



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WALLA WALLA DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
201 NORTH THIRD AVENUE
WALLA WALLA WA 99362-1876

Office of Counsel

August 6, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR

SUBJECT: Memorandum Concerning Fish Mortalities at McNary Dam

On the morning of August 4, McNary Dam Juvenile Fish Facility personnel discovered numerous juvenile fish mortalities in raceway 7. Nearly all of these fish were subyearling fall Chinook, but it is estimated less than 1% of these were fall Chinook listed under the Endangered Species Act. Upon investigation, approximately 175 fish were trapped in a 4" perforated PVC pipe located at the north upstream corner of the raceway. Apparently juvenile fish in raceway 7 would jump at the incoming water from the flume and became trapped inside the uncovered PVC pipe. The project personnel believe this cover was missing at the start of juvenile fish collection at McNary Dam, which began on July 16. The 175 fish mortalities accumulated between the beginning of collection and discovery of the situation on August 4. The perforated PVC pipe was covering a 2" diameter metal pipe that was periodically used in the past as a siphon for research purposes.

Background: At the juvenile transport collector projects (Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental, and McNary Dam), raceways are used to hold collected fish before they are loaded for transport below Bonneville Dam. In 2008 at McNary Dam, the Technical Management Team (TMT) recommended initiation of transport beginning on July 16, as conditions were no longer "spring like." Fish collection began the afternoon of July 16 and the first fish were loaded and barged downstream on July 17. In accordance with the Fish Passage Plan (FPP), the Corps has been collecting fish every day and loading barges for transport every other day.

Estimated listed fish mortalities: Corps personnel have attempted to estimate the number of listed species mortalities. The Corps has referred to a memo from of NMFS entitled "*Revised Estimation of Percentages for Listed Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Smolts Arriving at Various Locations in the Columbian River Basin in 2007.*" (John Ferguson, September 11, 2007).¹ From the information in this memo, the Corps has extrapolated an approximate estimate of the number of listed fish mortalities attributed to the situation at McNary Dam, and has determined that two listed Chinook were lost.

This number is below the mortality provided for in the Corps' juvenile transport permit.

¹ Since NMFS has not yet published the 2008 memo, the 2007 memo is the best available information on numbers of listed fish to be expected at any project.

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Corrective Action: Project personnel have removed both the PVC pipe and metal pipe from raceway 7 so there is no longer a place for fish to become trapped. There is no similar siphon at any other project. The other raceways have been surveyed to confirm that fact and ensure that this problem will not reoccur.