

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST:#98-21

TO: **Brigadier General Griffin** **COE-NPD**
 William Branch **COE-RCC**
 Cindy Henriksen **COE-RCC**
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 Dave Geiger **COE-P**
 John Keys III **USBR-Boise**
 Jack Robertson **Acting BPA-Administrator**
 Greg Delwiche **BPA-PGP-5**
 Mark Maher **BPA-PG-5**

FROM: **Jim Nielsen, Chairperson, Salmon Managers**

DATE: **June 2, 1998**

SUBJECT: **Operations at Grand Coulee, Hungry Horse, and Libby through June 14**
 Operations at Brownlee through June 14
 Operations at Dworshak through June 14

SPECIFICATIONS:

All Projects

- All of the requested operations are based upon flow and operations projections provided by the federal operators and regulators. If projected conditions change significantly, Jim Nielsen, WDFW, or the Fish Passage Center should be contacted. Questions regarding the request should be referred to Jim Nielsen or the Fish Passage Center.

Dworshak

- Based on flow projections provided by the federal operators and regulators, Dworshak will operate to meet flood control requirements resulting in daily average flows at Lower Granite exceeding 100 kcfs through June 14.

Brownlee

- Pass inflow at Brownlee.

Grand Coulee, Hungry Horse, Libby

- Operate Grand Coulee to meet a minimum daily average flow at Priest Rapids of no less than 135 kcfs. Fill Grand Coulee, Hungry Horse, and Libby during the projected, upcoming week of higher flows, while sturgeon flows and Priest Rapids flows are being met.

Priest Rapids

- The federal operators and regulators, Grant County Public Utility District, and the Mid-Columbia Coordinating Committee should work together (including power exchanges and purchases) to minimize, as much as possible, hourly, daily, and weekly load factoring and flow fluctuations below the Priest Rapids project.

McNary

- Weekend flows should not decrease to less than 80% of the previous five-day average flow.
- Delay initiation of juvenile transport from McNary Dam until barges can safely operate from the fish facility. The salmon managers believe that both yearling and subyearling migrants are better off in-river until flows drop below 300 kcfs and water temperatures begin a significant increase. We do not support initial trucking operations for subyearling chinook transport while the Corps of Engineers waits for river conditions to drop to more manageable levels. This request is based on the current, favorable “in-river” conditions and the ISAB’s strong recommendation that juvenile transport discontinue trucking of juvenile salmonids.

JUSTIFICATION:

Field surveys below the Priest Rapids project have provided evidence that significant stranding of fall chinook fry is taking place below Priest Rapids Dam. Mortality of stranded fry is high. Although these data are preliminary, they do indicate that a serious problem is occurring below the Priest Rapids project and that the extreme load following that has been taking place is the cause.

Passage indices and PIT tag recoveries clearly show that juvenile salmon and steelhead smolts are passing all projects from all upstream watersheds. Recent high flows have moved more migrants into the lower Snake River corridor. McNary Dam passage indices continue to increase for yearling chinook and steelhead. Fall chinook passage indices have been increasing at both Lower Granite and McNary dams.

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**The Salmon Managers are state, federal and tribal entities who have legally recognized mandates and jurisdictions to manage salmon resources in the Columbia River Basin. The following have participated in the preparation of this SOR: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.*

James R. Nielse
