

# **SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2020-5**

## **WALLA WALLA DISTRICT**

*The following State, Federal, and Tribal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this  
SOR: NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Washington  
Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Nez Perce Tribe, Yakama Nation,  
Colville Tribes, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.*

<b>TO:</b>	Brig. Gen. Pete Helmlinger	COE-NWD-ZA Commander
	Lt. Col. Christian Dietz	COE-NWW Commander
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	Paul Cloutier	COE-NWD Tribal Liaison
	Dean Holecek	COE-NWW Tribal Liaison

**FROM:** Dave Swank, FPAC Chair

**DATE:** August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Lower Granite Dam Removable Surface Weir (RSW)

**OBJECTIVE:** Leave the RSW at Lower Granite Dam in place through the end of August regardless of river flow level to facilitate evaluations of subyearling Chinook salmon passage route selection.

### **SPECIFICATIONS**

This SOR seeks to adjust Lower Granite RSW operations from those described in the 2020 Fish Passage Plan. We request that the Corps of Engineers leave the RSW at Lower Granite in place through the end of August (summer spill season), regardless of river flow level, unless there is a recommendation from FPAC to remove it. A recommendation to remove it would likely occur if the PIT tag data show that either juveniles are not using the RSW route in significant numbers, or if we start to see problems such as adult passage delays. This is not a request for a permanent change to the FPP, it only applies to the 2020 season.

### **JUSTIFICATION**

Previous studies of juvenile Chinook passage at the projects during times of low flows and relatively high water temperatures were limited in sample size due to low juvenile passage during summer, or due to restrictions on handling fish during warm water conditions. However, we now have the ability to monitor passage through the RSW using the newly operational PIT tag antenna. Recent (July and early August 2020) detections at the Lower Granite RSW PIT tag antenna show that juvenile Chinook salmon are continuing to utilize the surface passage route even as the water has warmed. On August 15<sup>th</sup> of 2020, a new spill operation will be implemented at Lower Granite Dam which limits spill to the RSW flow (or its equivalent volume if the RSW is removed) through the end of August. If the RSW is still in place during this period, it will become the only available surface route for downstream migrants, and we can then directly compare the numbers passing via a surface route to those passing via a deeper route (JBS) without the complication of an unknown number of juveniles passing through other spillbays. Leaving the RSW in place will allow us to learn more about subyearling Chinook route selection at Lower Granite Dam by using associations between detections from the new PIT tag antenna in the Lower Granite RSW, the Juvenile Bypass System, and environmental conditions.