

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2006-NAV-02

The following Navigation Interests have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: Columbia River Towboat Association:

TO:	Brigadier General Gregg F. Martin	COE-NWD
	James D. Barton	COE-Water Management
	Cathy Hlebechuk	COE-RCC
	Witt Anderson	COE-P
	LTC Anthony Hofmann	COE-Walla Walla District
	J. William McDonald	USBR-Boise Regional Director
	Stephen J. Wright	BPA-Administrator
	Greg Delwiche	BPA-PG-5

FROM: John Pigott, Columbia River Towboat Association

DATE: August 8, 2006

SUBJECT: Lower Monumental Spillway Operations for April through August 2006

NAVIGATION OBJECTIVES

The objective of this SOR is to provide safe navigation below Lower Monumental Dam for arriving upbound and departing downbound vessel traffic during the period of time when spill patterns are adjusted for the juvenile salmonid outmigration.

SPECIFICATIONS:

This SOR recommends that the special operation of the Lower Monumental spillways, to accommodate outmigrating salmonids, be modified to allow for cessation of spill, if needed, for the period of time it takes a vessel to enter or depart the lock. This is estimated to be approximately twenty minutes

JUSTIFICATION:

We find ourselves facing a problematic set of circumstances with mandated spill patterns and volumes creating unusual eddy formations around the Lower Monumental lower basin guide wall. The resulting eddy has created an unacceptably high safety risk for river system navigators. Departing tows have found it very difficult if not impossible to get off the guide wall. This forces the tow to scrape along the wall for its full length. This prevents proper acceleration which marginalizes the tow's ability to safely navigate past the turn in the river just below the dam. Additionally, this scraping down the length of the wall creates an unnecessary maintenance issue for the project, and an equipment safety and maintenance issue for the affected barges.

Upbound tows are similarly affected, but face higher likelihoods of more serious damage due to the fact that they need to land on the wall. The eddy accelerates movement towards the wall in a manner that is difficult, if not impossible to control. The only option left for the boat operator is to attempt to flatten out the tow so that the impact on the wall is dispersed along the full length of the tow. Should the operator misjudge this critical moment then point loading may occur that results in significant hull damage. It should be noted that single skin petroleum barges still move through this river system and are threatened by this problem at Lower Monumental dam.

It is our hope that the brief duration of the requested spill modification (approx 20 minutes), contrasted with the consequences of an oil spill or breached hull, argues for your approval of this request to protect human life, the environment and the safety of cargo and equipment.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request.

John Pigott
Chairman
Columbia River Towboat Association