SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #98-20

TO: Brigadier General Griffin COE-NPD
    William Branch COE-RCC
    Cindy Henriksen COE-RCC
    Bolyvong Tanovan COE-RCC
    Dave Geiger COE-P
    John Keys III USBR-Boise
    Jack Robertson Acting BPA-Administrator
    Greg Delwiche BPA-PGP-5
    Mark Maher BPA-PG-5

FROM: Jim Nielsen, Chairperson, Salmon Managers

DATE: May 28, 1998

SUBJECT: Operations at Grand Coulee, Hungry Horse, and Libby through June 7
         Operations at Brownlee through June 7
         Operations at Dworshak through June 7

SPECIFICATIONS:

All Projects
• All of the requested operations are based upon flow and operations projections provided by
  the federal operators and regulators. If projected conditions change significantly, Jim
  Nielsen, WDFW, or the Fish Passage Center should be contacted. Questions regarding the
  request should be referred to Jim Nielsen or the Fish Passage Center.

Dworshak
• Based on flow projections provided by the federal operators and regulators, Dworshak will
  operate to meet flood control requirements resulting in daily average flows at Lower Granite
  exceeding 100 kcf/s through June 7.

Brownlee
• Pass inflow at Brownlee.

Grand Coulee, Hungry Horse, Libby
• Operate Grand Coulee to meet a minimum daily average flow at Priest Rapids of no less than
  135 kcf/s. Fill Grand Coulee, Hungry Horse, and Libby during the projected, upcoming week
  of higher flows, while sturgeon flows and Priest Rapids flows are being met.

Priest Rapids
• The federal operators and regulators, Grant County Public Utility District, and the Mid-
  Columbia Coordinating Committee should work together (including power exchanges and
  purchases) to minimize, as much as possible, hourly, daily, and weekly load factoring and
  flow fluctuations below the Priest Rapids project.
McNary
- Weekend flows should not decrease to less than 80% of the previous five-day average flow.

JUSTIFICATION:
Field surveys below the Priest Rapids project have provided evidence that significant stranding of fall chinook fry is taking place below Priest Rapids Dam. Mortality of stranded fry is high. Although these data are preliminary, they do indicate that a serious problem is occurring below the Priest Rapids project and that the extreme load following that has been taking place is the cause.

Passage indices and PIT tag recoveries clearly show that juvenile salmon and steelhead smolts are passing all projects from all upstream watersheds. Passage index numbers at McNary and Lower Granite dams continue at a steady daily rate for salmon and steelhead. The attached cumulative passage plots show passage indices continuing at Lower Granite Dam. Sockeye passage indices at Lower Granite Dam have increased.

*The Salmon Managers are state, federal and tribal entities who have legally recognized mandates and jurisdictions to manage salmon resources in the Columbia River Basin. The following have participated in the preparation of this SOR: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
James R. Nielsen