

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW

1.	Fish Passage Plan	OV-1
1.1.	Overview	OV-1
1.2.	Emergency Deviations from FPP	OV-2
1.3.	Technical Management Team	OV-3
1.4.	Spill at Corps Mainstem Projects	OV-3
1.5.	Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring	OV-3
1.6.	System Load Shaping	OV-4
1.7.	Juvenile Fish Transportation Plan	OV-4
1.8.	Project Fish Passage Facilities Inspection and Reporting Criteria	OV-4
1.9.	Implementation of the Fish Passage Plan	OV-5

1. Fish Passage Plan

1.1. Overview

The Fish Passage Plan (FPP) is developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in coordination with the region's fisheries agencies, Indian tribes, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and other participants through the Corps' Fish Passage Operations and Maintenance Coordination Team (FPOM). The FPP describes year-round project operations necessary to protect and enhance anadromous and resident fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as other migratory fish species. The FPP guides Corps actions in regard to providing fish protection and passage at the eight Corps mainstem Columbia and Snake River projects. Other Corps documents and agreements related to fish passage at these projects are consistent with the FPP.

The FPP is revised as necessary to incorporate changes to project operations and maintenance as a result of new facilities or changes in operational procedures. Revisions will incorporate changes adopted through coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of the ESA Section 7 consultation, Recovery Plan, or Section 10 permit processes, and through consideration of other regional input and plans. The current revisions reflect provisions contained in the NMFS Biological Opinion (BiOp), issued 21 December 2000 and titled "Reinitiation of Consultation on Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System, Including the Juvenile Fish Transportation Program, and 19 Bureau of Reclamation Projects in the Columbia Basin", and the USFWS BiOp, issued 20 December 2000 and titled "Effects to Listed Species from Operations of the Federal Columbia River Power System". The Corps at this time is preparing a decision statement relative to these BiOps, stating how BiOp measures will be implemented to protect multiple ESA-listed fish species. Also, the Corps is preparing 1-year and 5-year Operations and Maintenance (O&M) implementation plans, as called for in the 2000 NMFS BiOp. Longer term project actions to increase capability and reliability of project fish passage are described in those Plans. When revising the FPP, the Corps considers the amended Northwest Power Planning Council (NPPC) Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program to the fullest extent practicable.

Comments on the FPP are welcome. They may be directed either to the FPOM or the Corps' Northwestern Division, Reservoir Control Center (RCC) Fish Team in Portland, Oregon.

1.2 Emergency Deviations From FPP. River operations emergencies may occur which require projects to deviate temporarily from the FPP. To the extent possible, these operations will be conducted to minimize fish impacts and coordinated with fisheries agencies and tribes. Normally, coordination occurs prior to an action. However, if an emergency situation requires immediate attention, coordination will be done as soon as possible after the fact.

Columbia River Basin water supply forecasts for 2001 indicate that runoff volumes and flows may be substantially below average during the main fish passage periods at mainstem projects. In February 2001, the National Drought Mitigation Center declared most of the Basin in a D1, or moderate drought, condition. Also, BPA is experiencing unprecedented energy market conditions which are expected to continue over the coming months. BPA has declared several power system emergencies of varying duration to maintain power system reliability and economic stability. In response to these conditions, the Federal action agencies are working with NMFS, USFWS, states, and tribes to develop a 2001 river operating strategy that will meet fish and power system needs to the extent feasible. This could result in changes to project operations as stated in this FPP. Operations may be altered relative to flow augmentation, spill for fish passage, fish transportation, studies, and other activities. RCC will inform the projects by teletype regulation of any changes needed to implement this year's coordinated operating strategy. This will include research, monitoring, and evaluation components of the fish program.

The phrase "when practicable" appears in the FPP to help describe those project actions for fish that may vary on a case-by-case basis and thus require judgement calls by the project for a particular situation. This is due to factors such as real time biological or other environmental conditions, project manpower or mechanical equipment availability, and fish facility or dam structural integrity. In these cases the project biologist and other project personnel will consider all relevant factors and determine the best way to proceed, then implement the appropriate action. These actions will be coordinated with fisheries agencies and tribes when they deviate from the FPP.

1.3 Technical Management Team. In-season decisions on river operations to achieve BiOp performance standards for spring and summer outmigrants will be made in coordination with the Technical Management Team (TMT). Coordination of special operations identified in the FPP will occur through the TMT and will be identified in the Water Management Plan. These may include maintenance or research activities requiring unit outages that affect other river operations, operation of turbines outside of the 1% efficiency range, zero nighttime flow, and implementation of the Juvenile Fish Transportation Plan.

1.4 Spill at Corps Mainstem Projects. Corps mainstem projects will provide spill for juvenile fish passage according to the NMFS Biological Opinions (specifications in Appendix E) to protect ESA-listed salmon species. Target spill levels are developed through consultation with NMFS and may be adjusted during the fish migration season as recommended by the TMT. Continuous spill is provided at Bonneville, The Dalles, and Ice Harbor Dams, and nightly spill is provided at John Day Dam for spring and summer outmigrants to meet BiOp measures. Also, continuous spill is provided at Lower Monumental Dam and nightly spill is provided at McNary, Little Goose, and Lower Granite Dams for spring outmigrants. Spill may also be provided under special circumstances for non-listed fish species if recommended by the fisheries agencies and tribes and if the recommendations are consistent with regional operational agreements (i.e., Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery release in March).

The Corps is revising spill patterns at John Day Dam to provide for safe entrance and exit to the navigation lock for towboat operators. New spill patterns will consider needs for migration of ESA-listed fish species, while making it safe for barge traffic at John Day. These patterns will be coordinated with the regional fisheries agencies and tribes through FPOM and TMT.

1.5 Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring. Total dissolved gas (TDG) saturation levels are monitored at the forebay and tailrace of each mainstem project during the fish passage season. The water quality standard and criterion developed by the states and EPA is 110% of saturation at ambient temperature and pressure. The Corps' policy is to operate each mainstem project to meet state standards insofar as physically possible unless other overriding reasons cause temporary deviations. The Corps also recognizes that the

NMFS Biological Opinions call for fish spill to be provided at levels that create higher TDG levels (Appendix E). Also, implementation of fish spill requests from fisheries agencies and tribes have in the past resulted in TDG levels of 120% or greater. Therefore, fish spill implementation will be subject to further coordination with appropriate entities if excessive TDG levels occur or if evidence of gas bubble disease is observed in fish. The Corps will take those actions necessary to coordinate with the region and provide spill to protect ESA-listed fish in 2001. TDG levels are provided to the TMT and summarized for the year in the Corps' annual Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring report.

1.6 System Load Shaping. Guidelines coordinated by BPA on system load shaping to consider fish impacts are included in Appendix C. The guidelines describe procedures BPA follows to make hydropower load requests that enable the Corps to operate units in consideration of the 1% turbine operating range.

1.7. Juvenile Fish Transportation Plan (JFTP). Juvenile fish will be transported in accordance with the NMFS Biological Opinions and Section 10 permit. Transport criteria are contained in the JFTP, Appendix B. The JFTP covers collection, holding, and transport of juvenile fish. Other project criteria on operation of the juvenile fish bypass facilities are contained in Sections 2 through 9. Additional criteria may be developed as part of the ESA Section 10 permit process and/or in coordination with the TMT. Implementation of juvenile fish transportation, including deviation from the plan described in Appendix B, will be coordinated through the TMT and with NMFS (ESA).

1.8. Project Fish Passage Facilities Inspection and Reporting Criteria.

1.8.1 General. Sections 2 through 9 contain the detailed criteria for inspection and reporting for fish passage facilities at the Corps projects on the lower Snake and lower Columbia rivers. The Corps provides weekly written inspection reports to the NMFS Hydropower Program office in Portland, Oregon describing out-of-criteria situations, adjustments made to resolve problems, and a detailed account of how out-of-criteria situations affected project fish passage and survival. The weekly inspection reports also include summaries of equipment calibrations, adult fish collection channel velocity monitoring, and water temperature monitoring. Equipment which does not require calibrating will not routinely be included in the weekly

report. The Corps also provides an annual report to NMFS which summarizes project operations and maintenance and fish passage facility inspections and monitoring.

1.8.2 Criteria for Reporting Excursions Outside the 1% Turbine Operating Efficiency Range. Excursions outside the 1% turbine operating range will be reported by BPA annually. These reports will describe instances where lower Columbia and lower Snake river turbines were operated outside the 1% efficiency ranges for significant periods, as defined under the guidelines in Appendix C. BPA will prepare the reports by consolidating data provided by Corps project operators and the reports will be sent to NMFS by BPA. The intent of excursion reporting is to provide a means for quality assurance for project operations.

1.9. Implementation of the Fish Passage Plan.

Implementation of the FPP requires information from and coordination with NMFS, BPA, other Federal and state fisheries agencies, and tribes. RCC coordinates operation of Corps projects that affect system water management, spill, unit availability, or other project uses through the TMT. District biologists may coordinate directly with the fisheries agencies and tribes on other project-specific operations that do not have system impacts.

A public RCC briefing is held each Thursday at 1300 hours during the flood control and fish passage seasons, in the U.S. Custom House, Portland, Oregon. RCC also participates in meetings of the TMT throughout the year that recommends river operations to implement the BiOps and other recommendations from fish interests. Corps representatives are available at these meetings to discuss the latest weather and runoff forecasts, as well as fish, hydrologic, water quality, and power information to assist in the planning of upcoming operations for fish passage. Fish operation recommendations are evaluated by the Corps to determine impact on overall system operations. The Corps also coordinates with NMFS and USFWS to meet ESA requirements for listed species.

1.9.1 Agency Responsibilities.

1.9.1.1. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

a. Coordinate with NMFS and USFWS on operational actions that might impact threatened, endangered, or

candidate species.

b. Prepare a Water Management Plan for in-season management, in coordination with TMT members, which implements the Corps Record of Decision.

c. In cooperation with the fisheries agencies and tribes, provide fish passage monitoring, surveillance, and reporting at Corps projects throughout the migration period.

d. Provide timely information on all proposed and/or scheduled studies or special operations which may negatively impact or otherwise constrain fish passage or energy production. Discuss unforeseen changes in fish passage operation with fisheries agencies and tribes.

e. Carry out routine and emergency fish passage operations and maintenance procedures in accordance with criteria in Sections 2 through 9 and Appendix A.

f. Conduct the Dissolved Gas Monitoring Program as described in Appendix D.

1.9.1.2. Fisheries Agencies and Indian Tribes.

a. Request spill for fish through TMT to protect endangered species or other species in accordance with the TMT Guidelines.

b. Through TMT, provide RCC with a spill priority list and recommendations for modifications.

c. Provide biological monitoring and surveillance reports throughout the migration period from predetermined locations, such as Smolt Monitoring Program sample sites.

d. Provide status reports on the timing of the downstream migration, including pertinent marked fish release and recovery data, with weekly written reports estimating percentage of run past key projects.

e. Where biologically and logistically feasible, coordinate hatchery releases to ensure they are protected by regulated fish flows and spills while minimizing impacts on endangered species. Provide and update hatchery release schedules weekly.

f. Provide recommendations to the operating agencies for maintaining acceptable fish passage conditions. This

information can be used to maximize other project uses, including power generation.

g. Provide information on all proposed and scheduled studies or special operations designed to improve fish passage operations which may affect energy production or project operation. Discuss unforeseen changes with the Corps.

h. Recommend viable methods and procedures to reduce mortality to resident and migratory fish. This may include such operations as collection and transport of migrants, use of alternate bypass strategies, or other methods to reduce fish mortality.

1.9.1.3. Bonneville Power Administration.

a. Report to RCC on updated load-resource studies during the April-to-September period to supplement the National Weather Service River Forecast Center's runoff volume forecast for fish passage planning assistance.

b. Provide to RCC, NMFS, other fisheries agencies, and tribes, the BPA estimate of power market impacts of requested spill operations.

c. Utilize available flexibility of the Federal Columbia River Power System to shape flow requirements, spill priorities, and plant generation consistent with BPA policies and statutory requirements related to fish protection.

d. Adjust system generation to provide adequate water to meet fish operations requirements in accordance with the NMFS Biological Opinion on hydrosystem operations.

e. Provide project load requests on a real-time, hourly basis that enable the Corps to implement spill priorities.

f. Provide information on unit operation within the 1% operating range, as indicated in Appendix C.

1.9.1.4. Mid-Columbia Public Utility Districts.

Operate projects for spill transfer in accordance with provisions of the FPP with at least one and one-half hours notification to start or stop spill.

1.9.2. Coordination Procedures.

1.9.2.1. Coordination of the FPP.

The FPP is effective year-round and revisions are coordinated with FPOM, which includes NMFS, other Federal and state fisheries agencies, tribes, and other interested parties. Different parts of the FPP may be revised at different times. Suggested revisions should be submitted to FPOM for consideration by the Corps. Draft FPP revisions will be provided for a two-week regional review. FPP revisions will be published two weeks after the close of the regional review period. FPP revisions are provided to TMT for use as part of the overall river operation plan. Sections dealing with special operational requirements will be included in the Water Management Plan.

1.9.2.2. Day-to-day Coordination of River System.

a. Flow Augmentation and Reservoir Operations Recommendations. Procedures described in the Water Management Plan will be used for fish operations. Coordination for system and project operations will occur through TMT. This will include requests for operation of turbine units outside of the 1% best efficiency range, zero nighttime flow in the Snake River, reservoir operation at minimum operating pool (MOP) or some other specific level, and special operations for implementation of approved research projects as identified in Appendix A. During the time when reservoirs are not being operated to provide special protection for fish passage, projects may be operated within the full reservoir operating range.

b. Fish Spill Management. The Corps will implement BiOp fish spill provisions described in Appendix E, including special TDG conditions for juvenile fish passage. The TDG and gas bubble trauma signs in fish will be monitored and evaluated during the spill season by the Corps, NMFS, other fisheries agencies, tribes, and water quality agencies. Project spill levels will be adjusted as needed, based on daily physical and biological monitoring results, and coordinated with the TMT and tribes.

c. Special Operation Recommendations (Fish-related and for Project O&M Activities). Recommendations for special fish operations outside the Water Management Plan may be

made to RCC. Coordination of these recommendations will be made through the TMT. Recommendations related to project O&M activities requiring special operations will be evaluated for impacts on fish migration. Sufficient lead time will be given on a planned operation, whenever practical, to allow coordination with the TMT, NMFS, and USFWS (ESA). As much lead time as possible will be provided for activities requiring immediate action. After-action coordination will occur when advance notice is not possible, such as in emergency actions.

d. Other Operational Requests. As with Corps O&M requests, all other operational recommendations will be evaluated for impacts on fish migration and effects on other project O&M requirements. Coordination of special operations with NMFS, USFWS, other fisheries agencies, and tribes will occur through the TMT. Except as necessary for emergency actions, adequate time will be allowed for evaluation of all project and fish impacts prior to implementation. Coordination of emergencies, as identified in the Emergency Protocols adopted by the TMT (Water Management Plan, Appendix 2), will be followed.

1.9.2.3. Activities by Non-Corps Personnel. All non-Corps personnel intending to conduct any activity, such as fish handling or minor facility modifications, at a Corps facility must have prior written approval. This approval must be requested in writing to the Chief, Operations Division, at the district office responsible for a particular project. If the activity could affect ESA-listed fish, proof of consultation with NMFS or USFWS (Section 10 permit) must also be provided.