

## **SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: 2013-01**

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**FROM:** Kootenai Tribe of Idaho; Sue Ireland, Fish and Wildlife Department Director

**DATE:** April 03, 2013

**SUBJECT:** September / October 2013 Libby Dam Outflow for Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Project, Phase 2, Braided Reach

### **SPECIFICATIONS:**

Release 8,000 cfs or less from Libby Dam during September and October, 2013.

Provide gradually declining discharge to the target flows following ramping rate guidelines in the 2006 USFWS BiOp for bull trout and white sturgeon.

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

Low flows in the Kootenai River in September and October are requested to allow the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's contractor to de-water two areas (channels) located in the Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Project, Phase 2, Braided Reach 2 project area. The restoration strategy for this portion of the project is to stabilize eroding banks, trap sediment and promote floodplain development, increase riparian vegetation, create pools and increase channel margin and side channel complexity. The Middle Meander project will result in restoration of approximately 2,700 feet of river bank and will substantially reduce sediment loading that is contributing to degraded habitat conditions downstream. The 1A Extension project will address degraded habitat conditions in 900 feet of side channel.

The proposed operation will ensure Action Agency compliance with the USFWS Biological Opinion regarding the Effects of Libby Dam Operations on the Kootenai River White Sturgeon, Bull Trout, and Kootenai Sturgeon Critical Habitat (1901F0279R) as clarified (2008). Action 2.1 under RPA Component 2 (Management of Sturgeon Habitat) calls for Action Agency cooperation in implementing the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's Kootenai River Restoration Project Master Plan.