

**Corps of Engineers Decision
2004 Spring Spill at Lower Snake River Projects**

The NOAA 2000 Biological Opinion (BiOp) has provisions for spill when seasonal average Snake River flows are projected to be above 85,000 cfs (RPA 40). April final runoff volume forecast is for seasonal average Snake River flows to be about 77,000 cfs, well below the threshold for spill. As a result, the BiOp calls for maximizing fish collection and transportation in the Snake River. Recent transport research results have raised questions about the benefits of transporting yearling Chinook salmon in April (as opposed to leaving them to migrate inriver) and NOAA Fisheries has been proposing reconsideration of the transportation criteria for early season migrants (RPA 51). As a result, two System Operation Requests have been issued, requesting spill in the Lower Snake for Spring 2004. On April 14, 2004 the Technical Management Team (TMT) met to discuss these Spring Spill operations in the Lower Snake River. Because TMT could not reach agreement, it was elevated to the Implementation Team (IT) on April 15.

Based on the discussions at IT, the Corps has decided to provide spill at Lower Granite and Little Goose until 23 April to provide inriver passage for yearling Chinook prior to the steelhead juvenile migration. In addition, subject to further consideration by the Study Review Work Group regarding the design of the modified spill research at Lower Monumental, up to 18 days of spill will be initiated there for early inriver passage and for the study. Three days of spill will be available prior to 26 April and 15 days will be available beginning 26 April and provided per the research design. Although the study is not considered the premier study, other valuable research can be gathered and the sunk costs are not lost. The Lower Granite behavioral guidance structure testing planned for 2004 will be postponed until April 2005.