

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2004-14

The following State, Federal, and Tribal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Nez Perce, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and the Columbia River Inter Tribal Fish Commission.

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FROM: David A. Wills, Chairperson, Salmon Managers

DATE: June 22, 2004

SUBJECT: Summer Flows at Libby

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Maintain stable outflows from Libby after the Sturgeon Pulse Operation while drafting Libby Dam to 2439 feet by August 31st, 2004.
- Provide stable flows during September to meet Montana's request for a reduced varial zone during the productive summer months by either drafting early toward the January 1 flood control elevation or by pursuing an agreement with Canada (i.e., Libby/Arrow swap or passage of September releases through Kootenay Lake).

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2000 FCRPS Biological Opinion calls for a summer draft from Libby to elevation 2439 feet. Given the projected summer flow levels in 2004, it is apparent that using flow augmentation water from Libby Dam is essential. It is desirable to provide stable flows (12-13 Kcfs) through the summer months of 2004 to assist in meeting flow objectives in the Lower Columbia River and to avoid a double peak flow operation in the Kootenai River.

Providing stable flows in September from Libby Dam will help alleviate Montana's concerns about river productivity in September. Flows in September can be achieved by either early flood control drafts or a Libby/Arrow swap, which would allow for higher pool elevations at Libby while still providing the higher and more stable flows. The flows provided by this SOR are for salmon needs below Grand Coulee Dam and are in excess of needs called for in the USFWS BiOp for bull trout in the Kootenai River.