

## Draft 2009 Water Management Plan

### 1. Introduction

The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), collectively referred to as the Action Agencies (AA), consult on the effects of the operation of the dam and reservoir projects in the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS)<sup>1</sup> on listed species<sup>2</sup> with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, or NOAA Fisheries Service) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The purpose of the Water Management Plan (WMP) is to layout how the Action Agencies' plan to operate the FCRPS projects during the current water year (October 2008 – September 2009)

#### *1.1. 2008 National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion for the Federal Columbia River Power System.*

The current draft WMP reflects provisions contained in the NOAA Fisheries FCRPS Biological Opinion (2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp) issued May 5th, 2008 and titled "Consultation on Remand for Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System, 11 Bureau of Reclamation Projects in the Columbia Basin and ESA Section 10(a)(I)(A) Permit for Juvenile Fish Transportation Program (Revised and reissued pursuant to court order, *NWF v. NMFS*, Civ. No. CV 01-640-RE (D. Oregon))" The Corps prepared a Record of Consultation and Statement of Decision (ROCASOD) relative to the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp on August 1, 2008, BPA signed a Record of Decision (ROD) on August 13, 2008 and Reclamation signed a Decision Document on September 3, 2008. The NOAA BiOp and the Corps' ROCASOD can be found at: <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Hydropower/Columbia-Snake-Basin/Final-BOs.cfm>

#### *1.2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife 2000 FCRPS Biological Opinion, the 2006 Libby Dam Biological Opinion, and the Upper Columbia Environmental Impact Statement*

The 2000 USFWS FCRPS Biological Opinion, "Effects to Listed Species from Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System," is operative for all the FCRPS projects except for Libby Dam and can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/finalbiop/BiOp.html>

In February 2006 the USFWS amended and supplemented the 2000 USFWS BiOp with respect to the effects of the operations of Libby Dam on the Kootenai sturgeon and the bull trout in the Kootenai River and can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/easternwashington/documents/Final%20Libby%20Dam%20BiOp%202-18-06lr3.pdf>. This BiOp was the subject of litigation in the District of Montana, Center for Biological Diversity and State of Montana et al. v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Corps. As of September 2008, a settlement agreement was executed and the Court dismissed the case.

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<sup>1</sup> The FCRPS comprises 14 Federal multipurpose hydropower projects. The 12 projects operated and maintained by the Corps are: Bonneville, The Dalles, John Day, McNary, Chief Joseph, Albeni Falls, Libby, Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, Lower Granite and Dworshak dams. Reclamation operates and maintains the following FCRPS projects: Hungry Horse Project and the Columbia Basin Project, which includes Grand Coulee Dam.

<sup>2</sup> Species listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The 2006 BiOp recommended operating Libby Dam in accordance with VARQ Flood Control Procedures, the preferred alternative for the operation of Libby Dam described in the Upper Columbia Alternative Flood Control and Fish Operations Final Environmental Impact Statement (UCEIS).

The Corps signed a Record of Decision on June 6, 2008, documenting the long-term decision to adopt VARQ for Libby Dam flood control and fish operations. The Record of Decision is located at

[http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/documents/VARQ/Final\\_UCEIS\\_rod\\_signed.pdf](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/documents/VARQ/Final_UCEIS_rod_signed.pdf) and describes the implementation of flood control procedures that can be expected at Libby Dam in Water Year 2009 and beyond.

### ***1.3. 2007 FCRPS Biological Assessment***

In response to the District Court of Oregon's Order and Remand of the 2004 FCRPS Biological Opinion, the AA and NOAA Fisheries engaged in a collaborative process with regional sovereigns. One objective was to develop a proposed action to submit to NOAA for ESA consultation. The 2007 FCRPS Biological Assessment was submitted to NOAA in August 2007 and can be found at [http://www.salmonrecovery.gov/biological\\_opinions/fcrps/ba-ca/Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.salmonrecovery.gov/biological_opinions/fcrps/ba-ca/Executive_Summary.pdf)

### ***1.4. Upper Snake Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion,***

In response to the District Court of Oregon's Order and Remand of the NOAA Fisheries 2005 Upper Snake Biological Opinion (covering Bureau of Reclamation Operations and Maintenance in the Snake River Basin above Brownlee Reservoir) (*American Rivers v. NOAA Fisheries*),

Reclamation prepared a biological assessment 2007 Upper Snake BA, that analyzed its proposed Upper Snake actions consistent with the Court's findings. The 2007 Upper Snake BA can be found at: <http://internet.pn.usbr.gov/programs/UpperSnake/index.html>.

### ***1.5. Comprehensive Analysis***

The District Court of Oregon also ordered that the upper Snake remand be integrated with the FCRPS remand to ensure a comprehensive analysis. In order to integrate the upper Snake and FCRPS analyses, the action agencies incorporated information from both river basins into a biological analysis for each species so that a collective or comprehensive conclusion could be made as to the status of each species. These biological analyses are contained in a separate document entitled Comprehensive Analysis of the FCRPS and Mainstem Effects of Upper Snake and Other Tributary Actions (Comprehensive Analysis) (USACE et al. 2007). The Comprehensive Analysis can be found at:

[http://www.salmonrecovery.gov/biological\\_opinions/fcrps/ba-ca/index.cfm](http://www.salmonrecovery.gov/biological_opinions/fcrps/ba-ca/index.cfm).

Using the Comprehensive Analysis and both BA documents NOAA Fisheries developed the new Biological Opinions with the Supplemental Comprehensive Analysis to address the effects of the operation of the FCRPS and the Upper Snake projects on ESA listed species. Both final biological opinions were issued on May 5, 2008.

### 1.6. *Preparation of Plans*

Each fall, the Action Agencies prepare an annual WMP (draft by October 1st and the final by January 1st). The Action Agencies have prepared this draft WMP for the 2009 water year consistent with the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp and the 2000 and 2006 USFWS BiOps. This plan describes how the FCRPS dams and reservoirs will be operated for the 2009 water year (October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009). At the time of preparation of the draft WMP, very little information is available about the future year's water supply; therefore, it provides only a general description of how the FCRPS will be operated during the upcoming water year. The operations are designed to:

- Implement water management measures in a manner consistent with the actions considered in the respective BiOps
- Make progress towards meeting the biological performance standards specified in the BiOps
- Meet non-BiOp related requirements and purposes such as flood control, hydropower, irrigation, navigation, recreation, and fish and wildlife not listed under the ESA. For a detailed description of flood control see <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/report/colriverflood.htm>.
- Take into consideration recommendations contained in the applicable Northwest Power and Conservation Council Fish and Wildlife Program and amendments

The draft WMP will also include any special operations (such as any special tests, required maintenance, construction activities, flood control procedures planned for the year, etc.) that are known at the time the plan is developed. These action plans will take into account changes in the operations due to water supply or other factors. As the water supply forecasts become available, the Action Agencies will develop more detailed in-season action plans for the proposed FCRPS project operations that describe planned hydro system fish operations for the upcoming fall and winter (draft by November 1 and final by January 1) and for the spring, and summer (draft by March 1 and final by May 15).

The Corps also prepares a Fish Passage Plan (FPP) each year that provides detailed operating criteria for project fish passage facilities, powerhouses, and spillways to allow for the efficient passage of migratory fish. The FPP contains appendices that describe special operations for studies, the juvenile fish transportation program, operation of units within 1% of best efficiency, spill for fish passage, total dissolved gas (TDG) monitoring, and dewatering procedures. The plan is coordinated through the Fish Passage Operations and Maintenance Coordination Team (FPOM) and is available on the web at <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/fpp/>. This draft WMP addresses strategies to enhance juvenile and adult fish survival through a coordinated set of hydro project management actions to achieve performance standards, and to provide benefits to resident fish. The plan is structured to address water management actions associated with the following strategies and substrategies, as defined in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp and USFWS BiOps.

### **1.7. *BiOp Strategies***

Hydropower Strategy 1—Operate the FCRPS to provide flows and water quality to improve juvenile and adult fish survival

Hydropower Strategy 2—Modify Columbia and Snake River dams to maximize juvenile and adult fish survival

Hydropower Strategy 3—Implement spill and juvenile transportation improvements at Columbia River and Snake River dams

Hydropower Strategy 4—Operate and maintain facilities at Corps mainstem projects to maintain biological performance

### **1.8. *Non-BiOp Operations***

Each year the Action Agencies implement water management actions that are not part of our ESA obligations, but are aimed at meeting other project requirements and purposes such as flood control, power generation, irrigation, navigation, recreation, and fish and wildlife not listed under the ESA. The table below includes fish and wildlife related non-ESA water management actions that may be implemented and the time of year such actions typically occur. These actions are further described below.

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**Table 1.** Non-listed Species and period of impact.

| <b>Action</b>                                      | <b>Time of Year</b>      |
|--|--------------------------|
| Keenleyside Dam (Arrow) mountain whitefish actions | December - January       |
| Keenleyside Dam (Arrow) rainbow trout actions      | April - June             |
| Libby - burbot actions                             | October - February       |
| Dworshak – flow increase for hatchery release      | March                    |
| Grand Coulee – kokanee                             | September – Mid November |
| Hanford Reach Protection Flows                     | March – June             |
| Vernita Bar Protection Flows                       | November – April         |
| McNary - waterfowl nesting                         | March – May              |
| McNary - waterfowl hunting enhancement             | October – January        |
| John Day - goose nesting                           | March – May              |
| John Day - waterfowl hunting enhancement           | October – January        |
| Bonneville - Tribal fishing                        | April – September        |
| Bonneville - Spring Creek Hatchery release         | April - May              |

**1.9. Changes from Last Year’s Plan**

This plan is based on the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp and the 2000 and 2006 USFWS BiOps; whereas last year’s WMP was based on the 2008 FOP (Fish Operation Plan), the 2000 and 2006 USFWS BiOps, and the 2004 Biological Opinion/Final Updated Proposed Action (UPA).

## 2. Hydro System Operation

### 2.1. Priorities

The 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp and USFWS BiOps list the following strategies for flow management:

- Provide minimum project flows in the fall and winter to support fisheries below the projects (e.g. Hungry Horse, Dworshak, Libby)
- Limit the winter/spring drawdown of storage reservoirs to increase spring flows and the probability of reservoir refill.
- Draft from storage reservoirs in the summer to increase summer flows.
- Provide minimum flows in the fall and winter to support mainstem chum spawning and incubation flow below Bonneville Dam.

The Action Agencies have reviewed these strategies and other actions called for in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp, and USFWS BiOps and developed the following priorities (in order) for flow management and individual reservoir operations after ensuring adequate flood damage reduction is provided:

1. Operate storage reservoirs (Hungry Horse and Libby) to meet minimum flow and ramp rate criteria for resident fish.
2. Refill the storage projects to provide summer flow augmentation. The timing and shape of the spring runoff may result in reservoir refill a few days before or after the target refill date. For example, a late snowmelt runoff may delay refill in order to avoid excessive spill.
  - Hungry Horse refill by about June 30 to provide summer flow augmentation.
  - Dworshak refill by about June 30 to provide summer flow augmentation.
  - Grand Coulee refill by about June 30 to provide summer flow augmentation.
  - Libby reservoir refill in 2009 may be less likely than recent years as the result of operating in accordance with the VARQ Operating Procedures at Libby Dam with the tiered sturgeon volume as recommended in the 2006 USFWS BiOp. These operating assumptions provide an approximately 12% probability of Libby refill to within one foot of full by July 31. This is further described in the Corps' 2006 UCEIS.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Upper Columbia Alternative Flood Control and Fish Operations (VARQ) Environmental Impact Statement.

3. Operate storage projects to be at their April 10 elevation objectives to increase available flows for spring flow management.
4. Provide flow augmentation to maintain sufficient water surface to protect Ives/Pierce Island chum salmon spawning and incubation.

In addition to operations for anadromous fish, the Action Agencies operate the FCRPS projects to benefit listed fish at or near each project or in its reservoir. Reservoirs operate to meet project minimum outflows, to avoid involuntary spill and resulting elevated total dissolved gas (TDG), to reduce outflow fluctuations to avoid stranding fish and degrading fish habitat and productivity, to reduce cross sectional area of run-of river mainstem projects to speed juvenile passage and reduce reservoir surface area to moderate temperatures, and to make specific temperature releases from storage projects to improve water temperatures for fish. These operations are generally the highest priority because of the direct linkage between a particular operation and impacts on fish near the dam.

As the operating year begins on October 1, the flow objectives are not encountered in the same order as the BiOp flow priorities (e.g. decisions need to be made on chum spawning flows first despite the fact that they have a lower priority than spring or summer migration flows). However, the Action Agencies will operate chronologically during the year while attempting to meet the flow priorities as they are outlined in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp. Objectives include:

- Operate the storage reservoirs (Dworshak, Hungry Horse, Libby, and Grand Coulee) to achieve the April 10 refill objectives with a high probability. This level varies by runoff forecast. The ability to reach early April flood control levels is affected by how much water was released for flood control, power generation, and fishery flows to support both lower Columbia chum and Hanford reach fall Chinook spawning, as well as minimum flow requirements below the projects.
- Refill the storage reservoirs by about June 30<sup>4</sup> while minimizing spill (except as needed to maintain flood control), in order to maximize available storage of water for the benefit of summer migrants. Although the June 30 refill objective generally has priority over spring flow (April, May, June) objectives, the Action Agencies attempt to refill as well as meet the spring flow objectives and other fish needs.
- Manage the available storage to augment summer (July and August) flows in an attempt to meet flow objectives and to moderate water temperature. Libby and Hungry Horse will be drafted to their specified draft limits by September 30, Grand Coulee and Banks Lake will be drafted to their specified draft limits by August 31 to augment summer flows. Dworshak will reach its summer draft limit in September to augment summer flows and to moderate river temperatures. Draft limits are a higher priority than the summer flow objectives in order to meet other project uses and reserve water in storage for the following year.

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<sup>4</sup> Libby Dam refill probability is likely to be later into July as defined in the VARQ Flood Control Operating Procedures and supporting effects analysis.

These objectives are intended as general guidelines. The 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp and the USFWS BiOps embrace the concept of adaptive management. Adaptive management is the concept that the operation of the system should be adjusted based on best available science and acquired knowledge about current conditions in the system and effects due to management actions, as opposed to following a rigid set of rules. Conditions that are continually changing include information on fish migration, stock status, biological requirements, biological effectiveness, and hydrologic and environmental conditions.

## **2.2. Conflicts**

System managers recognize that water supply conditions are variable and unpredictable and there may be insufficient water to accomplish all the objectives addressed in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp, and USFWS BiOps for the benefit of listed fish. This may be further complicated by responsibilities to provide for other authorized purposes such as flood protection, power system reliability, irrigation, recreation, and navigation needs. Management of water resources for any one fish species may implicate the availability of water for other fish species or project purposes. The Action Agencies, in coordination with regional parties<sup>5</sup> through the Technical Management Team (TMT), consider the multiple uses of the system, while placing a high priority on measures to benefit listed species. Below are some of the typical conflicts that may occur.

### **2.2.1. Flood Control Draft versus Project Refill**

One way to maximize flood control is to provide abundant storage space in the event a large flood occurs. Conversely, the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp, and USFWS BiOps specify that the storage projects be as full as possible to increase the likelihood of refill and provide flows for spring flow management and summer flow augmentation.

Flood control procedures specify the amount of storage needed to provide flood damage reduction. In furtherance of the flood damage reduction objective, storage space is provided to reduce the risk of forecast and runoff uncertainty. In an effort to reduce forecast error and to better anticipate the runoff timing or water supply for a given year, the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp calls for the Action Agencies to study forecast procedures to determine if they can be improved.

### **2.2.2. Provision of Spring Flows versus Project Refill and Summer Flow Augmentation**

Because water supply and runoff forecasts are not 100 percent accurate, it is difficult to estimate how much water might be available for spring flows and still achieve spring or summer refill objectives. Flood control elevations are determined based on water supply and runoff forecasts and can change significantly from one forecast to the next. Changes in forecasts throughout the flood control season can make it difficult to achieve refill or draft objectives.

### **2.2.3. Chum Tailwater Elevations versus Refill/Spring Flows**

Providing a Bonneville Dam tailwater elevation level for chum spawning and incubation in the Ives Island complex typically requires flow augmentation from storage reservoirs when reliable

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<sup>5</sup> Non Action agencies members of TMT include Noaa Fisheries, State of Oregon, State of Washington, U S Fish and Wildlife Service, State of Idaho, and State of Montana



flow forecast information is unavailable. Project refill and spring flows have priority over flow augmentation to provide chum tailwater elevations which have to be set in November/December. Although there is an early season Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) based forecast and other early season climate indices that can provide an indication of the upcoming year's water supply, the more reliable water supply forecasts don't start until January. If the tailwater elevation level selected during the spawning season is too high (requiring higher flows and requiring deeper reservoir drafts), there is a risk of refill failure at the storage projects if the higher flows are maintained throughout the incubation period. On the other hand, if the flows are reduced during the incubation period in order to refill, then there is the risk of dewatering chum redds.

#### **2.2.4. Sturgeon Pulse below Libby Dam Versus Summer Flow Augmentation**

Water released from Libby Dam for spring sturgeon flows (pulse) during May and into July may impact the project's ability to refill, thus reducing the reservoir refill level, and consequently the amount of the water available for summer flow augmentation from Libby. Water released for sturgeon will take a higher priority than refilling to meet salmon flow targets.

#### **2.2.5. Fish Operations versus Other Project Uses**

In addition to flood control operation, there are other project purposes that may conflict with operations for the benefit of fish. For example; (1) a particular spill pattern at a project may impact the ability of commercial barges to access and enter navigation locks safely. Additionally, in some cases, spill must be curtailed temporarily to allow fish barges to safely moor and load fish at fish loading facilities, (2) spilling water for juvenile fish passage reduces the amount of power that can be generated to meet demand; and, (3) timing of releases for flow augmentation during fish migration periods may conflict with the shape or timing of power demand. In addition to power generation, operations for irrigation and reservoir recreation may conflict with releases of water for flow augmentation

#### **2.2.6. Conflicts and Priorities**

The conflicts described above pose many challenges to the Action Agencies in meeting the multiple uses of the hydrosystem. The priorities for flow management and individual reservoir operations outlined in section 2.1 will assist the Action Agencies in their operational decision-making. Discussion of conflicts between operational requirements and alternatives for addressing such conflicts will occur in TMT.

### **2.3. Emergencies**

The draft WMP, the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp, and the current FPP acknowledge that emergencies and other unexpected events occur and may cause interruptions or adjustments of fish protection measures. Such deviations may be short in duration, such as a response to an unexpected unit outage or power line failure, or a search and rescue operation, or longer in duration, such as what was experienced in 2001 in response to the low water conditions. Emergency operations will be managed in accordance with TMT Emergency Protocol, the FPP and other appropriate Action Agencies emergency procedures. The TMT Emergency Protocols can be found Appendix 1: Emergency Protocols or see TMT homepage at <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/wmp>.

### **2.3.1. Operational Emergencies**

The Action Agencies will manage interruptions or adjustments in water management actions, which may occur due to unforeseen power system, flood control, navigation, dam safety, or other emergencies. Such emergency actions will be viewed by the Action Agencies as a last resort and will not be used in place of operations outlined in the annual WMP. Emergency operations will be managed in accordance with TMT Emergency Protocols, the FPP and other appropriate Action Agencies emergency procedures. The Action Agencies will take all reasonable steps to limit the duration of any emergency impacting fish.

### **2.3.2. Fish Emergencies**

The Action Agencies will manage operations for fish passage and protection at FCRPS facilities. They may be modified for brief periods of time due to unexpected equipment failures or other conditions. These events can result in short periods when projects are operating outside normal specifications due to unexpected or emergency events. Where there are significant biological effects of more than short duration resulting from emergencies impacting fish, the Action Agencies will develop (in coordination with the in season management Regional Forum (see BA Appendix B.2.1) and implement appropriate adaptive management actions to address the situation. The Action Agencies will take all reasonable steps to limit the duration of any fish emergency.

### **2.3.3. Emergency Operations for Unlisted Fish**

The Action Agencies agree to take reasonable actions to aid non-listed fish during brief periods of time due to unexpected equipment failures or other conditions and when significant detrimental biological effects are demonstrated. When there is a conflict in such operations, operations for ESA-listed fish will take priority.

## **2.4. Research**

Research studies sometimes require special operations that differ from routine operations otherwise described in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp, the USFWS BiOps, and the current FPP. These studies are generally developed through technical workgroups of the Regional Forum [e.g., the Corps' Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program Fish Facilities Design Review Work Group (FFDRWG) and Studies Review Work Group (SRWG)]. They are further described in the Corps' FPP and the Action Agencies' seasonal updates to the WMP. In most cases, operations associated with research entail relatively minor changes from routine operations and are coordinated in technical forums (e.g., TMT and FPOM). In some cases, the nature or magnitude of operational changes for research may require further coordination and review in policy forums [e.g., Implementation Team (IT)]. Generally, research planning and coordination occurs throughout the late fall and winter, with final research plans established by late winter/early spring. In extraordinary events such as extreme low runoff conditions or an emergency, planned research may be modified prior to implementation to accommodate anticipated unique circumstances and/or to reallocate resources to obtain the greatest value given the circumstances.

### **3. Decision Points and Water Supply Forecasts**

Table 2 below lists the key water management decisions/actions and when they need to be made. Some decision points, such as setting flow objectives, are clearly articulated in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp and the USFWS BiOps. Other decision points, such as setting weekly flow augmentation levels, require thorough discussion and coordination. The decision points given below are spelled out in the BiOps, or are based on experience. These decisions are made by the Action Agencies in consideration of actions called for in the BiOps, and input received through the Regional Forum (TMT, IT, Regional Executives).

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**Table 2.** Water Management Decision Points/Actions

|                   | September   | Early October  | November  | Winter<br>(December –<br>March)   | Early April  | Early May   | June   | Early July  |
|-------------------|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| <i>Operations</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Albeni Falls fall/winter drawdown strategy discussion to support kokanee and chum</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess potential tailwater elevations to support chum spawning below Bonneville Dam</li> <li>Preliminary discussions of flood control/project refill strategy</li> <li>Support for Hanford Reach fall chinook protection operations begins. (<i>Non-BiOp Action</i>)</li> <li>Consider Kootenai burbot operation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early season forecast using SOI</li> <li>Evaluate likely tier for sturgeon water volume</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine winter/spring chum flow tailwater elevations below Bonneville Dam</li> <li>Determine flood control and refill strategies, including any available flood control shifts</li> <li>Determine final April 10 objective base on FCE's from March Final WSF.</li> <li>Minimum flows from Hungry Horse Dam and minimum Columbia Falls flows are set by April-August forecast</li> <li>Begin discussing spring operations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring flow objectives are set by the April final volume forecasts</li> <li>Determine spring flow management strategy including priority for refill</li> <li>Determine Juvenile Fish Transport Operations for Lower Snake Projects and McNary</li> <li>Determine start dates and levels by project for spring spill</li> <li>Determine start date for Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) at Lower Snake River projects</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use May final forecast to calculate the appropriate volume of the sturgeon tiered flow release from Libby</li> <li>Determine required outflow from Libby for bull trout. May 15 until sturgeon flow.</li> <li>Use May forecast to determine VARQ refill flows for Libby and Hungry Horse</li> <li>Determine refill start date based on streamflow forecast to exceed Initial Control Flow (ICF) at The Dalles (if this does not occur</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer flow objective at Lower Granite determined by June final volume forecast</li> <li>Determine summer flow augmentation strategy (early June)</li> <li>Complete Dworshak temperature modeling and determine release strategy</li> <li>Decision on McNary juvenile fish transportation (late June)</li> <li>Switch to 30% spill 24 hours a day at John Day.</li> <li>Use June forecast to</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grand Coulee summer reservoir draft limit determined by July Final April – August volume forecast at The Dalles</li> <li>Salmon Draft at Libby and Hungry Horse</li> </ul> |

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|              | September | Early October                                | November | Winter<br>(December –<br>March)   | Early April   | Early May                                    | June   | Early July |
|--------------|-----------|--|----------|---|---|--|--|------------|
|              |           |  |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin spring transport discussions</li> <li>• Hanford Reach operations (<i>non-BiOp action</i>) discussed, beginning in January.</li> <li>• Perform analysis to determine amount of flexibility Dworshak has to operate above minimum flow and still reach spring refill targets.</li> <li>• Prepare outlook for meeting flow objectives.</li> <li>• Determine end of December flood control elevation at Libby, using December SOI –based forecast</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine John Day forebay elevations</li> <li>• Determine refill start date based on streamflow forecast to exceed Initial Control Flow at The Dalles</li> <li>• If required, use April forecast to determine VARQ refill flows for Libby and Hungry Horse</li> </ul> | in April                                     | determine VARQ refill flows for Libby and Hungry Horse |            |
| <i>Plans</i> |           | Develop fall/winter update to the annual WMP |          | Preliminary work on spring/summer update to the   | Start operational plans for Libby and Hungry  | Libby and Hungry Horse operational plans due |  |            |

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|                  | September | Early October | November | Winter<br>(December –<br>March)                                     | Early April                            | Early May                            | June                                  | Early July |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|----------|---|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
|                  |           |               |          | annual WMP  | Horse Dams                             |                                      |                                       |            |
| <i>Forecasts</i> |           |               |          | January, February, and March volume forecasts released by the NWRFC | April final forecast released by NWRFC | May final forecast released by NWRFC | June final forecast released by NWRFC |            |

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### 3.1. Water Supply Forecasts

Water supply forecasts serve as a guide to how much water is available for fish and other operations. Flow projections are provided to the TMT regularly during the flow management season (April 3 – August 31).

The National Weather Service’s Northwest River Forecast Center (NWRFC), Corps Northwestern Division Hydrologic Engineering Branch, Reclamation, and others prepare water supply forecasts to manage the Columbia River. Table 3 below lists the forecasts used to implement actions referenced in the BiOps. Table 4 summarizes the major fish-related reservoir and flow operations by project. More detailed descriptions of each of these operations follow.

**Table 3. Water Supply Forecasts Used to Implement BiOp Actions**

| <b>Forecast Point</b> | <b>Forecast period</b> | <b>Forecast</b>   | <b>BiOp actions determined</b>  |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| Hungry Horse          | April – August         | January, February, and March Final provided by Reclamation  | Columbia Falls and Hungry Horse minimum flows   |
| The Dalles            | April – August         | April Final<br>July Final<br>Provided by NWRFC              | Spring flow objective at McNary Dam<br>Summer draft elevation for Grand Coulee (August 31 elevation of 1280 feet or 1278 feet)<br>Juvenile Fish Transport operations at McNary<br>Libby Summer Draft Limit<br>Hungry Horse Summer Draft Limit |
| Lower Granite         | April – July           | April Final<br>Provided by NWRFC                            | Spring flow objective at Lower Granite<br>Juvenile Fish Transport operations at Lower Snake Projects  |
| Lower Granite         | April – July           | June Final<br>Provided by NWRFC                             | Summer flow objective at Lower Granite  |
| The Dalles            | April – August         | July Final<br>Provided by NWRFC                             | Grand Coulee summer draft limit   |
| Libby                 | April – August         | May Final<br>Provided by CORPS                              | Volume of water to provide for sturgeon and minimum bull trout flows to begin generally May 15  |
| Libby                 | April – August         | April, May, June Final<br>Libby Forecast provided by Corps, | VARQ Refill Flows   |
| Hungry Horse          | May - September        | April, May, June Final<br>Forecast provided by Reclamation  | VARQ Refill Flows   |

**Table 4.** Major Reservoir and Flow Operations for ESA-listed fish species.

| Project             | Flood Control & Refill  | Sturgeon  | Bull Trout   | Spring Anadromous  | Summer Anadromous   | Chum   |
|---------------------|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Libby</b>        | <p><u>Winter:</u> Operate to VARQ flood control rule curve and achieve appropriate elevation by April 10 if possible</p> <p><u>Spring:</u> Adhere to VARQ Operating Procedures at Libby Dam and supply the appropriate tiered volume for sturgeon.</p>        | <p><u>April – July</u><br/>Provide USFWS sturgeon volume to augment flows at Bonners Ferry.</p> | <p><u>Year Round:</u><br/>Operate to minimum flow of 4000 cfs and project ramping rates to minimize adverse affects of flow fluctuations</p> <p>May 15 – Sep 30:<br/>Operate to Bull Trout Minimum Flows</p> | <p>Operate to meet flow objectives and refill if possible without jeopardizing flood control.</p>  | <p><u>September</u><br/>Draft 10 feet from full by the end of September (except in lowest 20th percentile water years, as measured at The Dalles, when draft will increase to 20 feet from full by end of September).</p>   | <p>Fall/winter storage may be used to support chum flows</p> |
| <b>Hungry Horse</b> | <p><u>Winter:</u> Operate to VARQ flood control rule curves with a 75% confidence of meeting the April 10 elevation objective.</p> <p><u>Spring:</u> Refill by about June 30 if possible without excessive spill and operate to help meet flow objectives</p> |   | <p><u>Year Round:</u><br/>Operate in order to maintain Columbia Falls and project minimum flow requirements .<br/>Operate using ramping rates to minimize adverse affects of flow fluctuations</p>           | <p>Operate to meet flow objectives and June 30 refill if possible without exceeding TDG limits</p> | <p><u>September</u><br/>Draft 10 feet from full (elevation 3550 feet ) by the end of September except in lowest 20th percentile water years, as measured at The Dalles when draft will increase to 20 feet from full (elevation 3540 feet) by the end of September.</p> |  |



Draft Water Management Plan 10-1-08

| Project                  | Flood Control & Refill   | Sturgeon | Bull Trout   | Spring Anadromous   | Summer Anadromous   | Chum  |
|--------------------------|--|----------|--|---|---|---|
| Albeni Falls             | <p><u>Winter:</u> Operate to flood control rule curve</p> <p><u>Spring:</u> Refill by June 30 and operate to help meet flow objectives</p>                                     |          | <p><u>Fall/Winter:</u> Reach 2051-2055 feet msl by November 20 and maintain this elevation until kokanee fry emergence. Recommendation will be made by TMT</p> |   |   | Fall/winter storage may be used to support chum flows |
| Grand Coulee             | <p><u>Winter:</u> Operate to 85% confidence of meeting April 10 elevation objective</p> <p><u>Spring:</u> Refill by about June 30 and operate to help meet flow objectives</p> |          |  | <p>Operate to 85% confidence of meeting April 10 elevation objectives to increase spring flows in the Lower Columbia river.</p> <p>Operate to help meet the Spring flow objective at Priest Rapids Dam.</p> | <p><u>July-August:</u> Draft to support salmon flow objectives, not to exceed reservoir draft limit of 1,280 feet (<math>\geq</math> 92 MAF July Final forecast at The Dalles) or 1,278 feet (<math>&lt;</math> 92 MAF forecast at The Dalles)<sup>6</sup>.</p> | Fall/winter storage may be used to support chum flows |
| Grand Coulee (continued) |  |          |  |   | <p><u>July/August:</u> Operate Banks Lake to draft to elevation 1565 feet by August 31 to provide more water for summer flow augmentation</p>   |   |
| Dworshak                 | <p><u>Winter:</u> Operate to achieve April 10 refill objective</p> <p><u>Spring:</u> Refill by about June 30 and operate to help meet flow objectives</p>                      |          |  |   | <p>Draft for summer flow augmentation and water temperature reduction, not to exceed reservoir draft limit of 1,520 feet in September</p>   | Fall/winter storage may be used to support chum flows |

<sup>6</sup> These draft limits will be modified as the Lake Roosevelt drawdown component of Washington's Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP) is implemented (see Section 4.6.6).

Draft Water Management Plan 10-1-08

| Project          | Flood Control & Refill | Sturgeon | Bull Trout | Spring Anadromous  | Summer Anadromous  | Chum |
|------------------|------------------------|----------|------------|--|--|------|
| Lower Granite    |                        |          |            | Flow objective of 85-100 kcfs<br>Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency             | Flow objective of 50-55 kcfs<br>Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency              |      |
| Little Goose     |                        |          |            | Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency<br>Manually set Unit 1 lower operating limit | Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency<br>Manually set Unit 1 lower operating limit |      |
| Lower Monumental |                        |          |            | Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency  | Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency  |      |
| Ice Harbor       |                        |          |            | Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency  | Operate within 1 foot of MOP to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency  |      |
| McNary           |                        |          |            | Flow objective of 220-260 kcfs<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency   | Flow objective of 200 kcfs<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency   |      |
| John Day         |                        |          |            | Operate within 1.5 feet of minimum level that provides irrigation pumping to reduce juvenile travel time<br>Operate within 1% of best efficiency | Operate within 1% of best efficiency   |      |

| Project    | Flood Control & Refill | Sturgeon | Bull Trout | Spring Anadromous                    | Summer Anadromous                    | Chum   |
|------------|------------------------|----------|------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| The Dalles |                        |          |            | Operate within 1% of best efficiency | Operate within 1% of best efficiency |  |
| Bonneville |                        |          |            | Operate within 1% of best efficiency | Operate within 1% of best efficiency | Provide support to chum if hydrologic conditions indicate system can likely maintain minimum project tailwater elevation (on Oregon side 0.9 miles downstream of first powerhouse and 50 feet upstream of Tanner Creek) during spawning and incubation . |

## 4. Project Operations

### 4.1. *Hugh Keenlyside Dam (Arrow Canadian Project)*

#### 4.1.1. Mountain Whitefish

Spawning flow levels are set between 45 and 55 thousand cubic feet per second (kcfs) beginning the third week in December and continuing through mid-January. Egg protection flows are set 5 to 15 kcfs lower than the spawning flow from mid-January through the end of March.

#### 4.1.2. Rainbow Trout

Rainbow trout spawning begins in April. Protection levels begin somewhere between 15 and 25 kcfs. The goal is to have stable flows or ever-increasing flows through June.

### 4.2. *Hungry Horse Dam*

Hungry Horse Dam is operated for multiple purposes including fish and wildlife, flood control, irrigation, power, and recreation. Specific operations for flow management to aid anadromous and resident fish are listed in the following sections.

#### 4.2.1. Winter/Spring Operations

Hungry Horse will be operated during the winter and early spring to achieve a 75% probability of reaching the April 10 elevation objective in order to provide more water for spring flows. However in many years, typically dry years, the previous year's summer draft for flow augmentation and year-round required minimum discharges for resident fisheries will prevent Hungry Horse from reaching the April 10 elevation objective. Reclamation computes Hungry Horse Dam's April 10 elevation objective by linear

interpolation between the March 31 and April 15 forecasted flood control elevations based on the Reclamation March Final May - September Water Supply Forecast (WSF).

Hungry Horse will be operated for flood control from January through April using the Storage Reservation Diagram (SRD) developed for VARQ flood control. Hungry Horse began operating using VARQ Flood Control rule curves on an interim basis starting January 1, 2001 based on an Environmental Assessment Findings of No Significant Impacts (EA FONSI). Reclamation in coordination with the Corps, completed the Upper Columbia Alternative Flood Control and Fish Operations Final Environmental Impact Statement (UCEIS) in 2006. A Record of Decision (ROD) will be prepared in 2008. The purpose of this action is to provide more water for spring flow augmentation.

During the spring, the Action Agencies will operate the FCRPS to meet the flow and refill objectives at Hungry Horse. If both these objectives cannot be achieved, the TMT will make an in-season recommendation, weighing considerations unique to each particular year and project.

Often during the spring, changes in flood control, transmission limitations and generation unit availability will require adaptive management actions for real-time operations in order to control refill and to avoid spill.

#### **4.2.2. Summer Operations**

Hungry Horse will operate to refill by about June 30 to provide summer flow augmentation, except as specifically provided by the TMT. Refill at Hungry Horse usually begins approximately ten days prior to when streamflow forecasts of unregulated flow is projected to exceed the Initial Control Flow (ICF) at The Dalles, Oregon. During refill, discharges from Hungry Horse are determined using inflow volume forecasts, weather forecasts, and the VARQ Operating Procedures. Other factors such as local flood control are also considered when determining refill operations. During the latter part of the flood control season (April) and the refill season (typically May through June), Hungry Horse discharges may be reduced for local flood protection in the Flathead Valley. The official flood stage for the Flathead River at Columbia Falls, Montana is 14 feet (an approximate flow of 51,000 cfs cubic feet per second (cfs)). In order to prevent or minimize flooding on the Flathead River above Flathead Lake, Reclamation will adjust outflows from Hungry Horse Dam as necessary (to a minimum discharge of 300 cfs) in order to maintain the Flathead River at Columbia Falls below 14 feet if possible (flood control operations generally start at around 13.0 feet or approximately 44,000 cfs). Reservoir refill normally occurs by approximately June 30. However, the timing and shape of the spring runoff may result in reservoir refill a few days before or after the June 30 target date. For example, a late snowmelt runoff may delay refill to sometime after June 30 in order to avoid excessive spill.

During the summer, Hungry Horse is drafted within the NOAA Fisheries BiOp's specified draft limits based on flow recommendations provided by TMT. TMT considers a number of factors when developing its flow recommendations, such as: the status of the migration, attainment of flow objectives, water quality, and the effects that reservoir

operations will have on other listed and resident fish populations. Flows during the summer months should be even or gradually declining in order to minimize a double peak on the Flathead River. The summer reservoir draft limit at Hungry Horse is 3550 feet (10 feet from full) by September 30 except in the lowest 20th percentile of water years (as measured at The Dalles) when the draft limit is elevation 3540 feet (20 feet from full) by September 30. If the project fails to refill, especially during drought years, minimum flow requirements (see Section 4.2.4) may draft the reservoir below these draft limits.

#### **4.2.3. Reporting**

Reclamation will fulfill the USFWS Reasonable and Prudent Measure (RPM) from the 2000 USFWS BiOp for annual and monthly reporting by contributing to the annual WMP and presenting weekly and biweekly reports of Hungry Horse operations through the TMT process. Reclamation will also fulfill the USFWS RPM recommendation for reporting actual operations by making available pertinent historic elevations and flows as related to Hungry Horse Dam through its current website at <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/esatea.html>.

#### **4.2.4. Minimum Flows and Ramp Rates**

The following ramp rates and minimum flows help guide project operations to meet various purposes, including power production. Ramp rates were identified in the 2000 USFWS BiOp for Hungry Horse Dam to protect resident fish and their food organisms in the Flathead River.

**Table 5.** Hungry Horse Dam Ramping Rates.

| <b>Daily and Hourly Maximum Ramp Up Rates for Hungry Horse Dam<br/>(as measured by daily flows, not daily averages, restricted by hourly rates).</b> |                                 |                                      |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Flow Range (measured at<br/>Columbia Falls)</b>   | <b>Ramp Up Unit (Daily Max)</b> | <b>Ramp Up Unit<br/>(Hourly max)</b> |
| 3,200 - 6,000 cfs  | Limit ramp up 1,800 cfs per day | 1,000 cfs/hour                       |
| > 6,000 - 8,000 cfs  | Limit ramp up 1,800 cfs per day | 1,000 cfs/hour                       |
| > 8,000 - 10,000 cfs   | Limit ramp up 3,600 cfs per day | 1,800 cfs/hour                       |
| > 10,000 cfs   | No limit                        | 1,800 cfs/hour                       |

| <b>Daily and Hourly Maximum Ramp Down Rates for Hungry Horse Dam<br/>(as measured by daily flows, not daily averages, restricted by hourly rates)</b> |                                      |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Flow Range (measured<br/>at Columbia Falls)</b>  | <b>Ramp Down Unit (Daily max)</b>    | <b>Ramp Down Unit<br/>(Hourly max)</b> |
| 3,200 - 6,000 cfs   | Limit ramp down to 600 cfs per day   | 600 cfs/hour                           |
| > 6,000 - 8,000 cfs   | Limit ramp down to 1,000 cfs per day | 600 cfs/hour                           |
| > 8,000 - 12,000 cfs  | Limit ramp down to 2,000 cfs per day | 1,000 cfs/hour                         |
| > 12,000 cfs  | Limit ramp down to 5,000 cfs per day | 1,800 cfs/hour                         |

Daily and hourly ramping rates may be exceeded during flood emergencies to protect health and public safety and in association with power or transmission emergencies. Variances can occur due to unexpected transmission outages or flood control emergencies. Variances to ramping rates during years where runoff forecasting or storage shortfalls occur, or variances are necessary to provide augmentation water for other listed species, will be coordinated through the TMT process. This is expected in only the lowest 20<sup>th</sup> percentile water years. (Note: The ramp rates will be followed except when they would cause a unit(s) to operate in a zone that could result in premature wear or failure of the units. In this case the project will utilize a ramp rate, which allows all units to operate outside the rough zone. The Action Agencies will provide additional information to the USFWS describing operations outside the “rough zone”.)

There are two minimum flow requirements for Hungry Horse Dam. One is for Columbia Falls on the mainstem Flathead River located just downstream from the confluence of the South Fork with the mainstem. This flow requirement generally governs Hungry Horse outflows during the fall and winter. The second minimum flow requirement is for the South Fork Flathead River just below Hungry Horse Dam. This minimum flow typically comes into play during refill of the project in spring when the minimum flows at Columbia Falls are met by the North and Middle Fork flows. The minimum outflow for Hungry Horse Dam and the minimum flow for Columbia Falls will be determined monthly based on the Reclamation WSF for the inflows into Hungry Horse for the period April 1 to August 31. Both minimum flows are determined monthly starting with the January forecast, and then set for the remainder of the year based on the March final

runoff forecast. Table 6 shows how the minimum flows are calculated<sup>7</sup>. Reclamation Water Supply Forecasts will be provided to the TMT.

**Table 6.** Minimum Flows at Hungry Horse and Columbia Falls.

| April – August inflow forecast (KAF) | Hungry Horse min flow <sup>8</sup> (CFS) | Columbia Falls min flow (CFS)     |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| < 1190                               | 400                                      | 3200                              |
| 1790 > forecast > 1190               | Interpolate between 400 and 900          | Interpolate between 3200 and 3500 |
| > 1790                               | 900                                      | 3500                              |

#### 4.2.5. Spill

Hungry Horse will be operated to avoid spill if practicable. Spill at Hungry Horse is defined as any release through the dam that does not pass through the power plant. Large amounts of spill can cause TDG in the South Fork of the Flathead River to exceed the state of Montana’s standard of 110%. Empirical data and estimates show that limiting spill to a maximum of 15% of total outflow will help to avoid exceeding the Montana State TDG standard of 110%.

### 4.3. Albeni Falls Dam

#### 4.3.1. Fall and Winter Lake Elevation

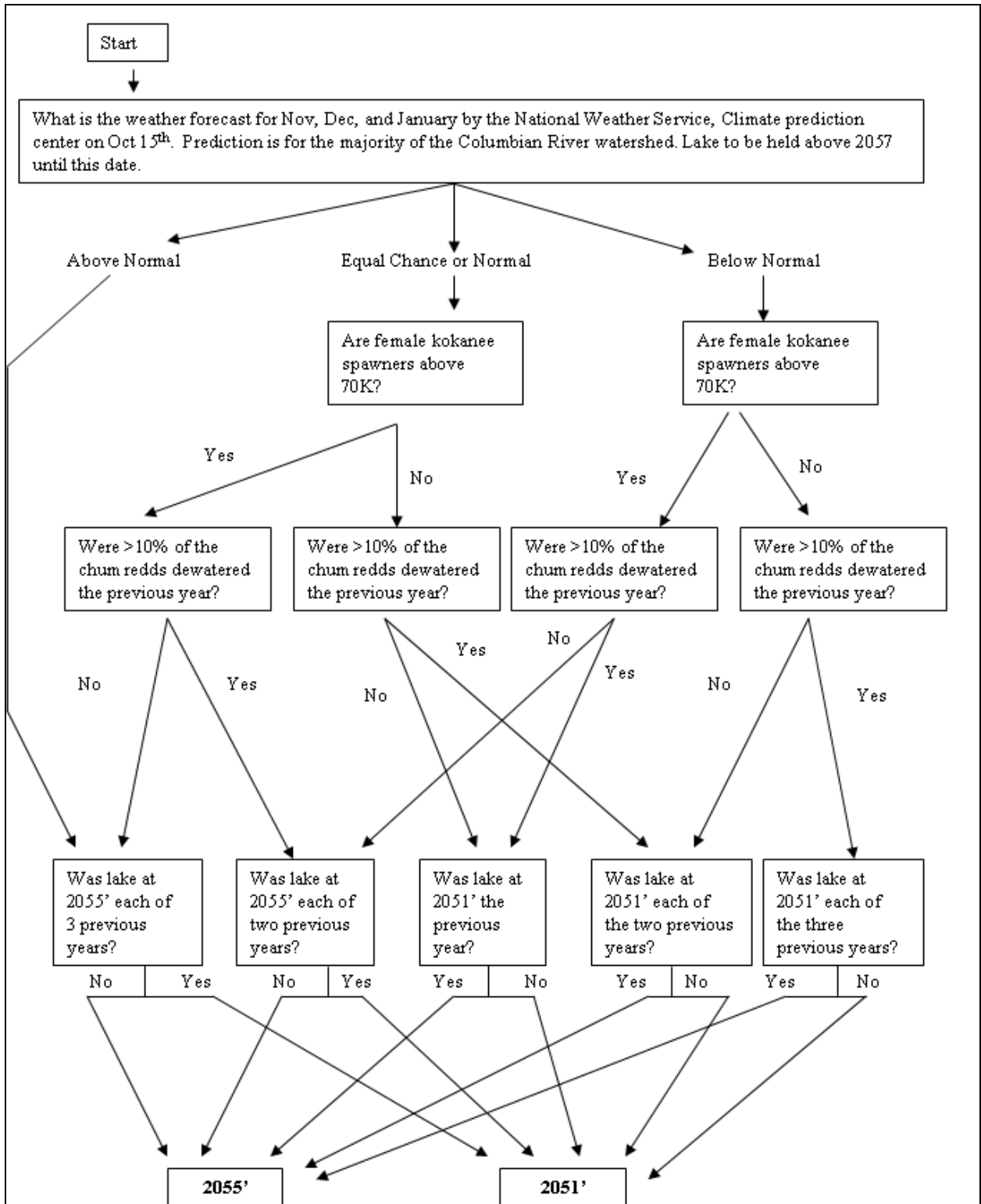
The reservoir will be drafted by November 20th to an approximate elevation of 2,051 ft for lakeshore spawning kokanee; kokanee are forage for threatened bull trout. This elevation will be maintained as a minimum until kokanee emergence ends. The elevation and date will be determined annually by looking at current conditions and needs and a recommendation will be provided by TMT.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and USFWS in conjunction with the Corps and other concerned parties have developed a draft decision tree that can be used annually as guidance to develop a recommendation for winter elevations of Lake Pend Oreille (Figure 1).

Albeni Falls Dam will operate to hold the lake winter elevation recommended in TMT unless a change is necessary to meet flood damage reduction objectives.

<sup>7</sup> USFWS BiOp at Section 3.A.1 Page 6

<sup>8</sup> To prevent or minimize flooding on the Flathead River above Flathead Lake, Hungry Horse discharges can be reduced to a minimum flow of 300 cfs when the stage at Columbia Falls exceeds 13 feet



**Figure 1.** Draft decision tree to guide selection of the winter lake elevation for Lake Pend Oreille.



#### **4.3.2. Spring Operations**

The purpose of the following actions is to refill Albeni Falls as much as possible in order to achieve a high probability of reaching the end of April flood control elevation objective, for spring flows. (Note: not in 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp)

During the spring, the Action Agencies will operate the FCRPS to meet the flow and refill objectives at McNary. The rate at which Albeni Falls refills in the spring will take into consideration the unique conditions presented in any given year.

#### **4.3.3. Flood Control Draft**

Albeni Falls will be operated during the winter season using standard flood control criteria.

#### **4.3.4. Refill**

During the spring, Albeni Falls will be refilled in accordance with standard flood control criteria. The Action Agencies will operate Albeni Falls to meet the flow objectives and refill by approximately June 30. . (Note: not in 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp)

#### **4.3.5. Albeni Falls Coordination**

Per the 2000 USFWS BiOp, the Action Agencies, the USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, Kalispel tribe, and IDFG will meet annually to evaluate Lake Pend Oreille female kokanee spawner numbers, the winter climate (precipitation) forecast, spawning and incubation success for threatened lower Columbia River chum salmon the previous winter, and recent history of winter elevations for Lake Pend Oreille. The purpose of this action is to ensure winter lake operation protocol is addressing the needs of kokanee spawning and hence, threatened bull trout, which feed on kokanee. Interagency coordination of drafting to winter pool levels for kokanee will take into consideration spawning and incubation needs for lower Columbia River chum salmon (Note: In 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp).

### **4.4. Libby Dam**

#### **4.4.1. Spring Operations**

The purpose of the following actions is to refill Libby in order to provide the flow for Kootenai River white sturgeon, bull trout ramping rates, and anadromous fish flow augmentation water in the summer. Libby will provide flows for sturgeon and bull trout during spring and for salmon and bull trout during summer, while attempting to minimize a double peak in the June – September period. After adhering to the VARQ refill flood control guidance and providing the sturgeon flow operation, Libby Dam refill may occur by July 31. During the spring, the Action Agencies will operate the FCRPS to meet the flow and refill objectives at Libby. If both these objectives cannot be achieved, the sturgeon flow operations are a higher priority over refill.

When not operating to minimum flows, operate to achieve 75% chance of reaching the upper flood control rule curve on or about April 10 (the exact date to be determined during in-season management) to increase flows for spring flow management.

#### **4.4.2. Summer Operations**

During the summer, the Action Agencies draft Libby within the NOAA Fisheries 2008 and USFWS BiOp's specified draft limits based on flow recommendations provided by TMT. TMT considers a number of factors when developing its flow recommendations, such as: the status of juvenile salmon outmigration in the lower Columbia, attainment of flow objectives, water quality, and the effects that reservoir operations will have on other listed and resident fish populations.

During the summer (July and August), the Action Agencies will operate Libby to help meet the flow objectives for juvenile salmon out-migration in the Columbia River. The summer reservoir draft limit is 10 feet from full by the end of September (except in lowest 20th percentile water years, as measured at The Dalles, when draft will increase to 20 feet from full by end of September). If the project fails to refill, then release inflows or operate to meet minimum bull trout flows through the summer months. Rationale for the experimental draft was adopted by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) and further details of the evaluation can be found in the FCRPS Biological Assessment of 2008 from NMFS (Appendix B.2.1). Arrangements for retention of July/August water in Lake Kooconusa are possible under a Libby-Canadian storage water exchange under the current Libby Coordination Agreement, which was signed February 16, 2000. However, this operation cannot be guaranteed in any given year because it must be mutually beneficial to the Canadian Entity and the U.S. Entity. Information needed for such a determination such as the volume of the water year, is not available until well into the migration season. This operation, if any, for a given water year is generally not finalized until June or July of that year. The exchange agreement reduces the draft of Lake Kooconusa and provides an equivalent amount of water from Canada.

#### **4.4.3. Flood Control**

The Corps will continue to use the new SOI forecast procedure in December to determine the December 31 flood control elevation. In water years where the forecast for the period April through August is less than 95% of average based on the SOI forecast procedures, the end-of-December draft elevation will be higher than 2411 feet. If the early forecast for April-August is 88% of average or less, the end-of-December target elevation would be 2426 feet. The end-of-December elevation is a straight line sliding scale between elevation 2426 feet and 2411 feet when the forecast is between 88% and 95%.

Libby will be operated during January through March to the Storage Reservation Diagram (SRD) developed for VARQ flood control. During the refill period from about April through July, Libby Dam will release flow in accordance with the refill guidance developed using the VARQ Operating Procedures at Libby Dam. Refill at Libby Dam will begin 10 days prior to when the unregulated forecast for The Dalles is expected to exceed the Initial Controlled Flow (ICF), and Libby outflow will be no lower than the computed VARQ refill outflow, unless otherwise allowed by the VARQ Operating

Procedures. For example, changes to reduce the VARQ outflow can occur to protect human life and safety, during the final stages of refill, or through a deviation request.

The VARQ refill outflow will be recalculated with each new Corps water supply forecast and outflows will be adjusted accordingly. If the VARQ refill guidance requires discharges above powerhouse capacity, spill from Libby Dam may occur. The intent is to adjust Libby Dam discharge to maximize reservoir refill probability and minimize the potential for spill. Libby Dam will provide the tiered volume for sturgeon flows as described in the 2006 USFWS BiOp. The outflow during sturgeon augmentation period will be equal to or greater than the VARQ refill outflow. An accounting method will be developed prior to commencement of the sturgeon tiered flow release.

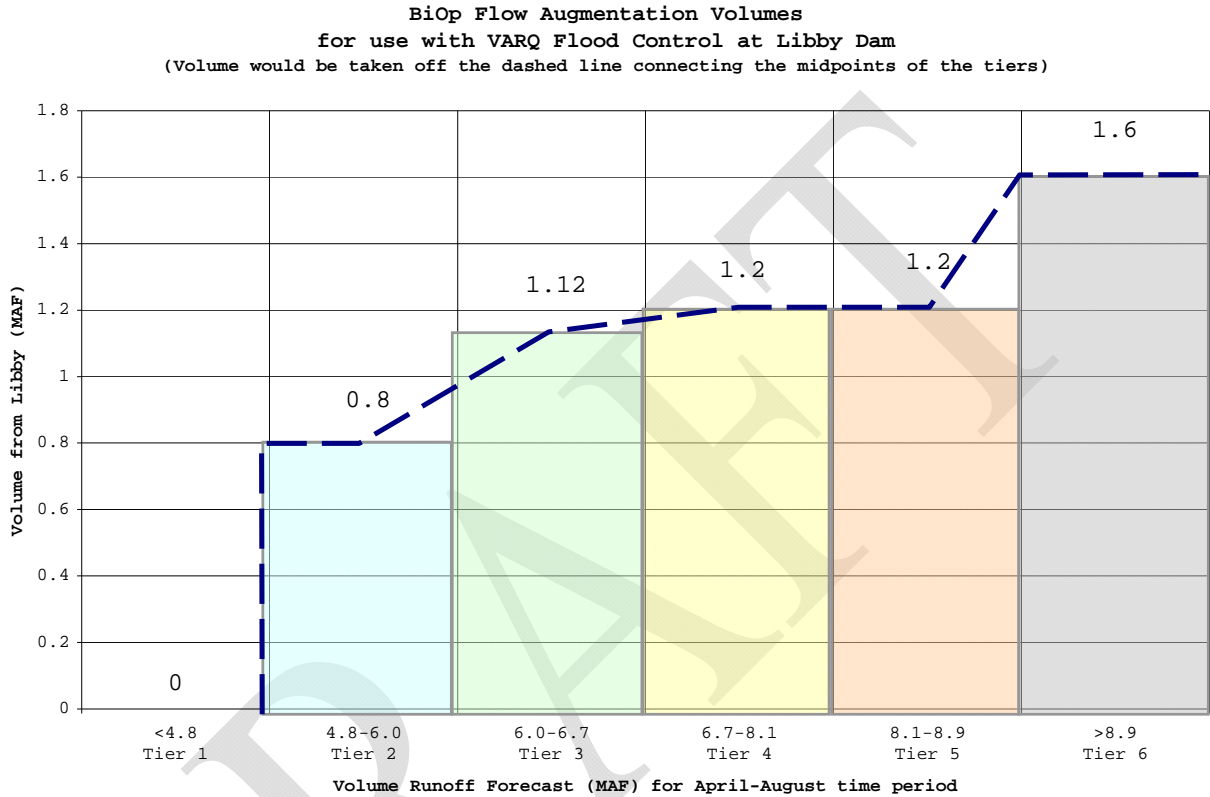
#### **4.4.4. Sturgeon Operation**

The purpose of the actions below is to provide water for sturgeon spawning and egg incubation. Water temperature profiles will be monitored near the dam during May and June to provide information necessary for timing of sturgeon spawning/rearing flow augmentation. Also, water temperature profiles in the forebay are used to determine whether warmer temperatures may be provided to assist sturgeon spawning. Reservoir temperature data collection is occurring and is intended to allow better planning for temperature management of water releases.

Water will be stored in Libby reservoir and used to supply water volume during May and June for sturgeon flows, following the “tiered” approach as defined in the USFWS BiOps, and as summarized in the table below. This water will be in addition to storage needs for listed bull trout, salmon, and will be measured above the 4,000 cfs minimum releases from Libby. Accounting on these total tiered volumes will begin when the USFWS determines benefits to conservation of sturgeon are most likely to occur. Sturgeon flows will generally be initiated between mid-May and the end of June to augment lower basin runoff entering the Kootenai River below Libby Dam, consistent with the the current version of the Kootenai River Ecosystem Function Restoration Flow Plan Implementation Protocol and 2006 USFWS BiOp and applicable clarifications.

### 4.4.5. Post Sturgeon Operation

Provide even or gradually declining flows following sturgeon flows during the summer months (minimize double peak) as determined through TMT in-season management.



**Figure 2.** “Tiered” volumes of water for sturgeon flow enhancement to be released from Libby Dam according to the Libby May final forecast of April - August volume. Actual flow releases would be shaped according to seasonal requests from the USFWS and in-season management of water actually available.

The tiered sturgeon volume and the release operations for that volume in 2009 have not been determined at this time. TMT will coordinate with USFWS for the 2009 sturgeon operations. Efforts will be coordinated to attempt to limit sturgeon-spawning flows so they do not exceed a river stage elevation of 1,764 feet at Bonners Ferry, but releases will be calculated to combine with local inflows to meet USFWS-requested flows at Bonners Ferry within that constraint. (Note: This may not always be possible during periods of unusual local runoff that may be beyond the control of Libby Dam.)

During sturgeon recruitment flow periods, local inflow will be allowed to supplement Libby Dam releases to the maximum extent feasible, while assuring public safety by monitoring water levels throughout relevant areas of the Kootenai River basin.

**4.4.6. Coordination**

The Action Agencies will continue to coordinate Libby BiOp operations at TMT.

**4.4.7. International Joint Commission (IJC)**

Libby Dam flows will be regulated consistent with existing treaties, Libby Project authorization for public safety, other laws, and the 1938 International Joint Commission order 1938 Order on Kootenay Lake to achieve water volumes, water velocities, water depths, and water temperature at a time to maximize the probability of allowing significant sturgeon recruitment, while also meeting flood damage reduction objectives.

**4.4.8. Burbot**

Providing low temperatures, if possible, from Libby Dam to aid upstream migration of burbot to spawning areas in the Kootenai River in Idaho will be considered each winter. These low temperatures may be called for over an extended period from October through February. The details of this operation for 2008 -2009 are being developed and may be included in the fall/winter update. An interagency Memorandum of Agreement for this species was completed in June 2005. Use of VARQ and implementation of the variable end-of-December flood control target elevation may aid this operation in years with below average runoff forecasts.

**4.4.9. Bull Trout**

Per the 2006 USFWS BiOp, a bull trout minimum flow will be provided from 15 May through 30 September. During the period 1 June through 31 August, the bull trout minimum flow may be from 6 kcfs to 9 kcfs. Table 6 shows how to determine the bull trout minimum flow during this period. Volume to sustain basal flow of 6 kcfs from May 15 through May 31 will be accounted for with sturgeon volumes, and in the fall should be drawn from the autumn flood control draft.

From 15 May to 30 June and during the month of September, a minimum flow of 6 kcfs will be provided and minimum flows of 4 kcfs will be provided from 1 October until 15 May.

**Table 7.** Minimum bull trout releases from Libby Dam June 1 through 31 August. (May 15 –May 30 and all of September the minimum is 6 kcfs)

| <b>Forecast runoff Volume (maf*) at Libby</b> | <b>Min bull trout flows between sturgeon and salmon flows</b> |
|---|---|
| 0.00 < forecast < 4.80                        | 6 kcfs  |
| 4.80 < forecast < 6.00                        | 7 kcfs  |
| 6.00 < forecast < 6.70                        | 8 kcfs  |
| 6.70 < forecast < 8.10                        | 9 kcfs  |
| 8.10 < forecast < 8.90                        | 9 kcfs  |

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| 8.90 < forecast | 9 kcfs |
|-----------------|--------|

*\*maf = million acre-feet*

#### 4.4.10. Ramp Rates and Daily Shaping

The purpose of the following actions is to provide better conditions for resident fish by limiting the flow fluctuations and setting minimum flow levels. These new ramp rates for Libby were proposed in the BA supplement to minimize impacts to bull trout and are included in the 2006 USFWS BiOp. The following ramp rates will guide project operations to meet various purposes, including power production.

**Table 8.** Prescribed maximum ramping rates to protect resident fish and their food organisms, and to minimize levee erosion, in the Kootenai River. Rate of change may be less than stated limits. When reducing flows, limits of higher range apply if flow rates are being changed across ranges.

|           |           | <u>Summer</u><br>(05/01 - 09/31) |              |
|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------|
|           |           | <u>Hourly</u>                    | <u>Daily</u> |
| Ramp Up   | 4-6 kcfs  | 2500 cfs                         | 1 unit       |
|           | 6-9 kcfs  | 2500 cfs                         | 1 unit       |
|           | 9-16 kcfs | 2500 cfs                         | 2 units      |
|           | 16-QPHC   | 5000 cfs                         | 2 units      |
| Ramp Down | 4-6 kcfs  | 500 cfs                          | 500 cfs      |
|           | 6-9 kcfs  | 500 cfs                          | 1000 cfs     |
|           | 9-16 kcfs | 1000 cfs                         | 2000 cfs     |
|           | 16-QPHC   | 3500 cfs                         | 1 unit       |
|           |           | <u>Winter</u><br>(10/01 - 04/30) |              |
|           |           | <u>Hourly</u>                    | <u>Daily</u> |
| Ramp Up   | 4-6 kcfs  | 2000 cfs                         | 1 unit       |
|           | 6-9 kcfs  | 2000 cfs                         | 1 unit       |
|           | 9-16 kcfs | 3500 cfs                         | 2 units      |
|           | 16-QPHC   | 7000 cfs                         | 2 units      |
| Ramp Down | 4-6 kcfs  | 500 cfs                          | 1000 cfs     |
|           | 6-9 kcfs  | 500 cfs                          | 2500 cfs     |
|           | 9-16 kcfs | 1000 cfs                         | 1 unit       |
|           | 16-QPHC   | 3500 cfs                         | 1 unit       |

(USFWS 2006 BiOp at Description of the proposed action, page 7, Table 1.

Daily and hourly ramping rates may be exceeded during flood emergencies to protect health and public safety and in association with power or transmission emergencies. Variances to these ramping rates during years when water supply forecasting errors overestimate actual runoff, or variances are necessary to provide augmentation water for

other listed species or other purposes, will be coordinated through the TMT process. This is expected in only the lowest 20<sup>th</sup> percentile water years.

Note: At the project, the ramp rates will be followed except when they would cause a unit(s) to operate in the rough zone, a zone of chaotic flow in which all parts of a unit are subject to increased vibration and cavitation that could result in premature wear or failure of the units. In this case the project will utilize a ramp rate which allows all units to operate outside the rough zone.

#### **4.4.11. Spill**

Limit voluntary spill to avoid exceeding Montana State TDG standard of 110%, when possible, and in a manner consistent with the Action Agencies' responsibilities for ESA-listed resident fish.

### **4.5. Chief Joseph Dam**

Construction of spillway flow deflectors at Chief Joseph Dam will be completed in 2009. A final spill test is expected to occur during the late spring or early summer of 2009 in order to characterize the performance of the flow deflectors. Total Dissolved Gas (TDG) levels associated with various spill amounts will be collected during the final spill test. These data will aid in determining a method of operation that minimizes TDG within the system.

When involuntary spill is required at Chief Joseph and/or Grand Coulee Dam, Chief Joseph will be elevated on the spill priority list to allow for use of its flow deflectors, and Grand Coulee Dam spill will be minimized in favor of power generation. This will reduce TDG levels not only in the mid-Columbia below Chief Joseph Dam, but also in Lake Rufus Woods (Chief Joseph Dam reservoir).

### **4.6. Grand Coulee Dam**

Grand Coulee Dam is operated for multiple purposes including fish and wildlife, flood control, irrigation, power, and recreation. Specific operations for flow management to aid anadromous fish are listed in the following sections.

#### **4.6.1. Winter/Spring Operations**

Grand Coulee will be operated during the winter and early spring to achieve an 85% probability of reaching the April 10 elevation objective in order to provide more water for spring flows. Reclamation computes Grand Coulee Dam's April 10 elevation objective by linear interpolation between the March 31 and April 15 forecasted flood control elevations based on the NWRFC March Final April-August WSF at The Dalles.

Grand Coulee will be operated for flood control from January through April using the NWRFC's forecast for unregulated runoff at The Dalles (adjusted for available storage capacity upstream of The Dalles other than at Grand Coulee Dam) and Grand Coulee's Flood Control SRD. During this time period Grand Coulee is also being operated to support the chum operation (described in detail in Section 5.4) and to achieve an 85% probability of reaching the April 10 elevation objective. Opportunities to shift system flood control requirements from Brownlee and Dworshak to Grand Coulee will also be

considered. These shifts may be implemented after coordination with TMT. The purpose of this action is to provide more water for flow augmentation in the lower Snake River. This will occur when the shifts will not compromise flood control and they have been coordinated. Real-time operations during the months of April and May must also account for the flow objectives at Priest Rapids Dam, changes in the amount of flood control shift from Dworshak and/or Brownlee, changes in flood control, draft rate limitations and other local and resident concerns. The deepest reservoir draft typically occurs around April 30.

During the spring, the Action Agencies will operate the FCRPS to help meet the flow objectives and to refill the projects. If both of these objectives cannot be achieved, the TMT will make an in-season recommendation, weighing considerations unique to each particular year and project.

#### **4.6.2. Summer Operations**

Grand Coulee will operate to refill by about June 30 to provide summer flow augmentation, except as specifically provided by the TMT. Refill at Grand Coulee normally begins approximately one day prior to when streamflow forecasts of unregulated flow is projected to exceed the ICF at The Dalles, Oregon. Grand Coulee will be operated during the summer (July and August) to help meet the flow objectives for juvenile salmon out-migration. Grand Coulee will be drafted to a minimum elevation of either 1280 feet or 1278 feet by the end of August depending on the July Final forecast for April through August runoff produced by the NWRFC. If the July Final April through August forecast for The Dalles is equal to or greater than 92 MAF then Lake Roosevelt's draft limit will be 1280 feet. If the forecast is less than 92 MAF, the draft limit will be 1278 feet. These draft limits will be modified if the Lake Roosevelt drawdown component of Washington's Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP) is implemented (see Section 4.6.6).

#### **4.6.3. Banks Lake Summer Operation**

Banks Lake will be allowed to draft to elevation 1565 feet by the end of August to provide more water for summer flow augmentation. Pumping to Banks Lake will be reduced and irrigation for the Columbia Basin Project will be met by drafting the reservoir up to 5 feet from full (elevation 1565 feet) by the end of August.

#### **4.6.4. Project Maintenance**

Drum gate maintenance is planned to occur during April and May annually. The reservoir must be at or below elevation 1255 feet to accomplish this work. Typically the flood control elevations during this time of year provide the required elevations and sufficient time to accomplish this work. However, during dry years flood control operations will not draft Lake Roosevelt low enough for a long enough period of time to perform necessary maintenance on the drum gates. Drum gate maintenance may be deferred in some dry water years; however drum gate maintenance must occur at a minimum one time in a 3-year period, two times in a 5-year period, and three times in a 7-year period. The drum gates are extremely important dam safety features and must be maintained at a satisfactory level. There will be some years when the project must be



drafted below flood control rule curves to accomplish this work. Reclamation will coordinate such an operation with TMT.

#### **4.6.5. Kokanee**

Every attempt is made to refill Lake Roosevelt to 1283 feet by September 30 (coordination with tribe will determine actual date) and maintain an elevation 1283 to 1285 feet or greater through the middle of November to aide in kokanee brood stock collection, improve spawning access to tributaries, and to increase retention time during a critical period for zooplankton production.

#### **4.6.6. Washington's Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP)**

If the Lake Roosevelt drawdown component of Washington's Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP)<sup>9</sup> is implemented, it will not reduce flows during the salmon flow objective period (April to August). The metric for this is that Lake Roosevelt will be drafted by an additional 1.0 foot in non-drought years and by about 1.8 feet in drought years by the end of August. A third of this water will go to in-stream flows. A more detailed description of this element is provided of the FCRPS BA (Appendix B.2.1, pages 5-9).

#### **4.6.7. Chum Flows**

Grand Coulee may be used to help meet tailwater elevations below Bonneville Dam to support chum spawning and incubation. The chum operation is described in more detail in Section 5.4.

#### **4.6.8. Priest Rapids Flow Objective**

Grand Coulee will be operated to help meet Priest Rapids weekly flow objective to support fall Chinook salmon spawning and incubation.

#### **4.6.9. Spill**

Involuntary spill at Grand Coulee Dam will be managed in coordination with Chief Joseph Dam; see Sec. 4.5. Grand Coulee will be operated to minimize TDG production.

### **4.7. Priest Rapids Dam**

#### **4.7.1. Spring Operations**

The spring flow objective at Priest Rapids Dam is for 135 kcfs flow from April 10 to June 30. There is no summer flow objective for Priest Rapids Dam.

#### **4.7.2. Hanford Reach Protection Flows**

Grant County PUD shapes outflow from Priest Rapids Dam to minimize juvenile fish stranding.

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<sup>9</sup> As indicated in the FCRPS BA, implementation of the Lake Roosevelt Incremental Storage Release portion of the CRWMP is dependent on the completion of a few items. Reclamation still needs to complete NEPA before the storage release can be implemented.

### **4.7.3. Vernita Bar Protection Flows**

Outflows from Priest Rapids Dam are managed in the fall to ensure that fall chinook salmon establish redds (spawn) at a low enough elevation that allows for a high likelihood that they would not be dewatered prior to emergence of fry. Daytime flows are regulated to a range between 50 and 70 kcfs during October and November when redds are being established. Flow fluctuations are limited from the time of fish emergence in early April through early June. (Note: This is included pursuant to the Vernita Bar Settlement Agreement and the annual Hanford reach stranding agreement.)

## **4.8. Dworshak Dam**

### **4.8.1. Spring Operations**

The purpose of the following actions is to refill Dworshak as much as possible in order to achieve a high probability of reaching the April 10 elevation objective. During the spring, the Action Agencies will operate the FCRPS to meet the flow and refill objectives at Dworshak refill by about June 30. If both these objectives cannot be achieved, the TMT will make an in-season recommendation, weighing considerations unique to each particular year and project.

### **4.8.2. Flow Increase for Dworshak National Fish Hatchery Release.**

Release 4 – 6 kcfs from Dworshak, if necessary, in order to move juvenile fish into the mainstem Clearwater River during the spring hatchery releases. Note: not in 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp.

### **4.8.3. Summer Operations**

Summer flow augmentation provided from Dworshak may cool water temperatures in the lower Snake River.

During the summer, releases will be made from Dworshak to attempt to maintain water temperatures at the Lower Granite tailrace fixed monitoring site at or below 68 F. Although a previous NOAA Fisheries FCRPS BiOp stated the goal was to maintain the forebay at this temperature, modeling and experience have demonstrated that the tailrace temperature is more representative of river conditions and temperature exposure of migrating salmonids. The purpose of this action is to improve water quality (by lowering water temperature) in the lower Snake River.

During the summer, the Action Agencies draft Dworshak within the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp's specified draft limits based on flow recommendations provided by TMT. TMT considers a number of factors when developing its flow recommendations, such as: the status of the migration, attainment of flow objectives, water quality, and the effects that reservoir operations will have on other listed and resident fish populations.

During the summer (July and August) the Action Agencies will operate Dworshak to help meet the flow objectives. The summer reservoir draft limit is 1,520 feet. This limit determines the maximum draft available for summer flow augmentation from Dworshak.

The Action Agencies plan to draft Dworshak to 1535 in August and draft to 1520 feet in September. The extension of the draft limit into September reflects assumed releases of about 200 KAF consistent with the agreement with the Nez Perce Tribe and the Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA) process.

Maximum project discharge for salmon flow augmentation to be within state of Idaho TDG water quality standards of 110%.

#### **4.8.4. Flood Control**

Opportunities to shift system flood control requirements from Brownlee and Dworshak to Grand Coulee will be considered periodically between January and April. These shifts may be implemented after coordination with TMT. The purpose of this action is to provide more water for flow augmentation in the lower Snake River. This will occur when the shifts will not compromise flood control and they have been coordinated.

#### **4.8.5. Fall Operations**

After summer fish operations are completed, flows from Dworshak will be limited to minimum one turbine operation (approximately 1,500 cfs) unless higher flows are required for flood control, emergencies, or other project uses. The purpose of these actions is to manage the filling of Dworshak reservoir while operating the project for multiple uses. Flows from Dworshak also may be maintained above minimum flow if Corps analysis determines there is flexibility to release a volume of water above minimum flow and still maintain a high reliability of meeting spring refill objectives.

Provide minimum flows while not exceeding Idaho State Total Dissolved Gas (TDG) water quality standard of 110%.

### **4.9. *Brownlee***

Opportunities to shift system flood control requirements from Brownlee and Dworshak to Grand Coulee will be considered. The shifts would occur between January and March. All three reservoirs need to be back to their specific URC by April 30. The purpose of this shift is to allow Brownlee and Dworshak to be at higher elevations to increase the probability for increased spring flows in the Snake River. These shifts may be implemented after coordination with TMT. The shifts typically occur in drier years when they will not compromise flood control.

### **4.10. *Lower Granite Dam***

#### **4.10.1. Reservoir Operations**

Lower Granite will operate within 1 foot of Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) from approximately April 3 until small numbers of juvenile migrants are present (approximately September 1) unless adjusted to meet authorized project purposes, primarily navigation.. Lower Granite reservoir may be raised as needed after September 1, in order to operate the adult fish holding facilities to support brood stock collection.

#### **4.10.2. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines at Lower Granite will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, FPP)

#### **4.10.3. Spring Flow Objectives**

The April final runoff volume forecast at Lower Granite Dam for April to July determines the spring flow objective at Lower Granite Dam. When the forecast is less than 16 million acre-feet (MAF) the flow objective will be 85 kcfs. If the forecast is between 16 MAF and 20 MAF the flow objective will be linearly interpolated between 85 kcfs and 100 kcfs. If the forecast is greater than 20 MAF the flow objective will be 100 kcfs. The planning dates for the spring flow objective are from April 3 to June 20. These flow objectives are provided as a biological guideline regardless of the ability to achieve them. The flow in the Snake River during this period are support by draft of Dworshak Dam from the April 10 objective elevation to the April 30 flood control elevation up the TDG limit at the project. The flow in the Snake River primarily depends on the volume and shape of the natural runoff.

#### **4.10.4. Summer flow objectives**

The June final runoff volume forecast at Lower Granite Dam for April to July determines the summer flow objective at Lower Granite Dam. When the forecast is less than 16 MAF the flow objective will be 50 kcfs. If the forecast is between 16 MAF and 28 MAF the flow objective will be linearly interpolated between 50 kcfs and 55 kcfs. If the forecast is greater than 28 MAF the flow objective will be 55 kcfs. The planning dates for the summer flow objective are from June 21 to August 31. Summer flow objectives are provided as a biological guideline regardless of the ability to achieve them. The flow in the Snake River is supported by the summer draft but the flow in the Snake River primarily follows the natural hydrograph of the River.

#### **4.10.5. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to Lower Granite Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

#### **4.10.6. Juvenile Fish Transport Operations**

Transport operations specific to Lower Granite Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

### ***4.11. Little Goose Dam***

#### **4.11.1. Reservoir Operations**

Little Goose will operate within 1 foot of Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) from approximately April 3 until small numbers of juvenile migrants are present (approximately September 1) unless adjusted to meet authorized project purposes, primarily navigation. This normally occurs in late August. The purpose of this action is to provide a smaller reservoir cross section to reduce juvenile salmon travel time and reduce flow fluctuations. Elevations may be modified to maintain the minimum

navigation channel requirements. The navigation lock tailwater gage at Lower Granite Dam will be used to ensure minimum navigation channel requirements are met.

**4.11.2. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines at Little Goose will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, FPP)

Additionally, during the juvenile migration season, the lower operating limit of unit 1 will be manually re-set as indicated.

Little Goose Unit 1 2009 Spill Season Operating Limits

| Lower Limit             | Upper Limit   | Condition   |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|
| 115 MW<br>(16,000 cfs)* | Varies w/Head | With extended-length submersible bar screens installed    |
| 125 MW<br>(17,500 cfs)* | Varies w/Head | Without extended-length submersible bar screens installed |

\* Discharges are approximate.

Historic operation within the GDACS program tended to balance flows out of any units in operation. This year’s operation will, at times, result in an unbalanced operation where more flow is passing through unit 1 than other operating units. A heavier flow out of unit 1 has been shown in the Little Goose physical model to be very important in disrupting the eddy that tends to form along the south shore downstream of the powerhouse. Disrupting the eddy optimizes the tailrace conditions for both adult passage and juvenile egress with the temporary spillway weir operating in spillway bay 1.

**4.11.3. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to Little Goose Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

**4.11.4. Juvenile Fish Transport Operations**

Transport operations specific to Little Goose Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

**4.12. Lower Monumental Dam**

**4.12.1. Reservoir Operations**

Lower Monumental will operate within 1 foot of Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) from approximately April 3 until small numbers of juvenile migrants are present (approximately September 1) unless adjusted to meet authorized project purposes, primarily navigation. This normally occurs in late August. The purpose of this action is

to provide a smaller reservoir cross section to reduce juvenile salmon travel time and reduce flow fluctuations. Elevations may be modified to maintain the minimum navigation channel requirements.

#### **4.12.2. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines at Lower Monumental will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, FPP)

#### **4.12.3. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to Lower Monumental Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

#### **4.12.4. Juvenile Fish Transport Operations**

Transport operations specific to Lower Monumental Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

### *4.13. Ice Harbor Dam*

#### **4.13.1. Reservoir Operations**

Ice Harbor will operate within 1 foot of Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) from approximately April 3 until small numbers of juvenile migrants are present (approximately September 1) unless adjusted to meet authorized project purposes, primarily navigation or if alternative reservoir operations are recommended and adopted as part of the Ice Harbor Dam Configuration and Operation Plan (COP), scheduled for completion in early 2009. This reduction in migrants normally occurs in late August. The purpose of this action is to provide a smaller reservoir cross section to reduce juvenile salmon travel time and reduce flow fluctuations. Elevations may be modified to maintain the minimum navigation channel requirements.

#### **4.13.2. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines Ice Harbor will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, FPP)

#### **4.13.3. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to Ice Harbor Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

### *4.14. McNary*

#### **4.14.1. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines at McNary projects will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, FPP).

#### **4.14.2. Spring Flow Objectives**

The spring flow objective at McNary Dam is set according to the April final runoff volume forecast at The Dalles Dam for April to August. When the forecast is less than 80 MAF the flow objective will be 220 kcfs. If the forecast is between 80 MAF and 92 MAF the flow objective will be linearly interpolated between 220 kcfs and 260 kcfs. If the forecast is greater than 92 MAF the flow objective will be 260 kcfs. The planning dates for the spring flow objective will be from April 10 to June 30. The flow objectives at projects are provided as biological guideline and are supported minimally by flow augmentation operations. The magnitude and duration of the flow is primarily a result of the size and shape of the natural runoff.

#### **4.14.3. Summer Flow Objectives**

The summer flow objective at McNary Dam is 200 kcfs. The planning dates for the summer flow objective will be from July 1 to August 31. The flow in the summer at McNary is supported by various flow augmentation measures. There is a limited amount of water available for flow augmentation and flow objectives provide guidelines on how the water should be shaped.

#### **4.14.4. Weekend Flows**

Weekend flows are often lower than weekday flows due to less electrical demand in the region. During the spring and summer migration period (April through August), the Action Agencies will strive to maintain McNary flows during the weekend at a level which is at least 80% of the previous weekday average.

#### **4.14.5. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to McNary Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

#### **4.14.6. Waterfowl Nesting**

To improve waterfowl nesting conditions in the McNary pool between March and May each year, the pool is operated in the top 1 foot of the pool range for several hours every 4 days.

#### **4.14.7. Waterfowl Hunting Enhancement**

In order to enhance Waterfowl hunting, the McNary pool is held constant several times a week from October to January.

#### **4.14.8. Juvenile Fish Transport Operations**

Transport operations specific to McNary Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

#### *4.15. John Day Dam*

##### **4.15.1. Reservoir Operations**

John Day pool will operate within a 1½-foot range of the minimum level that provides irrigation pumping from April 10 to September 30. The purpose of this action is to provide a smaller reservoir cross section to reduce juvenile salmon travel time.

##### **4.15.2. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines at all the Lower Columbia projects will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, Corps' current FPP)

##### **4.15.3. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to John Day Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

##### **4.15.4. Goose Nesting**

To encourage geese to nest in areas that are not typically inundated by frequent fluctuations in the John Day pool between March and May each year, the pool the reservoir is operated in the top 1 foot of the range for several hours every 4 days.

##### **4.15.5. Waterfowl Hunting Enhancement**

In order to enhance Waterfowl hunting, the John Day pool is held constant several times a week from October to January.

##### **4.15.6. Tribal Fishing**

To accommodate tribal fishing, the John Day pool may operate within a 1.5 foot operation range during tribal fishing seasons.

#### *4.16. The Dalles Dam*

##### **4.16.1. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines at all the Lower Columbia projects will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, FPP).

##### **4.16.2. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to The Dalles Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.



## **4.17. Bonneville Dam**

### **4.17.1. Turbine Operations**

To enhance juvenile passage survival, turbines at all the Lower Columbia projects will be operated within 1% of peak efficiency during the juvenile and adult migration seasons (April 1 through October 31). (See appendix C, FPP)

### **4.17.2. Spill Operations**

Spill operations for fish passage specific to Bonneville Dam will be outlined in the 2009 FPP.

### **4.17.3. Tribal Fishing**

To accommodate tribal fishing, the Bonneville pool is normally held between elevation 75.0 and 76.5 feet during tribal fishing times. Sometimes the pool is held to a 1.5 ft. range.

### **4.17.4. Spring Creek Hatchery Release**

Bonneville Dam operations (i.e. reduced turbine loading) for the March release of tule fall Chinook from the Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery will be determined at a later date, and if necessary, described in the 2009 FPP and the final 2009 WMP.

## **5. Specific Operations**

### **5.1. Spill operations general**

The Corps will manage spill levels to the TDG saturation levels of 120% in the project tailrace and 115% in the forebay of the next project downstream, referred to as “gas caps” in this document. The project spill discharge level needed to meet but not exceed the gas caps is referred to as the “spill cap”. Therefore, the spill cap is the maximum flow rate a project can spill for fish passage that does not exceed the gas caps. The gas caps (120% tailrace and 115% forebay) do not change for dams providing spill for fish passage in the spring and summer. Spill caps, on the other hand, may vary daily depending on flow, temperature, and other environmental conditions.

Power system and other project emergencies, including unplanned/unanticipated facility maintenance or outages, may necessitate temporary spill adjustments in accordance with established protocols.

The spill rates represented above assume average runoff conditions; however, actual conditions may require adjustments to these spill rates. Actual spill rates may increase above the specified rates for several reasons including:

1. High runoff conditions where flows exceed powerhouse hydraulic capacity with the specified spill rates;
2. Turbine unit outages that reduce powerhouse capacity;
3. Power system or other emergencies that reduce powerhouse discharges; and,

4. Lack of power load, resulting in an increase in the rate of spill.

Spill below the specified rates could occur during low runoff conditions when meeting minimum generation levels at a project requires reducing spill rates. This would most likely occur in late July and August. Minimum generation and spill rates are specified in the 2009 FPP. Spill also may be reduced or curtailed to accommodate navigation safety issues or other exigencies.

To make adjustments in response to changes in conditions, the Corps will utilize the existing Regional Forum committees. Changes in spill rates when flow conditions are higher or lower than anticipated will be coordinated through the TMT. This could include potential issues and adjustments to the juvenile fish transportation program.

### **Spillway Operations**

Actual hourly spill quantities at dams may be slightly greater or less than specified levels. The Action Agencies will meet the requested spill levels to the extent possible, as described. However, actual spill levels depend on the precision of spill gate settings, flow variations in real time, varying project head (the elevation difference between a project's forebay and tailwater), and other factors. Operations considerations are as follows:

**Spill discharge rates:** Due to limits in the precision of spill gates and control devices, short term flow variations, and head changes, it is not possible to discharge exact spill rates, or as stated in RCC spill requests to projects that call for specific spill discharges. Therefore, spillway gates are opened to the settings in FPP spill pattern tables which provide discharges that are the closest to the agreed upon spill discharge rate. The spill rates coincide with specific gate settings in the FPP spill tables. Actual spill may be higher or lower than the identified spill rate.

**Spill percentages:** Spill percentages are considered target spill levels. The project control room operator and BPA duty scheduler calculate spill rates to attempt to be within +/- 1% of the target percentage for the following hour. These percentages may not be attained due to low flow conditions, periods of minimum generation, when spill caps limit spill amounts, when spill is curtailed for navigation safety, and other circumstances. Operators and schedulers will review the percentages achieved during the day and adjust spill rates in later hours, with the objective of ending the day with a day average spill that achieves the target.

### **Minimum Generation**

The Corps has identified minimum generation flows derived from FPP tables which specify turbine operation within the 1% of best efficiency range. These flows are approximations and do not account for varying head or other small adjustments that may result in variations in the reported minimum generation flow and spill amount. Conditions that may result in minor variations include:

1. Varying pool elevation: as reservoirs fluctuate within the operating range, flow rates through the generating unit change.
2. Generating unit governor "dead band": the governor controls the number of megawatts the unit should generate and cannot precisely control a unit; variations can be +/- 1% to 2% of generation.
3. System disturbances: once the generator is online and connected to the grid, it responds to changes in system voltage and frequency. These changes may cause the unit to increase flow and generation slightly within an hour.
4. Individual units may behave slightly differently or have unit specific constraints.
5. Generation control systems regulate megawatts (MW) generation only, and not flow through turbines.

All of the lower Snake River powerhouses may be required to keep one generating unit on line at all times for power system reliability. During low flows, one generator is run at the bottom of the 1% of best efficiency range. All of the Snake River plants have 2 "families" of turbines with slightly different capacities. In most cases one of the smaller units, with somewhat less generation and flow, will be online during these times. At the Snake River dams, the smaller units are generally numbered 1 – 3 and are the first priority for operation during the fish passage season. However, if smaller units are unavailable, one of the larger units may be used. Further, at Lower Monumental, generating unit 1, which is the first priority unit during fish passage, is damaged and cannot operate at the low end of the design range. However, because this unit is a fish passage priority TMT may recommend use of this unit, which will result in higher turbine discharge rates than shown in the Lower Monumental Summer Operation Considerations section below. In addition, Ice Harbor units cannot be operated at the lower end of the 1% of best efficiency range. These units experience cavitation at a generation level somewhat higher than the lower 1% limit, which damages the turbine and can be detrimental to fish. Therefore, Ice Harbor units will operate at their lower cavitation limits, as in 2008

### **Low Flow Operations**

Low flow operations on Lower Snake and Lower Columbia projects are triggered when inflow is not sufficient to provide for both minimum generation and the planned spill levels. In these situations, the projects will operate one unit at minimum generation and spill the remainder of flow coming into the project. As flows transition from higher flows to low flows, there may be situations when flows recede at a higher rate than forecasted. In addition, inflows provided by nonfederal projects upstream are variable and uncertain. The combination of these factors may result in instances where unanticipated changes to inflow result in forebay elevations dropping to the low end of the MOP. Since these projects have limited operating flexibility, maintaining minimum generation and the target spill may not be possible on every hour.

Also during these low flow operations, additional flow that is passed through a dam as the result of navigational lockages becomes more apparent. This is because the volume of water needed to empty the navigation lock during periods of low flow is a greater percentage of the total flow than it had been earlier in the season. As a result, the official

recorded spill percent through the spillway appears to be reduced since it does not include this volume of water needed to empty the navigation lock.

### **Operations for Transmission Stability**

Because projects must be available to respond to within-hour load variability to satisfy North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) reserve requirements (“on response”), project operations may result in not meeting hourly spill requirements, mostly at McNary, John Day, and The Dalles dams. In addition to within-hour load variability, projects on response must be able to respond to within hour changes that result from intermittent generation (such as wind generation). During periods of rapidly changing loads and intermittent generation, projects on response may have significant changes in turbine discharge within the hour while the spill quantity remains the same within the hour. Under normal conditions, within-hour load changes occur mostly on hours immediately preceding and after the peak load hours, however, within-hour changes in intermittent generation can occur at any hour of the day. Sometimes, several hours after peak load hours, the project may be decreasing total outflow and generation faster than the corresponding spill decreases causing the percent spill to be slightly higher. Due to the high variability of within-hour load, these “Transmission Stability” hours may have a greater instance of reporting actual spill percentages that vary more than the +/- 1% requirement than other hours.

## **5.2. Canadian Storage for Flow Augmentation**

### **5.2.1. Columbia River Treaty Storage**

The purpose of the actions below is to see if more water from Canadian storage projects can be obtained for flow augmentation. One (1) MAF of Columbia River Treaty (Treaty) storage will be requested and negotiated when available with BC Hydro (BC – British Columbia) to be provided and released during the migration season.

Annual agreements between the U.S. and Canadian entities to provide flow augmentation storage in Canada for U.S. fisheries needs will include provisions that allow flexibility for the release of any stored water to provide U.S. fisheries benefits in dry water years, to the extent possible.

- Providing the greatest flexibility possible for releasing water to benefit U.S. fisheries May through July;
- Giving preference to meeting April 10 elevation objectives or achieving refill at Grand Coulee Dam over flow augmentation storage in Canada in lower water supply conditions; and
- Releasing flow augmentation storage to avoid causing damaging flow or excessive TDG in the U.S. or Canada.

BPA and the Corp will continue to coordinate with Federal agencies, States and Tribes on Treaty operating plans.

### **5.2.2. Non-Treaty Storage (NTS)**

BPA will continue to work with BC Hydro to negotiate a non-Treaty storage agreement to provide for storage during the spring with subsequent release in July and August, for flow enhancement as long as operations forecasts indicate that water stored in the spring can be released in July and August.

A study regarding the shaping and release of water behind Canadian Treaty storage projects in July and August was completed in 2001.

### **5.2.3. Non-Treaty Long-Term Agreement**

BPA will seek to negotiate a new long-term agreement on use of non-Treaty space in Canada so long as such an agreement provides both power and non-power benefits for BC Hydro, BPA, and Canadian and U.S. interests. As part of these negotiations, BPA will seek opportunities to provide benefits to ESA-listed fish, consistent with the Treaty. If a new long-term non-Treaty agreement is not in place, or does not address flows for fisheries purposes, BPA will approach BC Hydro about possibly negotiating an annual/seasonal agreement to provide U.S. fisheries benefits, consistent with the Treaty.

### **5.2.4. Non-Treaty Coordination with Federal Agencies, States, and Tribes**

Prior to negotiations of new long-term or annual non-Treaty storage agreements, BPA will coordinate with Federal agencies, States, and Tribes to obtain ideas and information on possible points of negotiation, and will report on major developments during negotiations.

### **5.2.5. Non-Treaty Storage (NTS) Refill**

BPA, in concert with BC Hydro, will refill the remaining non-Treaty storage space by June 30, 2011, as required under the 1990 non-Treaty storage agreement. Refill will be accomplished with minimal adverse impact to fisheries operations.

### **5.2.6. Releasing Flow Augmentation Storage**

Flow augmentation storage will be released to avoid causing damaging flow or excessive TDG in the United States or Canada.

## ***5.3. Upper Snake River Reservoir Operation for Flow Augmentation***

Reclamation will attempt to provide 487 KAF annually of flow augmentation from the Reclamation projects in the Upper Snake River basin consistent with its Proposed Action as described in the November 2007 Biological Assessment for O&M of its projects in the Snake River basin above Brownlee Reservoir. Reclamation's flow augmentation program is dependent on willing sellers and must be consistent with Idaho State law.

#### **5.4. Bonneville Chum Operations**

The Action Agencies plan to operate the FCRPS to provide flows to support chum salmon spawning, incubation and egress in the Ives/Pierce Islands Complex, Hamilton Creek and Hardy Creek below Bonneville Dam.

The Ives/Pierce Islands Complex below Bonneville Dam represents about 10% of the natural spawning area for the ESA listed Columbia River chum. Non-listed lower Columbia River bright fall Chinook also spawn in the area. The 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp recognizes that access to spawning habitat in the Ives/Pierce area is primarily a function of the water surface elevations greater than 11.2 feet above mean sea level (msl). Managing the water surface elevation with the operation of Bonneville Dam has proven to be an effective means of protecting this spawning area.

Providing spawning access to Hamilton Creek and Hardy Creek is similarly a function of sufficient tailwater elevation but must be coupled with sufficient rainfall events to get the creeks flowing sufficiently.

As addressed in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries, chum salmon spawning operations have lower priority than spring flow objectives or summer refill. If all of the BiOp objectives cannot be met, the Action Agencies will work with NOAA Fisheries and the regional salmon managers to identify operations that would best benefit salmon while maintaining other fish protection measures.

There are two phases of chum operations; spawning which generally runs from late October through late December, and incubation and egress which runs from late December to early April.

##### **5.4.1.1. Spawning Phase**

During the spawning phase of the Bonneville/Ives Island chum salmon life cycle, the tailwater elevation will be held at minimum of 11.3 – 11.7 feet during the daylight hours. During night time hours the day time tailwater limits may be exceeded if needed to past additional water. This operation is generally requested (per the 2008 NOAA Fisheries BiOp) to begin by TMT when a significant number of chum salmon present are spawning. Normally this occurs in the first week of November but can occur from late October through mid-November. The flow associated with providing an 11.5 foot msl tailwater is generally assumed to be between 110 kcfs and 125 kcfs. This is a conservative approach to managing chum spawning which is intended to discourage redd development at higher elevations that cannot be maintained throughout the incubation period. If higher flows materialize, the protection level may be increased or a decision may be made whether or not to protect redds that were placed at higher elevations. TMT will make adjustments to the tailwater elevation through the TMT process consistent with the size of the spawning population and water supply forecasts.

In order to maintain a stable tailwater elevation of 11.3 to 11.7 feet during day-light hours, water often needs to be held over at upstream reservoirs. The volume of water held over during the day must generally be released at night. As the distance between

Grand Coulee (the nearest storage reservoir) and Bonneville dams is nearly three hundred miles, it can be difficult to maintain a tailwater elevation of 11.5 at all times due to the influence of significant rain events that could occur below Grand Coulee. Research performed in 2005 to assess the impacts of higher flows (day and night) on chum salmon redd development by Tiffen (cite Tiffen, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) if published) indicates that increases in flows above 175 kcfs delayed spawning until flows dropped back to base levels (125 kcfs) but did not force fish to abandon their redds and search for new locations. Extra chum spawning flows may be available from Lake Pend Oreille (Albeni Falls Dam) during fall drawdown when drafting to elevation 2051 as part of the planning process for winter draft for kokanee spawning. The SOR for Albeni Falls draft is formulated, usually in September, by the USFWS and IDFG in coordination with NMFS and other concerned parties.

Through TMT, if water supply is deemed insufficient to provide adequate mainstem spawning or continuous tributary access, provide, as appropriate, mainstem flow intermittently to allow fish access to tributary spawning sites if adequate spawning habitat is available in the tributaries.

#### **5.4.1.2. Incubation and Egress**

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will determine when chum spawning is completed, this usually occurs no later than the end of December. Then the operation is shifted to provide a tailwater elevation (to be determined by TMT) equal to or greater than the elevation of the highest established redds. Redds established due to conditions beyond the control of the action agency may not be protected. This elevation is typically around 11.3 or 11.5 feet msl during normal water years. This operation continues until the completion of emergence and egress which can extend to the start of the spring flow management season around April 10. At that time spring flow augmentation volumes generally provide sufficient flows to maintain the protection elevations necessary. If the emergence period extends beyond April 10<sup>th</sup> and the decision is made to maintain the tailwater, TMT will need to discuss the impacts of TDG associated with spill for fish in the gravel. Bonneville typically starts its spring spill around April 10, but a delay in the start of spill may be needed.

Revisit the chum protection level decision at least monthly through the TMT process to assure it is consistent with the need to provide spring flows for listed Columbia and Snake River stocks.

#### **5.4.1.3. Typical Operation Specifications**

During an average year, the following operation should begin in the first week of November or when fish arrive in sufficient numbers.

Bonneville project tailwater is held to the elevation range 11.3' - 11.7' between 0700 - 1900 hours. A project tailwater elevation of 11.7' must not be exceeded in any hour. Tailwater will be measured 0.9 miles downstream from the first powerhouse, 50 feet upstream from Tanner Creek and at River Mile (R.M.). 144.5. This is the "project tailwater" as opposed to the powerhouse tailwater.

After spawning is declared complete, the TMT establishes a recommended protection level considering the number of redds above the protection level provided during the operation to date. The protection elevation is then held as a minimum not to be gone below in any hour until the end of emergence and egress.

After emergence and egress is declared complete by TMT, chum operations end.

#### **5.4.1.4. General Chum Operation Considerations**

Determine if operating Bonneville Dam to meet the minimum effective tailwater elevation of 11.5 feet or greater can be sustained over the needed duration of November through April exclusively from water stored in upstream reservoirs.

Consider implications of augmenting flows for chum on storage water available for spring and summer migrants. Augmenting flows for chum can significantly diminish the stored water available for migration of salmon in the spring.

Evaluate early season forecast to help inform establishment of tailbay elevations below Bonneville. A tailwater elevation of 11.5' is possible in most years.

Minimize the impact to the upstream storage reservoirs by taking advantage of tides, precipitation, increases in incremental flows below Grand Coulee, the flow in the Willamette River and the operation of Bonneville Dam to maintain the tailbay elevation.

It takes a few days for water from Grand Coulee Dam to arrive at Bonneville Dam. Requests to start the chum operation or change the current protection level should take into account the travel time. If managers expect the start of or a change in chum operations to occur over a weekend the request must come by at least Wednesday of that week.

It is difficult to forecast increase in "local" inflows downstream of Grand Coulee which can raise the daytime tailwater elevation above the planned elevation. High night time spikes in temperature of short duration can be used to discourage redd development in low velocity areas at night. High flows from the Willamette River can raise the tailwater at Bonneville Dam significantly providing low velocity access to some areas in the Ives/Pierce complex. If spawning occurs in these areas, the redds may be difficult to protect once the Willamette recedes.

It is not possible to operate the system to provide desired tailwater elevations at spawning areas downstream of the Ives/Pierce complex (i.e. Multnomah Falls/I-205). Any spill required for the March release of the Spring Creek Hatchery including the use of the corner collector can produce high TDG levels that may impact emerging chum salmon at a very vulnerable stage in their lifecycle.

When spring flows are low and the spill season has begun it might be necessary to delay spill at Bonneville Dam to avoid impacting any emerging chum with excess TDG.



#### **5.4.1.5. Considerations for Dewatering Chum Redds**

While a conservative approach to managing tailwater elevations during spawning reduces the risk of dewatering redds, it does not eliminate dewatering as a possibility. The conditions in each year vary too dramatically to allow for the development of set criteria for whether or not to dewater redds, therefore the basis for a dewatering decision depends greatly on in-season conditions so are best made in TMT. Factors that should be considered in making a dewatering decision include:

- The number and percentage of the total redds which would be affected by the decision
- The percentage of the total chum population that spawned in the creeks
- The percentage of the total chum population that spawned at other locations
- The component of the overall population that these redds represent
- Status of the FCRPS reservoir elevations
- Expected benefit to reservoir levels and river operations which would be provided by the dewatering decision
- Precipitation and runoff forecasts
- Expected river operations due to power market environment
- Status of the upriver listed stocks
- Existence and status of a brood contingency plan

#### **5.4.1.6. Dewatering Options**

Consideration of options to minimize the impacts should a decision be made to lower the protection level for the spawning, incubation and egress follow:

1. If water supply conditions indicate that it is not possible to maintain this minimum tailwater elevation at Bonneville Dam, flow will be provided at times during the chum- emergence season to allow juveniles to depart from Hamilton and Hardy Creeks. Details will be set through coordination in TMT.
2. Early season forecasts can be used by TMT to determine a level of caution when choosing the spawning elevations to provide below Bonneville. A general apprehension to provide tailwater elevations above 11.5' is prudent in most years. Fall precipitation can lead to chum spawning at higher elevations than intended. It may be difficult to commit to providing those elevations without a solid water supply forecast.

3. Manage flows below what is necessary for mainstem spawning to discourage redds from being established in the area.
4. Shaping flows in a manner that would discourage redd development above a particular elevation. Reverse load factoring with nighttime discharges more than 75 kcfs over the daytime discharge level have occurred without impacting where chum redds were placed.
5. Shaping flows as low as possible during the day with one or two spikes of flow as short of duration as possible can also discourage redd development.
6. If water supply conditions indicate that it is not possible to maintain this minimum tailwater elevation at Bonneville Dam, flow will be provided at times during the chum-spawning season to allow access to Hamilton and Hardy Creeks if the creeks are flowing.

### **5.5. Public Coordination**

Actions in the WMP will be coordinated with NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, and the states and tribes in pre-season planning and in-season management of flow and spill operations. This coordination will occur in the Technical Management Team process and will utilize the best available science. At all appropriate decision points, the Action Agencies will routinely seek timely input and concurrence from the USFWS on all matters affecting USFWS listed fish through the Columbia River Treaty, IJC, and all other decision making processes involving transboundary waters in the Columbia River basin. This will include notification of all meetings and decision points and provision of opportunities to advise the Action Agencies during meetings and in writing, as appropriate.

## **6. Water Quality**

### **6.1. Water Quality Plans**

The Corps has completed a comprehensive Water Quality Plan (WQP) outlining the physical and operational changes that could be used to improve the overall water quality in the mainstem waters of the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia rivers. The plan was first completed in April 2003 and updated in December 2003, December 2004, and in November 2006. The plan is currently under revision in preparation for submitting to the states of Oregon and Washington for TDG waivers. This revision should be completed by the end of December 2008. The goals of the WQP are as follows:

- To assist in understanding system wide loading capacity and loading allocation by assessing the existing effects at Federal and non-Federal dams and tributaries.
- To provide an organized, coordinated approach to improving water quality, with the long-term goal of meeting water quality standards that the states and Tribes can integrate into their water quality management programs.
- To provide a framework for identifying, evaluating, and implementing reasonable actions for dam operators to use as they work toward reducing temperature and dissolved gas levels.

- To provide a record of the actions that are and are not feasible for structural and operational improvements aimed at improving water quality conditions and meeting water quality standards. This information may provide a basis for future beneficial use and water quality criteria revisions.
- To bring basin wide information into the decision processes regarding dissolved gas and temperature, and to provide technical assessment of a project's relative value in terms of water quality.
- To integrate dissolved gas and temperature work into one process for both Federal and non-Federal dams on the mainstem Columbia River and Snake River system. Over the long term, with a focus on water quality, WQP implementation anticipates that EPA, NOAA, and the Federal Action Agencies will properly integrate with TMDL development and implementation activities on the mainstem and in the sub-basins.

### **6.1.1. Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring**

Exposure to high levels of TDG over long periods of time can be harmful or lethal to fish. Environmental monitoring in the waters impacted by operations at the dams is necessary where voluntary spill is employed for juvenile fish passage to ensure that gas levels do not exceed TDG thresholds established in NOAA Fisheries' BiOp's, and variance levels established by the state water quality agencies.

There are two purposes for the Corps to monitor TDG and water temperature in the waters of the Columbia River Basin: 1) to monitor project performance in relation to water quality standards, and 2) to provide water quality data for anadromous fish passage at Columbia/Snake mainstem dams. The monitoring program is considered an integral part of the Corps' Reservoir Control Center water management activities.

The physical TDG monitoring program is to include the QA/QC provisions specified in the "Data Quality Criteria for Fixed Monitoring Stations" completed in 2002 and recommended by the Water Quality Team. This report includes goals related to the accuracy, precision, and completeness of data at each fixed monitoring station and the methodologies that are used in the attempt to achieve those goals. These methodologies are characterized in three parts: calibration protocols (data quality control), data review and corrections (data quality assurance), and completeness of data (a substitute quality assurance program for station redundancy). Each fixed monitoring station will be assessed at the end of the monitoring season against these criteria and a performance report will be included in the Annual Dissolved Gas and Water Temperature Monitoring Report provided to the states of Oregon and Washington.

TDG is a primary water quality parameter that is monitored. High saturation level TDG can cause physiological damage to fish. Water temperature is also measured because it affects TDG saturation levels, and because it influences the health of fish and other aquatic organisms. Both TDG and water temperature are closely linked to project water management operations (e.g., water released over the spillways, releases through the powerhouses and other facilities, and forebay and tailwater water surface elevations). One component of the Corps' water quality strategy was to take actions necessary to implement the spill program at the dams indicated in the 2000 Biological Opinion,

including obtaining variances from appropriate State water quality agencies. Since 2002, the Corps has provided information to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in support of a modification in the TDG standard to spill water over McNary, John Day, The Dalles, and Bonneville dams to assist out-migrating threatened and endangered juvenile salmon smolts. For the 2009 migrating season, the approval of the rule modification was made by the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission in June 2007 and covered both the 2008 and 2009 seasons. The Corps has also submitted “Gas Abatement Plans” to the State of Washington since 2002 in support of an adjustment to the Washington State TDG standard to assist out-migrating threatened and endangered salmon smolts. In February 2008, the Washington Department of Ecology approved the Corps’ Gas Abatement Plan and issued a TDG standard adjustment that will be in effect from February 8, 2008 through February 2010. These rule modifications/adjustments provide for a revision of the TDG standard from 110% to a revised standard of 115% in the forebays and 120% in the tailwaters of the lower Columbia and Snake River projects. For the State of Oregon, the 115% and 120% caps are based on the 12 highest hourly measurements per calendar day. For the State of Washington, it is based on the 12 highest consecutive hourly measurements per calendar day. Also, a cap of TDG of 125%, based on the one highest hour (Washington) or highest two hours (Oregon), is in effect.

The Reservoir Control Center is responsible for monitoring the TDG and water temperature conditions in waters impacted by Corps projects on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. To assess water quality conditions in these waters, the Corps operates TDG and temperature monitors in the forebays and the tailwaters of the lower Columbia River/lower Snake River dams, and other selected river sites. The operational water management guidelines from the States of Oregon and Washington are to change spill levels and, subsequently, spill patterns at the dams (daily if necessary) so that the forebays are as close to, but do not exceed, daily (12 highest hours) average of 115% TDG, and the tailwater levels are close to, but do not exceed, daily (12 highest hours) average of 120% TDG.

The Corps prepares a Total Dissolved Gas Management Plan (TDG Management Plan) each year (see Appendix 4), which is a supporting document for the WMP. The TDG Management Plan summarizes the factors that affect TDG levels within the waters of the Columbia and Snake rivers, and how those factors are taken into account in the management of the spill program.

## **7. Dry Water Year Operations**

Flow management during dry years is often critical to maintaining and improving habitat conditions for ESA-listed species. A dry water year is defined as the lowest 20th percentile years based on the NWRFC’s averages for their statistical period of record (currently 1971 to 2000) using the May final water supply forecast for the April to August period as measured at The Dalles. The Action Agencies will complete the following activities to further the continuing efforts to address the dry flow years:

- Within the defined “buckets” of available water (reservoir draft limits identified in Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) Action 4), flexibility will be exercised in a dry water year to distribute available water across the expected migration season to optimize biological benefits and anadromous fish survival. The Action Agencies will coordinate use of this flexibility in the TMT.
- In dry water years, operating plans developed under the Treaty may result in Treaty reservoirs being operated below their normal refill levels in the late spring and summer, therefore, increasing flows during that period relative to a standard refill operation.
- Annual agreements between the U.S. and Canadian entities to provide flow augmentation storage in Canada for U.S. fisheries needs will include provisions that allow flexibility for the release of any stored water to provide U.S. fisheries benefits in dry water years, to the extent possible.
- BPA will explore opportunities in future long-term NTS storage agreements to develop mutually beneficial in-season agreements with BC Hydro to shape water releases using NTS space within the year and between years to improve flows in the lowest 20th percentile water years to the benefit of ESA-listed Evolutionary Significant Units (ESUs), considering their status.
- Upon issuance of the FCRPS Biological Opinion, the Action Agencies will convene a technical workgroup to scope and initiate investigations of alternative dry water year flow strategies to enhance flows in dry years for the benefit of ESA-listed ESUs.
- In very dry years, the Action Agencies will maximize transport for Snake River migrants in early spring, and will continue transport through May 31 (see RPA 30).
- BPA will implement, as appropriate, its Guide to Tools and Principles for a Dry Year Strategy to reduce the effect energy requirements may pose to fish operations and other project purposes.
- Annual agreements between the U.S. and Canadian entities to provide flow augmentation storage in Canada for U.S. fisheries needs will include provisions that allow flexibility for the release of any stored water to provide U.S. fisheries benefits in dry water years, to the extent possible.
- BPA will explore opportunities in future long-term NTS storage agreements to develop mutually beneficial in-season agreements with BC Hydro to shape water releases using NTS space within the year and between years to improve flows in the lowest 20th percentile water years to the benefit of ESA-listed ESUs, considering their status.

## **8. FCRPS Hydrosystem Performance Standards**

The Action Agencies will operate the FCRPS hydrosystem as described in this draft 2009 WMP, in an adaptive management framework, to make progress towards meeting biological performance goals. Those goals are contained in the 2008 NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinion. Adult and juvenile fish survival estimates from research, monitoring, and evaluation studies will be considered in annual planning as future plans are developed.

## **9. Conclusion**

This draft 2009 WMP is being coordinated with the TMT and may be adjusted. Seasonal action plans will be developed as described in the introduction to this plan. Additionally, operations may be adjusted in-season based on recommendations from the TMT.

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