

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2004-4

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

TO:	B. G. Grisoli	COE-NWD
	William Branch	COE-Water Management
	Cathy Hlebechuk	COE-RCC
	Witt Anderson	COE-P
	Col. Richard Hobernicht	COE-Portland District
	LTC Kertis, Jr.	COE-Walla Walla District
	J. William McDonald	USBR-Boise Regional Director
	Stephen J. Wright	BPA-Administrator
	Greg Delwiche	BPA-PG-5



FROM: David A. Wills, Chairperson, Salmon Managers

DATE: April 12, 2004

Re: Lower Columbia River Spill Program

SPECIFICATIONS:

Beginning on April 12, 2003, spill daily at Lower Columbia River projects according to the 2000 Biological Opinion up to the 120% spill cap, with the exception of Bonneville Dam. Spill at Bonneville Dam is to occur as described below.

- At McNary Dam spill should occur between the hours of 1800 and 0600 and instantaneous volumes should only be limited by the gas cap.
- Spill daily at John Day Dam at 60% of instantaneous flow during nighttime hours at flows up to 300 Kcfs, and up to the 120% gas cap at flows greater than 300 Kcfs. Spill should occur from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise.
- Spill at The Dalles Dam shall occur for 24 hours daily at a level equal to 40% of instantaneous flow.
- Until notified otherwise, spill 50 Kcfs at Bonneville Dam for 24 hours daily, maintaining an instantaneous tailwater elevation of 13 feet. Operate the corner collector for fish passage.

JUSTIFICATION:

The passage of juvenile fish into the Lower Columbia River is presently occurring. McNary Dam sampling is occurring on alternate days and has shown the presence of juvenile yearling chinook, subyearling chinook and steelhead. At John Day Dam passage numbers have increased steadily over the past week. While the second half of April is not normally characterized as a significant passage period for spring migrating juveniles as a whole, it does represent a period of time when significant proportions of specific stocks are migrating. Stocks migrating from the John Day, Umatilla and Yakama River basins dominate the second half of April. To-date PIT tagged wild spring/summer chinook from the Yakama and Walla Walla rivers have been detected at McNary Dam. Historic information for passage timing at John Day Dam indicates that the presence of Umatilla and John Day stocks is expected during the early part of April based on the historic passage. If spill is not initiated early enough during the migration season there is a higher likelihood that these stocks will pass under no spill conditions.

Similar to patterns observed at upstream sites, passage indices have been steadily increasing at Bonneville Dam over the past few days. Presently, ESA listed chum salmon continue to emerge from redds below Bonneville Dam and are expected to emerge until the last week of April. At present flows there is the potential of increasing total dissolved gas levels over the redds where salmon have not yet emerged. Consequently, the recommended spill conditions at Bonneville Dam have been changed to address this concern. Changes to the Bonneville recommendation will be made following emergence, or as river conditions improve.