd observations. This marked increase in chum numbers is indicative of the likelihood of large numbers entering the area in the next few days.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees (Don Anglin, Jonathan Miller) conducted a site visit to Hamilton Creek on November 9, 2001 to install a stream gage for streamflow monitoring.

Approximately 25 live and 8 dead coho salmon were observed along a 300-meter section of the creek near the bridge in North Bonneville. Approximately 15 redds were also observed. No chum salmon were observed.

Subsequently, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees (Marshall Barrows, Donna Allard) conducted a site visit to Hamilton and Hardy creeks on November 13-14, 2001 to check on the status of streamflows and the adult chum traps in each location. High streamflows from recent rain events allowed approximately 12 adult chum salmon to move upstream, above the trap in Hardy Creek. In addition, approximately 40 adult chum were observed in Hamilton Creek just downstream from the mouth of Hamilton Springs.

The survey studies show that in addition to chum salmon, 31 fall chinook redds and 99 live fall chinook have been counted at the Ives/Pierce channel break and in the area below Hamilton Creek. A total of 13 coho redds (4 of those were added between November 9 and the survey conducted on November 13th) have been counted.

All of these data collected to-date suggest that fish are staging and spawning in the island and creek area and that it is necessary to maintain river elevation in the lower elevation spawning areas once flows from Hamilton Creek subside. This area represents an extremely important natural spawning habitat that at present conditions is of limited availability to these fish.