

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2002-07

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

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FROM: **Greg Haller, Nez Perce Tribe and Steve Pettit, IDFG, for Salmon Managers**



DATE: **August 13, 2002**

SUBJECT: August – September operation for Dworshak reservoir. **Provide greater than minimum discharge from Dworshak to maintain the present thermal regime and try to achieve the water quality temperature standard in Lower Granite Reservoir into mid-September and monitor the adult passage response to this operation.**

SPECIFICATIONS:

Operate Dworshak Dam to provide the following outflows for the period August 15 through September 14, 2002.

- Continue to provide the current discharge rate of 13.8 kcfs through August 24.
- Provide 12 kcfs outflow August 25 through August 31.
- Provide 10 kcfs outflow September 1 through September 10.
- At the end of the test period, begin to ramp project discharge down at the standard project ramp rate (no greater than 1 foot per hour at the Peck gauge) until the minimum outflow of approximately 1.4 kcfs is achieved.
- Water temperature during this operation will be maintained at approximately 48⁰F.
- If the provision of the 200 KAF for the test appears to require a draft below elevation 1517, FAPC and TMT will reconvene to reconsider the operation.

JUSTIFICATION:

RPA action 34 of National Marine Fisheries Service's 2000 Biological Opinion on the Federal Columbia River Power System directs the Action Agencies to: "Evaluate potential benefits to adult Snake River steelhead and fall chinook salmon passage by drafting Dworshak Reservoir to elevation 1,500 feet in September. An evaluation of the temperature effects and adult migration behavior should accompany a draft of Dworshak reservoir substantially below elevation 1,520 feet."

The summer of 2002 provides a unique opportunity to accomplish the intent of this action without drafting the reservoir to elevation 1500 feet. The runoff volume and runoff shape of the North Fork Clearwater basin's snowpack was such that this action has a reasonable probability of being accomplished without drafting the reservoir below the Biological Opinion stated August draft limit. Extensive thermal data will be collected in the lower Snake project reservoirs and an adult monitoring effort will be in place to document this year's adult behavior given the thermal condition of the reservoirs. The adult monitoring effort will consist of:

- The thermal history of approximately 20 steelhead and 6 fall chinook salmon tagged with data storage tags (DST) which migrated from Bonneville Dam through the lower Snake River. It is anticipated 6 of these fish will migrate during August, and the balance will migrate during September.
- The passage timing of 100 - 200 radio tagged steelhead which migrate from Bonneville Dam past Lower Granite Dam.
- The behavioral response to thermal conditions in the Lower Granite pool of approximately 50 fall chinook and 70 steelhead radio tagged with depth sensitive (MAP) tags at Lower Granite Dam. It is anticipated 10 fall chinook / 40 steelhead will be tagged and tracked in August, and 40 fall chinook / 30 steelhead will be tagged and tracked in September.
- Passage timing of all salmon and steelhead adults this year will be available for comparison to past and future years.

While the focus of the monitoring effort will be on adult fish, it is the position of the Nez Perce Tribe, CRITFC, and the state of Idaho that late migrating juveniles will also benefit from water releases extending into September.