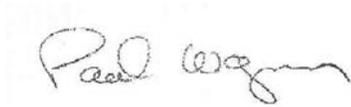


## **SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2008-2**

*The following State, Federal, and Tribal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this SOR; NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.*

<b>TO:</b>	<b>Colonel Steven R. Miles</b>	<b>COE-NWD</b>
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**FROM:** Paul Wagner, Chairperson, Salmon Managers

**DATE:** April 29, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Use Albeni Falls, Grand Coulee, and Libby to achieve a Minimum Flow Objective of 180 Kcfs at McNary Dam.

### **SPECIFICATIONS:**

Use the following operations to achieve a minimum flow objective of 180 Kcfs at McNary Dam until the 2008 spring freshet begins:

1. Pass inflows at Albeni Falls (Do not refill) until 2008 freshet begins.
2. Use a combination of Grand Coulee and Libby Dam to augment flows as necessary to meet the 180 Kcfs minimum flow objective at McNary Dam until the spring 2008 freshet begins.

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

Present flows are considerably less than the Biological Opinion flow objectives. The Biological Opinion spring flow objective this year at Priest Rapids Dam is 135 Kcfs over the period from April 10<sup>th</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Over the spring period through April 28<sup>th</sup>, flows have averaged 124 Kcfs over the last week and just 96.8 Kcfs thus far over the spring season. The

Biological Opinion spring flow objective this year at McNary Dam is 260 Kcfs over the same period, while flows have averaged 189.7 Kcfs over the last week and just 163.6 Kcfs thus far over the spring season.

To date, the 2008 spring runoff has been delayed due to cooler than normal temperatures. Even with the continued cool weather that has persisted this year, which continues to delay the runoff; the Grand Coulee Reservoir has been drafted to its April 30<sup>th</sup> flood control elevation of 1228.8 feet. The current planned operation at Grand Coulee Reservoir is to pass inflow beginning May 1st. This planned operation will result in an estimated reduction in lower Columbia River flows of at least 20 Kcfs.

At the same time that flows are predicted to decrease, juvenile fish numbers in the Mid and lower Columbia have been increasing. PIT tag detections at McNary Dam indicate that both Mid Columbia and Snake River stocks are passing into the lower River. Historic average passage timing would suggest that numbers will continue to increase.

The Salmon Managers would like to prevent flows from decreasing during this important part of the migration period. Given the present amount of water in the upriver reservoirs and the physical and cultural constraints of these reservoirs, the Salmon Managers are proposing meeting a minimum flow of 180 Kcfs, which is approximately equal to the average flow that has occurred thus far this year. The proposal is to achieve this objective by passing inflows at Albeni Falls and augmenting Columbia River flows using Grand Coulee and Libby reservoirs as necessary until the 2008 spring freshet begins. The Salmon Managers propose using both, or a combination of, Grand Coulee and Libby reservoir within their respective physical constraints to minimize potential impacts to either reservoir.