

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2005-4

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

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FROM: David A. Wills, Chairperson, Salmon Managers

DATE: April 5, 2005

Re: Ice Harbor and Lower Columbia Spill¹

SPECIFICATIONS:

1. Ice Harbor Dam: Begin spill immediately to the amount specified in the Biological Opinion with the bulk spill pattern.
2. McNary Dam: Begin spill on April 10th, 2005 to the amount specified in the Biological Opinion.
3. John Day Dam: Begin spill on April 10th, 2005 to the amount specified in the Biological Opinion.
4. The Dalles Dam: Begin spill on April 11th, 2005 to the amount specified in the Biological Opinion.

^{1 1} CRITFC and the Nez Perce Tribe do not oppose this SOR but want to see higher spill volumes, as outlined in their 2005 River Operations Plan.

5. Bonneville Spill: The commencement of spill at Bonneville Dam is being considered by the agencies and tribes. ODFW will monitor dissolved gas at chum emergence sites downstream. The agencies and tribes will consider additional data prior to requesting spill at Bonneville. The agencies and tribes anticipate that start of spill will be requested for April 15.

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, and steelhead. At John Day Dam passage indices of yearling chinook have been over 2000 the first 3 days of sampling. 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.

Passage indices for yearling chinook 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.