



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

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SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: 2000 C-4

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COE-NWD-Portland
COE-Portland District
USBR-- Pacific Northwest Regional Director
BPA Administrator
BPA-PG-5 and BPA-PGPO

FROM: Kyle Martin, *Mainstem Hydrologist*, CRITFC Hydro Program

DATE: August 2, 2000

SUBJECT: **Operation of the Lower Columbia Pools
during the 2000 Treaty Fall Fishery**

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, on behalf of its member tribes the Nez Perce Tribe, the Yakama Indian Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, requests the following reservoir operations in Zone 6 (Bonneville to McNary dams) during the 2000 fall season Treaty fishery. Implement the following hydro-system operations during the Treaty fishery times as established by the Columbia River Compact.

SPECIFICATIONS:

- **Bonneville Pool.** Operate the pool within 1.0 foot from full pool (msl elevation 77 - 76)
- **The Dalles Pool.** Operate the pool within 1.0 foot (from msl elevation 159.5 - 158.5)
- **John Day Reservoir.** Operate the pool within 1.0 foot (from msl elevation 264.5 - 263.5)

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2000 autumn Treaty fishing season is anticipated to begin during the week of August 21 and should conclude by September 23, 2000. Exact dates will be established at a series of Columbia River Compact hearings, the first of which is set for August 18. Fishing periods generally start at 6 AM on a Tuesday or Wednesday and conclude at 6 PM on Saturday. CRITFC will notify the Corps with specific times for the tribal fishing season after each Compact hearing.

During a meeting at CRITFC's Law Enforcement Division in Hood River on September 2, 1999, tribal fishers explained the impacts of unstable pools and pools below full to the Treaty fishery to Colonel Mogren and Lt. Colonel Harshbarger. The tribal fishers explained that a pool fluctuation of 1.0 foot or more disrupts tribal fishery operations. Specific problems include: (1) Increased local currents that sweep debris into fishing nets, (2) Rapid 1-2 hour drops in water level will lead to entanglement of nets, (3) boat access problems, and (4) nets torn from their anchors. Nets and gear are costly to replace.

The fishers also stressed to Corps officials that much of the tribal fishers' incomes comes during the brief fall fishing season, so that any delays or disruptions to their fishing operations caused by the excessive pool fluctuations in Zone 6 negatively impact tribal incomes.

Implementing this request will insure that the Federal operating agencies meet their federal trust responsibilities to the Columbia Basin treaty tribes. This SOR and SOR 2000-C3 complement each other in providing stability to the pools. If this SOR cannot be accommodated, CRITFC requests a detailed written response with justification by August 10, 2000.