

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #99-12

- *The following State, Federal and Tribal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation of this SOR: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, National Marine Fisheries Service and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.*

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Marvin S. Yoshinaka

FROM: **Marv Yoshinaka, Chairperson, Salmon Managers**

DATE: **May 25, 1999**

SUBJECT: **Columbia and Snake River Flows May 30 through June 6 and Spill at John Day Dam.**

SPECIFICATIONS:

Flow:

Specifications:

Lower Granite Dam – At a minimum meet the flow of 100 Kcfs.

Priest Rapids Dam – At a minimum meet an instantaneous flow of 150 Kcfs.

McNary Dam - At a minimum meet the flow of 260 Kcfs.

Justification:

A combination of flood control operations and an extended period of cool weather have resulted in the Biological Opinion flow targets being missed for several weeks in the Snake River, and for one week in the Lower Columbia River. Significant numbers of juvenile migrants remain in the migration corridor. Adequate flows should be provided at Lower Granite and McNary dams to enhance present migration conditions. At Priest Rapids Dam the 150 Kcfs minimum instantaneous flow will minimize stranding and mortality impacts to Hanford Reach fall chinook migrants.

Spill:**Specifications:**

Initiate a 12-hour spill test at John Day Dam beginning at 1800 hours on May 25, 1999. Spill levels should be maintained at 140 Kcfs during the 12-hour period. Data should be reviewed immediately after the test and, if results indicate this higher spill level is possible, then implement this higher level immediately.

Justification:

The three-hour test conducted last week, as well as data collected during 1998, indicates that spill levels for fish protection could be higher than presently occurring. The intent of the increased spill is to meet the objective of the 1998 Supplemental Biological Opinion to spill to the extent possible under the 115/120% gas cap for fish protection. This test has been coordinated with the water quality agencies of Washington and Oregon.

Project Maintenance:

It is anticipated that Snake River flows will be less than the Biological Opinion flow target for most of the summer migration. It is imperative that given the conditions projected for 1999, maximum flexibility be maintained in the hydrosystem for flow augmentation. Specifically, Idaho Power Company plans to take a unit at Hells Canyon Dam off-line for maintenance beginning July 12. This unit outage will limit hydraulic capacity at this project to 20 Kcfs, which will affect the ability to use flow augmentation for the summer migration. It is therefore recommended that this maintenance be delayed until after the migration.