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2023 NWW  
Access Guide for  
Fish Researchers



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Walla Walla District



U. S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Walla Walla District  
201 North Third Avenue  
Walla Walla, Washington 99362

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## Introduction

This guide summarizes the requirements for performing research at Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers Projects that include McNary, Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite Lock and Dams. Examples of activities that must be coordinated are facilities operations and maintenance, construction, fish related research, and public visitation. In addition to the information provided here, individual Projects may have additional requirements and requirements may change over time, particularly with regard to safety and security issues. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the research lead to ensure to District and Project specific guidelines are reviewed and followed at all times while working at Walla Walla District Projects. Research, non-routine maintenance, and construction activities within 100' of a fish ladder entrance or exit, within 50' of any other part of the fish ladder, of directly in, above, or adjacent to any fishway requires advanced coordination with FPOM.

## Coordination

Submitting a written Request for Access Letter to the District Chief of Operations summarizing the work and coordination completed (see sample letter) is the first step in the coordination process. The letter is then sent to the Project OPM and Project Biologist for review and approval. Once approved, district Operation Lead Biologist and Chief of Operations make the final decision. A reply letter is sent to the person originally making the request with a determination. The remainder of the coordination is done at the Project level with the Project Fishery Biologist. Access requests and the coordination process must be done annually for ongoing research programs. Coordination with Projects typically begins early in the research planning process and may be initiated in work groups such as during Study Review Work Group (SRWG) development meetings.

Following is a list of items needed prior to submitting your Request for Access Letter and should be included in the letter:

1. Project work plan, including a detailed schedule of planned activities.
2. Project impact statement.
3. Activity hazard analysis (AHA) and job hazard analyses (JHA).
4. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).
- 5. Appropriate ESA documents/permits, when applicable**
- 6. State collector's permit, when applicable**
7. Funding arrangements for project support.
8. Lists of boats, personnel and vehicles.

**Work at a Project may not start until USACE provides a written affirmative response to the Request for Access Letter and all Project level coordination is completed.** Coordination may take two weeks or longer, so plan accordingly.

**Removing fish or wildlife from the Project requires a State collector's or transport permit,** a copy of which must be provided to the Project Biologist before research or removal may commence. This applies to all researchers including ongoing research contracts.

For work requiring physical project support, funding arrangements must be made before assistance can be coordinated or provided. If support is needed submit your requests to the Project Biologists as early as possible that outlines activities and dates.

## **Points of Contact**

Submit your Request for Access Letter to:

Paul.a.ocker@usace.army.mil  
or  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Walla Walla District Headquarters  
201 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Walla Walla WA, 99362

**Attention: Paul Ocker**  
**Chief, Operations Division**

After your Request for Access letter is submitted, further coordination will typically occur through an Operations Division Coordinator. Contact information for NWW District Coordinators:

**Adult Fish Coordinator:** Chris Peery  
NWW Operations Division, Fisheries Biologist  
[Christopher.a.perry@usace.army.mil](mailto:Christopher.a.perry@usace.army.mil)  
(509)-527-7124

**Juvenile Fish Coordinator:** Vacant  
NWW Operations Division, Fisheries Biologist  
(509)-527-7122

Once access has been approved, all research activities and safety and security requirements (see below) must also be coordinated with specific Project personnel. Project specific points of contact for each NWW Project are listed below:

Tim Roberts  
Operations Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
McNary Lock and Dam  
82790 Devore Road, P.O. Box 1230  
Umatilla, OR 97782

Bobby Johnson  
McNary Fishery Biologist  
[Bobby.johnson@usace.army.mil](mailto:Bobby.johnson@usace.army.mil)  
541-922-2263

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Brian Vorheis  
Operations Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Ice Harbor Lock and Dam  
2763 Monument Drive  
Burbank, WA 99323

Ken Fone  
Ice Harbor Fishery Biologist  
[Kenneth.r.fone@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kenneth.r.fone@usace.army.mil)  
509-543-3208

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Operations Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Lower Monumental Lock and Dam  
5520 Devils Canyon Road  
Kahlotus, WA 99335

Denise Griffith  
Lower Monumental Fishery Biologist  
[Denise.s.griffith@usace.army.mil](mailto:Denise.s.griffith@usace.army.mil)  
509-282-7211

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Justin Stegall  
Operations Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Little Goose Lock and Dam 1001  
Little Goose Dam Road Dayton,  
WA 99328

Deborah Snyder  
Little Goose Fishery Biologist  
[Deborah.l.snyder@usace.army.mil](mailto:Deborah.l.snyder@usace.army.mil)  
509-399-2233 (ext 263)

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Rob Lustig  
Operations Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Lower Granite Lock and Dam  
885 Almotia Ferry Road  
Pomeroy, WA 99347

Elizabeth Holdren  
Lower Granite Fishery Biologist  
[Elizabeth.a.holdren@usace.army.mil](mailto:Elizabeth.a.holdren@usace.army.mil)  
509-843-2263

## General Safety Considerations

An important requirement of the Corps' Safety Manual is an Activity Hazard Analysis. A new hazard analysis must be provided for review and approval at the beginning of each year of research activity. In addition, we require copies of the OSHA-mandated Personnel Job Hazard Analyses for each position description involved in the activity.

Each research group must conduct their own weekly safety meetings. Notes, or at least a list of topics from each of these meetings, must be provided to the Project Biologist monthly.

As defined in the Corps' Safety Manual, a specified number of employees at each job site must have First Aid and CPR training. Generally, two people on each crew must be currently certified in first aid and CPR. Provide a list of all personnel's First Aid and CPR certification expiration dates to the Project Biologist.

**All safety incidents shall be reported immediately.** Refer to project specific guidelines for reporting. Generally, all of the following will be reported: a) location of incident, b) personnel involved - if applicable, c) severity of situation, d) resources required to combat situation - if known.

### *Safety Equipment and Clothing*

Each research unit is responsible for providing their employees with appropriate safety equipment and training. Safety equipment includes steel-toed footwear, hard hats, earplugs, eye protection, safety harnesses, shock absorbing fall protection, and personal flotation devices, as required by the activities being performed. **Contact the Project Fishery Biologist for information on what safety equipment will be required for your research activities.**

Research personnel must also conform to the dress requirements while at USACE Projects. The dress code applies to **all non-visitor areas** and is **in effect all hours** (including night shifts). Researchers performing work such as loading fish in a visitor access area will follow PPE and dress requirements.

Failure to meet the minimum dress requirements may be grounds for dismissal from the project. Dress requirements include:

- Long pants
- Sleeved shirt (no sleeveless, tank top, or midriff shirts)
- Hard hat
- Steel-toed footwear.

## **Boat Operations**

All NWW Projects have an established Boat Restricted Zone (BRZ) around the major structures of the Project. Signs designate this area. No boats may enter the BRZ without first receiving approval from the Control Room, and completing the requirements described in the Coordination Section.

A request, including the work schedule and work plan, must be received by the Project Biologist at least thirty days prior to the start of requested access to the BRZ. BRZ access in many cases requires unit and spillway outage coordination with BPA and must be approved by the Project Chief of Operations. Approval is not guaranteed and may be declined due to river conditions, weather, and operational concerns. A pre-work safety meeting covering safety and security requirements will be administered by a Project representative prior to commencing work.

### *Requirements*

- All personnel must wear flotation devices while in the BRZ. All vessels entering the BRZ will meet Coast Guard safety standards for day and night operations, including fire extinguishing capabilities, running and anchor lights, and audible warning devices capable of being heard anywhere in the BRZ.
- Each boat vessel entering the BRZ will have either current Coast Guard Certification or State Inspection stickers on the boat demonstrating standards are met.
- A marine band radio capable of communicating with the Project Control Room on channel 14 must be available to the boat operator. Failure to maintain communication with the Control Room during deployment within the BRZ may be cause for removal and denial of future access.
- A rescue line shall be available in an approved device. The rescue line length shall be sufficient in length to reach personnel that have gone overboard. A line, minimum of 50' and constructed of buoyant material, is recommended.

**No vessel may enter the BRZ without proper coordination with the Project Biologist who will obtain approval from the Operations Project Manager or Chief of Operations. Entrants must obtain permission to enter from the Control Room Operator in charge prior to entry into the BRZ.**

## **Chemical Storage, Disposal, and MSDS Requirements**

A list of all chemicals that the research unit anticipates using at the Project must be presented to the Project Fishery Biologist prior to bringing any chemicals on site. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be obtained for all approved hazardous materials, and copies must be provided to



the Project Fishery Biologist. Each research group is responsible for providing their own general first aid supplies, including any supplies specified in the MSDS such as eye stations and solution. Research groups are also responsible for the proper storage and disposal of chemicals and hazardous wastes, including anesthetic solutions. If a research group spills any chemical or hazardous material, they are responsible for cleanup. **All spills must be reported to the Project Biologist and Control Room.**

All chemicals must be stored and labeled in manners appropriate to their MSDS. (MS-222 is generally stored in lockers by the State Biologists).

## **Construction Activities**

All plans for fish related construction at a Project must be coordinated through the Project Fishery Biologist. Construction may not begin until the Project engineering staff has approved the proposal. All crane operations must be approved by the Chief of Operations (or designee). Cranes must meet all Corps safety requirements and must be tested by trained Corps staff. Crane operators must also be approved. Activities that may impact fish passage are not allowed near fishways without prior coordination and approval. Activities which can potentially cause material or pollutants to fall into fishways, or generate noise that may result in fish delay, must be coordinated prior to starting.

In some cases, construction or installation of equipment at a Project or on an adjacent shoreline may require an additional permit from Corps Real Estate. Such coordination is on a Project by Project and case by case basis. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure any necessary coordination occurs prior to planning any installation or construction on Project lands or structures. Check with the District Fisheries Biologist early in the planning process to determine if a Real Estate permit will be necessary to allow work to proceed.

## **Security Considerations**

Project security regulations require that every person working at USACE Projects wear an identification badge while on site. Family members and guests are not authorized to be in non-visitor areas without prior Project approval. Researcher/contractors are not authorized to bring domestic animals (pets) on Project and shall not leave animals in unattended vehicle on Corps property with the exception service dogs obtained from an accredited service dog organization that meet the ADA Title II and III definition. In addition, all non-government vehicles must be identified. All persons visiting non-public areas must be accompanied by a USACE project employee or have completed the access coordination process. Submit a request for visitors to the Project Fishery Biologist in advance that includes their name and the purpose of their visit.

Foreign nationals requesting access to a project must apply for clearance from Army Headquarters. Requests should be submitted 30 days in advance to be approved by Army Headquarters. Project Fishery Biologist can help to facilitate foreign national access requests.

## Researcher's Access Checklist

- Complete a Request for Access Letter
- Submit hard copy of letter to Chief of Operations
- Submit hard copy of letter to Chief of Operations
- Submit electronic copies to Project as necessary
- Walla Walla District Chief of Operations Access Approval Letter
- Review and comply with all Project specific guidelines
- Statement of Impacts
- Funding arrangements
- Coordination with Real Estate (if applicable)
- Walla Wall District Project Access Request Form (each Project)
- Job Hazard Analysis
- Activity Hazard Analysis
- MSDS (if applicable)
- ESA documents (if applicable)
- State collection permit (if applicable)
- List of personnel and vehicles on site
- First aid and CPR certifications
- Hazardous Energy Control Program (HECP) Awareness
- Gate and door access keys
- Photo ID Badge