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SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2005 - 19

The following Navigation Interests have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: Columbia River Towboat Association, the Port of Clarkston, and the Port of Lewiston

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FROM: Dixon Shaver, Columbia River Towboat Association
DATE: September 12, 2005
SUBJECT: **Lower Granite Operations for September through December**

Navigation Objectives

The objective of this SOR is to restore adequate water depths to the Federal navigation channel in the Snake River in the area of the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers. Current channel conditions provide well under the authorized 14-foot channel depth when the pool level is held to the MOP+1 requirement in effect for the remainder of the juvenile salmonid outmigration.

Specifications

This SOR recommends that the special operation of the Lower Granite Reservoir to accommodate outmigrating salmonids be terminated earlier than normal and that the reservoir be operated in the upper foot of the normal pool range to address increasing navigation issues. Operation of the reservoir in the upper foot of the pool would restore the 14-foot authorized depth in most parts of the channel.

Justification

As one example of the need to raise the water level, in the area in front of the Gateway Dock facility at the Port of Clarkston, the August 2004 hydrographic survey performed by the Corps of Engineers shows point elevations in the range of 723.0 to 723.2. These point elevations are on a bar that is building in the Federal channel about 180 feet out from the face of the Dock. The Maintenance responsibility of the Port of Clarkston extends 50 feet out from the face of their dock, making the bar area clearly in the Federal area of maintenance responsibility. Other facilities along the Lower Granite Pool are also experiencing difficulties in dealing with the shallow draft locations in the Federal

channel. In the turning basin portion of the Federal channel out in front of the Port of Lewiston, the August 2004 Corps hydrographic survey shows spot elevations as high as 723.0. This area is about 330 feet out in front of the Port of Lewiston port facilities, well outside the port berthing area maintenance responsibility of 50 feet.

The following statement is from the Port of Clarkston.

On August 31, 2005, the Columbia Queen Cruise Ship was coming in to dock at Gateway Dock. At 2:00 p.m. when she disembarked, she was about 200 feet off of our dock in the federal channel and sucked up a bunch of sand off the bar that is being built up by the sand. They lost a motor, which becomes a safety concern.

At the crane dock, a Port of Clarkston facility further downstream, we are having problems with our barges grounding on the east end of our dock. We have a hump that is about 20 feet by 30 feet that the barges get stuck on when the water is held near minimum pool. We need to keep the water up near full pool because of these occurrences. Please be advised that the hump at this dock is within the berthing area which the Port is responsible for dredging. However, this area cannot be dredged until the in-water work window begins in mid-December.

This seems to be getting worse all the time and we understand that the reservoirs down river have all been brought back to full pool and we are requesting that the Lower Granite pool be brought back to the same. The other alternative is that the barges will run aground and put holes in them with the same potential for the cruise boats.

In September and October we have nine cruise boats scheduled to come into our Port and we need to resolve this issues as soon as possible.

The Port of Lewiston is having many of the same problems. They are light loading their barges and would also benefit from an increased water level.

Rick Davis
Port Manager
Port of Clarkston