# Fish Passage Plan (FPP) Change Form

**Change Form # & Title**: 23MCN002 – Adult Steelhead Spill in 2023

**Date Submitted**: 6-JAN-2023

**Project**: McNary Dam

**Requester Name, Agency**: Lisa Wright, Corps RCC

**Final Action:** **APPROVED as Revised 3-FEB-2023**

**FPP Section**: MCN section 2.2. Spill Management.

**Justification for Change**:

Updates the dates of adult steelhead spill in 2023, in accordance with the *Term Sheet for Stay of Preliminary Injunction Motion and Summary Judgement Schedule*, as extended through August 31, 2023 (excerpt copied below with highlights added):

**I. SPILL OPERATIONS**

**B. Planned Fall/Winter Spill Operations from Sept. 1, 2022 to April 2, 2023 (LSR) and April 9, 2023 (LCR).**

**1. From September 1, 2022 to November 15, 2022 and March 1, 2023 to the start of the spring fish passage spill season in April 2023, the Corps will provide surface oriented spill at least three times each week on non-consecutive days for 4 hours each morning (generally between 0500 and 1100) through a spillway weir at each of the following five dams: Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental, Ice Harbor, and McNary.**

**Proposed Changes**:

**2.2.2. Spill for Adult Steelhead Overshoots.** Surface spill will be implemented at McNary and the four lower Snake River dams as a means of providing non-powerhouse downstream passage for adult steelhead that overshoot natal tributaries prior to spawning or that strive to repeat a subsequent reproduction cycle (iteroparity). This operation is pursuant to non-discretionary terms and conditions in the 2020 NOAA Fisheries Columbia River System (CRS) Biological Opinion[[1]](#footnote-1), which calls for surface spill via the spillway weir at each of the five projects from March 1 through March 30 and from October 1 through November 15, three times each week on non-consecutive days for four hours in the morning (generally between 05:00 and 11:00). This operation is also considered in the 2020 USFWS CRS Biological Opinion[[2]](#footnote-2) as a means of providing safe and effective downstream passage for adult steelhead and other fish.

**i**. In 2023, surface spill in the spring will continue until the start of spring spill for juvenile fish on April 10 to comply with the Agreement for short-term operations of the Columbia River System.[[3]](#footnote-3) As such, in 2023, spring surface spill for adult steelhead at McNary Dam will occur March 1 through April 9. .

**COMMENTS**:

FPOM FPP Meeting 3-FEB-2023:

Hesse - not ok with changing fall spill back to October 1. This is a degradation in fish protection measures and shows that the Corps is not committed to the administration level coordination process.

Bettin - can those fall dates be struck from that section until the higher-level coordination process plays out?

Hesse – yes that works.

Wright – fine with that change. The Corps is committed to implementing the current Agreement and any operations subsequently agreed to through that process. At any point there is agreement at that level to change the dates of fall spill, we will notify the projects and coordinate with FPOM to get those dates in the FPP.

Van Dyke – please add that the expectation is there will be more conversation at the higher level before changing the fall operation dates.

Wright – not privy to those conversations so it would be misleading to state that in this document. The conversations are happening at the administration level and unsure when/if that will occur or what the outcome will be.

Van Dyke – objects to not including that additional language regarding the higher-level coordination. Can live with the modification that Hesse described (removing fall dates and reference to restoring the 2020 BiOp without further discussion from that section for now).

Wright – will revise as discussed.

**RECORD OF FINAL ACTION**:

Approved as revised at the FPOM FPP Meeting on Feb 3, 2023.

1. NOAA CRS BiOp, section 2.17.4.G, “*Reduce Take of Overshoot Adult Steelhead*”: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/109136871> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. USFWS CRS BiOp, section 5.7.4, “*Off-season Surface Spill for Downstream Passage of Adult Steelhead*”: <https://ecos.fws.gov/tails/pub/document/17101031> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Term Sheet, section B (pdf page 7), as extended through August 31, 2023: <https://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/JointMotion_TermSheet_CourtOrder_and_Extension_AUG2022.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)