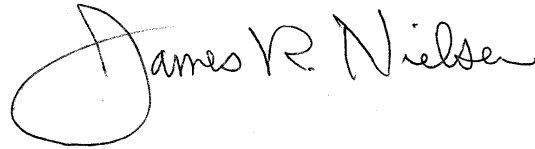


SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST:#98-11

TO: Brigadier General Griffin COE-NPD
William Branch COE-RCC
Cindy Henriksen COE-RCC
Bolyvong Tanovan COE-RCC
Dave Geiger COE-P
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Jack Robertson Acting BPA-Administrator
Greg Delwiche BPA-PGP-5
Mark Maher BPA-PG-5



FROM: Jim Nielsen, Chairperson, Salmon Managers

DATE: April 16, 1998

SUBJECT:

- Failure to meet the Biological Opinion April 20, reservoir elevation target at the Grand Coulee project.
- Flows at Priest Rapids and McNary projects.
- Operation of the Grand Coulee project.

The state, federal and tribal fishery (or salmon managers) agencies and the TMT have concluded that the April 20, Biological Opinion reservoir target level of 1281 at the Grand Coulee project will not be met. This Opinion measure for Grand Coulee has not been implemented. The failure to implement Opinion measures has decreased the volume of water available to the spring and summer migration period for salmon and steelhead in the mid and Lower Columbia rivers by 598 KAF. This has also reduced the flow through the mid-Columbia reach to unacceptable levels during the early April period. The state, tribal and federal salmon managers maintain that the FCRPS has failed to meet the Biological Opinion April 20, reservoir elevation target for Grand Coulee Reservoir, RPA 1(g) page 102.

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Decrease the rate of fill of the Grand Coulee project on April 20 to 9.5 kcfs per day. Fill Grand Coulee to elevation 1274 on April 26.
- Based upon inflow projections provided by the federal operators, this should provide daily average outflow from Grand Coulee of 71.4 kcfs. Based upon projections provided by the federal operators for the Snake River Reach, this should provide daily average flows at McNary Dam of 155 - 160 kcfs for the week of April 20 through April 26.

- In view of the fact that this request is based upon projections provided by the FCRPS operators and regulators, short term changes in those projections, particularly for the Snake River, will result in modifications of this request.
- The weekend average flow should not decrease below 80% of the previous 5 weekday average flow.

JUSTIFICATION:

Fish passage through the mid-Columbia River has begun as indicated by the beginning of the Mid- Columbia downstream passage program. As documented in SOR #98-10, over 3 million yearling summer/fall Chinook have been released in the Mid-Columbia reach. Review of historic passage indices indicates that the 10% point of passage occurs between April 19 and April 21 at McNary Dam. The attached cumulative passage plots for McNary Dam shows present passage timing and indicates that the juvenile migration is nearing the 10% point of passage.

Reducing the rate of refill of Grand Coulee increases flow as the juvenile migration increases, and distributes available flow and refill more evenly through the spring migration period.

154-98.doc

**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, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.*