# US Fish and Wildlife Service
# SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2004-FWS 2

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| **TO:** | **Brigadier General W.T. Grisoli** | **COE-NWD** |
| | **William Branch** | **COE-NWD-NP-Water Management** |
| | **Cindy Henriksen, Rudd Turner** | **COE-NWD-NP-WM-RCC** |
| | **Witt Anderson** | **COE-NWD-CM-F (Fish Management Office)** |
| | **Col. Debra Lewis** | **COE-Seattle District** |
| | **Steven Wright** | **BPA-Administrator** |
| | **Greg Delwiche** | **BPA- KE-4** |

**FROM: Susan Martin, Supervisor, Upper Columbia Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on behalf of the following cooperating agencies and tribe: Idaho Office of Species Conservation, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the City of Bonners Ferry and Boundary County, Idaho.**

**DATE: November 5, 2004**

**SUBJECT: Winter Temperature Operation of Libby Dam for burbot**

**SPECIFICATIONS**:

USFWS staff and others met, as members of the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) burbot sub-committee, on October 19 to discuss issues regarding burbot this winter. Three issues affecting dam operation (temperature, flow, and research) were discussed. The group requests that the Corps of Engineers use the selective withdrawal system at Libby Dam to release the coolest water possible in November and December, before temperature stratification limits the temperature control capability. This will likely result in November and December temperatures slightly cooler than the existing selective withdrawal temperature rule curve. This diversion from the temperature rule curve has been coordinated with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The request is to determine if the lower river (Bonners Ferry vicinity) can be cooled prior to the burbot-spawning season (Dec 15 – end of Feb), when temperatures of 1 to 4° C are preferable. The committee views this year as an opportunity to investigate the possibility of influencing ambient river temperatures at higher flows from Libby Dam during the early winter period.

The burbot committee will not be making at flow request for November or December of 2004. The group was briefed by the COE and BPA on the reservoir elevation (2,446 feet) and expected discharges this fall. With 190% of normal precipitation occurring so far this water year it is most

likely the reservoir will be drafted down to elevation 2,411 feet, which will result in high flows this fall.

Arrangements are being made to use an ROV [Remotely Operated Vehicle] fitted with a camera to video survey burbot spawning holes in the Kootenai River from Libby Dam to the Goat River. This research may require lower flows for 3 to 5 days in January to allow the ROV access into the pools. The committee will work with the Reservoir Control Center to coordinate the flows necessary to accomplish the research.

The committee will continue to review future forecasts and issue additional SORs if conditions warrant. The committee is pursuing other methods for reintroducing burbot to the Kootenai River and it anticipates that in future years flow requests may be made to enhance spawning conditions. The committee hopes that the Action Agencies will be able to put more weight on those requests in future years when altering the shape of the fall discharges has a higher likelihood of being biologically productive.