

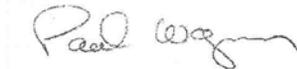
SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2013-1

The following State, Federal, and Tribal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: National Marine Fisheries Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Colville Tribes, the Nez Perce Tribes, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

TO:

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FROM: Paul Wagner, FPAC Chair



DATE: April 23, 2013

SUBJECT: 2013 McNary Dam Summer Transport Operations

OBJECTIVE: Do not initiate summer transport operations at McNary Dam.

SPECIFICATIONS: Do not initiate summer transport from McNary Dam over migration year 2013.

JUSTIFICATION:

With regard to summer transportation at McNary Dam, the 2013 Fish Operations Plan (FOP) states:

Transportation will be initiated at McNary Dam between July 15–30 per the 2010 Supplemental BiOp (RPA 30, Table 4) and in coordination with NOAA Fisheries and the TMT. Fish will be transported from McNary Dam by barge through August 16, then transported by truck every other day. All fish collected will be transported except those

marked for in-river studies. Fish are expected to be transported through September 30. The presence of factors such as excess shad, algae or bryozoans that can clog screens and flumes may result in discontinuing transport operations at McNary Dam before September 30. Detailed criteria for McNary transport are contained in the FPP, Appendix B.

Transportation operations may be adjusted for research purposes, due to conditions at the collection facilities, or as a result of the adaptive management process (to better match juvenile outmigration timing and/or to achieve or maintain performance standards). If new information indicates that modifying (or eliminating) transportation operations at McNary Dam is warranted, adaptive management will be used to make appropriate adjustments through coordination with the FPOM/TMT.

The Salmon Managers recommend eliminating summer transport operations at McNary Dam in 2013. The most recent data on McNary summer transport is from the years 2001 and 2002. That data indicated a transport to inriver benefit ranging from 1.2 to 1.5 could occur during the mid-July to mid-August timeframe. Substantial improvements have been made to the McNary project and the projects down river which has resulted in increased survival at the projects as well as likely increases in reach survivals for inriver migrants which would reduce the transport benefit observed in those years. List of Improvements since 2002:

McNary Dam:

- 24 hours spill
- Relocated bypass outfall

John Day Dam:

- Top spill weirs
- Improved spill patterns
- Improved avian wire array
- 24 hours spill

The Dalles Dam:

- Spillway wall and associated improved spill patterns
- Improved ice and trash sluiceway chain gate opening patterns
- Improved avian wire arrays

Bonneville Dam:

- Second Powerhouse corner collector (surface bypass)
- Improved spill patterns (increased minimum openings)
- Increased spill volume
- Finished minimum gap runners at the First Powerhouse
- Improved ice and trash sluiceway flow, gate pattern and gate operation
- Filled holes and removed obstructions in spillway

System:

- Increased incentives and scope of Pikeminnow sport harvest reward program

In past years, the Region has maintained summer transport at McNary Dam primarily because of poor bypass performance at this project. However, in 2012, a new juvenile outfall was constructed at the McNary project that has improved survival at this project. Subyearling Chinook bypass survival was estimated at 94.6% in a single release study, which is a significant improvement over past years bypass survival (which ranged from 84.5% to 92.1%). The 2012 estimate was achieved despite high avian presence early in the subyearling migration season.

From a project safety perspective, there is a risk to the outfall if there is a problem with a barge operating in the relatively high flow and velocity conditions below this project. Eliminating summer transport would eliminate this risk. Current interruptions in spill and changes in the spill pattern required for the barge to dock at the juvenile facility (that do not favor fish passage) would also be eliminated.

The signatories to this SOR believe that, based on the improvements at McNary, John Day, The Dalles and Bonneville, the 96.2 % survival estimate for sub yearling chinook through the new McNary outfall, and the ongoing intensive sport reward harvest for northern Pikeminnow, that neither barge nor truck transport from McNary should be initiated in 2013.