

**Corps of Engineers Northwestern Division (NWD)
WALLA WALLA DISTRICT (NWW)**

TO:

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Jason Sweet	BPA-PGB-4
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Tribal Liaisons: Paul Cloutier (NWD), Dean Holecek (NWW)

FROM: Wanda Keefer, Port Manager, Port of Clarkston *Wanda Keefer*

DATE: August 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Lower Granite Dam Minimum Operating Pool; request revised from our 8-11-2020 request

SPECIFICATIONS:

Raise Lower Granite pool above Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) to between 736.5 and 738¹ as soon as possible and hold until midnight August 31, 2020 before resuming normal operations.

¹ Ideally, the closer to the higher end of the range the better for assuring safety, but this request does recognize the need for a 1.5' operating range for power generation. Please consider operations at the higher end of this range.

JUSTIFICATION:

The last dredging of the location in front of the Lewis-Clark Terminal in Clarkston, WA, (LCT Clarkston) occurred January and February 2015. More sediment than anticipated arrived in 2017 as a result of a very rainy spring which caused flooding and erosion (see Attachment A). As a result, barges calling at the LCT Clarkston must be light-loaded and topped off at the Port of Lewiston, because shoaling prevents adequate depth for fully loading a barge at the Clarkston facility. In fact, on February 27, 2020, a barge got stuck at that location. There is increased demand for services at the LCT Clarkston, and the goal to keep separate different types of wheat results for a need for a very temporary increase in water levels to facilitate loading and grain movement on the river system.

Additional water will prevent grounding of barging, making movement safer for people involved in loading barges, as well as the equipment itself including operating tugs. Transportation is one of the authorized, multiple uses of the river system.

Economic impact: After years of economic uncertainty (from tariffs, weather, disease and other factors), farmers in Asotin County, on the Palouse, and in the Camas Prairie are experiencing huge harvest volumes. Wheat production from this region has been an economic driver for over a century. Agricultural product movement on the Snake River system benefits farms, wheat suppliers and farming communities. Barging provides the best transportation alternative because it reduces truck and rail miles (thereby making surface travel safer for all), has comparatively low fuels costs, reduces carbon loads compared to other options, and provides greater safety. In fact, except for a short period of time from the late 1940s to the 1970s, moving wheat by water has been the transportation solution for wheat produced from this world-class region since wheat production began in the 1870s. Presently, more than 95% of the wheat produced in Asotin County is shipped out by barge with the bulk of that intended for foreign markets.

LCT is a cooperative of three big cooperatives: CHS, Pacific NW Farms and Uniontown Cooperative. It represents 3,500 farm families, 60% of whom are in Idaho. Grain grown in Idaho and Oregon, as well as Washington, is moved from the Clarkston facility. In addition, a small percentage of wheat (approximately 2% of that moved from the combined Lewiston/Clarkston facilities) originates in Montana.

Approximately 192 barges per year are moved by Lewis-Clark Terminal (LCT) out of its Clarkston and Lewiston locations. (The LCT is a cooperative of farmers who have made investments themselves to assure solutions to logistics in getting their products to market.) Wheat on LCT barges has a market value of \$138,000,000 when using an average market value of \$6.00/bushel. The month of August is typically one of the busiest times of the year for movement of grain, as the month is the height of harvest

season. With the bumper crop this year, it is essential to keep wheat moving toward its ultimate destination, in order to handle volumes still coming from the fields.

Preparation: The Port of Clarkston anticipated shoaling around its facilities and has been engaged in seeking resources for maintenance dredging (see “Going forward” on page 3). More obvious challenges identified over the past few years at the Port of Clarkston, however, were identified in relation to cruise boat traffic and a sand bar located within the navigation channel which limited access to the cruise boat dock berthing area. Therefore, the need for coordinated dredging with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was and continues to be essential.

Minimizing impact: The window of time making up this request has been narrowed down as much as possible, as well as the depths being requested, as we understand obligations the TMT has balancing multiple river uses with the needs of ESA listed species and other species of interest. If approved, it would take place a week later than the start time requested in our 8-11-2020 SOR, which was not approved. With this ask, we have pared down the desirable pool adjustments to only that which is *essential* for the safe movement of barges and tugs. This request does extend later into August than did our first request (8-11-2020).

Going forward:

The Port of Clarkston and its tenant, LCT, have been investing in preliminary steps for berth dredging in partnership with a larger dredging project with the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Sediment Quality Testing (Task Order W912ER19F9002) has been completed, and funding for the larger project will be requested for the federal FY22 budget year. Permitting will need to occur when funding becomes confirmed and before maintenance dredging is put out under contract. Once dredging is complete, it will not be necessary to request the raising of the water levels to accommodate barge loading and movement.

In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to fulfil its obligations relating to sediment management with a meeting planned in Clarkston on October 28, 2020.

What happened to the highway?

Man has rude awakening on his early morning commute

- By KERRI SANDAINE of the Tribune
- Apr 14, 2017, Lewiston Morning Tribune



A landslide forced a temporary closure of State Route 129 Thursday morning near Boggan's Oasis at the bottom of Rattlesnake Grade, about 40 miles south of Lewiston.

RATTLESNAKE GRADE - A Clearwater Paper employee who was driving to work early Thursday encountered a huge wall of mud and uprooted trees blocking State Route 129.

Shannon Beach, 36, who lives on Buford Ridge in Oregon, said he couldn't believe what was in his headlights at 4:40 a.m. after he crossed the bridge by Boggan's Oasis on the Grande Ronde River.

Instead of a highway, the bottom of Rattlesnake Grade had transformed into a swirling mass of logs, dirt and debris. A small bridge over Rattlesnake Creek was completely wiped out and was sitting upstream in the Grande Ronde River.

"I drive this road every day," Beach said. "It was the craziest thing I've ever seen."

Beach said he headed home to notify the Asotin County Sheriff's Office and transportation officials about the slide, and to let his boss know he'd be late for work.

Ronnie Mock, maintenance supervisor for the Washington State Department of Transportation, arrived a short time later.

"We had to cut logs with a chain saw just to get a vehicle through," Mock said at the scene, about 30 miles south of Asotin. "Some of those logs will probably wind up downstream in the Snake River."

By mid-morning, state crews had one lane of the highway cleared, but it will take a week or more to clean up the damage, Mock said. Luckily, the area's main bridge over the Grande Ronde was not damaged.

Behind Mock stood a pile of skinned trees about 20 feet tall and 70-feet wide. The power of the slide uprooted a thick alder stand, peeled back the bark and took out cattle gates and fencing on a steep hillside near the road.

The log jam picked up rocks and blocked the highway as it made its way down the creek corridor toward the Grande Ronde. The final punch blew out the private metal bridge.

A portion of the highway at the bottom of the winding, aptly-named grade was closed for a few hours until a path was cleared. Pilot cars then assisted motorists through a curvy, 1.5-mile stretch of debris as road crews tackled the mess.

"It's right up to the edge of the pavement in a couple of places," Mock said. "We're hoping no one was in its path. So far, there is no sign of any victims."

Later Thursday, Shannon Beach brought his parents, Tom and Laura Beach, down from their ranch on the ridge to survey the damage.

"I call it Mother Nature," said 62-year-old rancher Tom Beach. "The only woman I'd never marry."

The area has had its fair share of weather-related drama in recent months, from ice jams on the Grande Ronde to flooding on county roads.

The latest gully washer was likely caused by a heavy rain that pelted the area Wednesday night and early Thursday, said residents gathered at Boggan's Oasis. Snow was falling at Fields Spring State Park near Anatone a few days ago, and all that water had to go somewhere.

"It rained so hard last night, we still have standing water on top of the ground," Tom Beach said.

An exact time of the slide is tough to pinpoint, but officials said it must have been an impressive incident, based on the aftermath.

"I would've liked to have seen it," Mock said. "I'd really like to know how that small bridge got upstream."

Shannon Beach said he's thankful he wasn't caught up in the powerful mud ball.

"I'm usually on the road 10 minutes earlier," he said. "When I got down here today, there was no highway left. It was quite a sight."