

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2001-5

- *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, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission.*

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FROM: **Christine Mallette, Chairperson, Salmon Managers**

DATE: **May 30, 2001**

SUBJECT: **Albeni Falls**

SPECIFICATIONS: Pass inflow at Albeni Falls beginning immediately. Maintain the current lake elevation of 2058.2 feet through June 30, 2001. Refill the lake to 2062.5 feet at an even rate beginning on July 1 and extending through July 22nd or later depending on in-season observations of bull trout passage conditions at the mouth of Trestle and South Gold creeks during the month of July. Based on the difference between the present lake elevation and the full elevation, it is estimated that an additional 201.8 ksf are available for flow augmentation in the Mid Columbia River during the month of June. It is fully expected that this water be used for flow augmentation and not be retained in the Grand Coulee Reservoir.

JUSTIFICATION:

The present federal operations plan for the federal hydrosystem calls for Albeni Falls to refill to the summer elevation of 2062.5 feet by June 30. If this plan were continued, Albeni Falls would be the only FCRPS project that will fill and stay full through the summer and fall.

The present drought and economic situation has resulted in the interruption of Endangered Species Act protection measures. Flows are far below those called for by the Biological Opinion, The NWPPC's 1994 *Strategy for Salmon* and the CRITFC tribes' *Spirit of the Salmon* restoration plan. Further, the status of the juvenile fish migration has been affected by the extremely low flows in the Mid Columbia River (see attached memo).

Given the present hardship being endured by other users of the hydrosystem, it is appropriate to call for the participation of the Albeni Falls project to ease some of the burden being placed on fish this migration season. The Corps of Engineers' Record of Consultation and Statement of Decision for the 2000 FCRPS Biological Opinion notes that summer operation of Albeni Falls would be above

elevation 2062 feet provided “normal and planned conditions continue to exist within the Columbia Basin”. The present drought and economic situation in 2001 are not normal. The SOR calls for Albeni Falls to pass inflow to augment Mid and Lower Columbia flows.