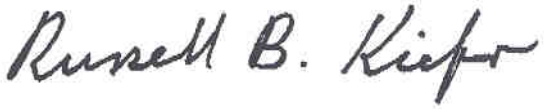
SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2005-19

The following State, Federal, and Tribal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries, Nez Perce Tribe, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

TO:	**Colonel Gregg F. Martin**	**COE-NWD**
	James D. Barton	**COE-Water Management**
	Cindy Henriksen	**COE-RCC**
	Witt Anderson	**COE-P**
	Col. Thomas E. O'Donovan	**COE-Portland District**
	LTC Randy L. Glaeser	**COE-Walla Walla District**
	J. William McDonald	**USBR-Boise Regional Director**
	Stephen J. Wright	**BPA-Administrator**
	Greg Delwiche	**BPA-PG-5**



FROM: **Russell B. Kiefer, Chairperson, Salmon Managers**

DATE: **October 18, 2005**

SUBJECT: Tailwater elevation at Bonneville Dam to protect natural spawning of chum and fall chinook salmon at the Ives/Pierce Island Complex, Multnomah Falls, and partly influence the I-205 seeps.

SPECIFICATIONS: As required by the 2004 NMFS Biological Opinion, beginning when chum are present and continuing until further notice, provide a minimum instantaneous tailrace elevation of 11.5 feet at Bonneville Dam. On average it is anticipated that daily average flows will not exceed 125 Kcfs.

JUSTIFICATION: The Ives/Pierce Islands Complex below Bonneville Dam represents a limited natural spawning area for ESA listed Columbia River chum and unlisted Lower Columbia River bright fall chinook. The NMFS 2004 Biological Opinion (BiOp) recognizes that access to spawning habitat in the Ives/Pierce area and Hardy and Hamilton creeks is primarily a function of the water surface elevation. More so, the BiOp and experience over the last 5 years recognizes that managing water levels to a tailwater gage height rather than a flow level is preferable.

Over the last ten days the flow below Bonneville has varied 90.2 and 120 Kcfs, with project tailwater elevations fluctuating between 9.3 and 11.3 feet. These variable flows and tailwater elevations are not consistently adequate to provide spawning area for chum salmon at the Ives/Pierce Islands Complex and Multnomah Falls. Additionally, these flows and tailwater elevations limit access to both Hardy and Hamilton creeks and spawning effectiveness at the I-205 seeps. The provision of a minimum 11.5-foot tailwater elevation at Bonneville Dam will provide access to a limited area of mainstem spawning habitat for chum salmon and allow unrestricted access to Hardy and Hamilton creeks.