SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: 2012-01

TO:	**BG John R. McMahon**	**COE-NWD**
	Jim Barton	**COE-Water Management**
	Doug Baus	**COE-RCC**
	David Ponganis	**COE-PDD**
	Colonel Bruce A. Estok	**COE-Seattle District**
	J. William McDonald	**USBR-Boise Regional Director**
	Steven Wright	**BPA-Administrator**
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FROM: Kootenai Tribe of Idaho; Sue Ireland, Fish and Wildlife Department Director

DATE: March 28, 2012

SUBJECT: September / October 2012 Libby Dam Outflow for Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Project, Phase 2, Braided Reach

SPECIFICATIONS:

Release minimal outflow from Libby Dam during September (6,000 cfs) and October (4,000 cfs minimum), 2012.

JUSTIFICATION:

Minimum flows in the Kootenai River in September and October are requested to allow the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's contractor to de-water two areas (channels) located in the Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Project, Phase 2, Braided Reach 2 project area. The restoration strategy for this portion of the project is to stabilize eroding banks, trap sediment and promote floodplain development, increase riparian vegetation, and increase channel margin and side channel complexity. The Upper Meander project will result in restoration of approximately 2,000 feet of river bank and will substantially reduce sediment loading that is contributing to degraded habitat conditions downstream. The North Side Channels project will address degraded habitat conditions in 7,500 feet of side channels.

Provide gradually declining discharge to the target flow following ramping rates and minimum flow guidelines in the 2006 BiOp for bull trout and white sturgeon.

The proposed operation is requested in order to implement the Tribe's Phase 2, Braided Reach 2 portion of the Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Project. The proposed operation will also ensure Action Agency compliance with the USFWS Biological Opinion regarding the Effects of Libby Dam Operations on the Kootenai River White Sturgeon, Bull Trout, and Kootenai Sturgeon Critical Habitat (1901F0279R) as clarified (2008). Action 2.1 under RPA Component 2 (Management of Sturgeon Habitat) calls for Action Agency cooperation in implementing the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's Kootenai River Restoration Project Master Plan.