

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: 2017-1

TO:

BG Scott Spellmon **COE-NWD Commander**
COL John G. Buck **COE-NWS Commander**
David Combs **COE-NWD-PDD Chief**
Steven Barton **COE-NWD-PDW Chief**
Rock Peters **COE-NWD-PDD**
Julie Ammann **COE-NWD-PDW-RC**
Doug Baus **COE-NWD-PDW-RC**
Aaron Marshall **COE-NWD-PDW-RC**
Joel Fenolio **COE-NWS-EN**

Lorri Lee **USBR-PN Regional Director**
John Roache **USBR-PN-6208**
Mary Mellema **USBR-PN-6204**

Elliot Mainzer **BPA Administrator**
Kieran Connolly **BPA-PG-5**
Lorri Bodi **BPA-KE-4**
Jason Sweet **BPA-PGB-5**
Eve James **BPA-PGB-5**
Tony Norris **BPA-PGPO-5**
Scott Bettin **BPA-EUP-4**

FROM: Kootenai Tribe of Idaho; Sue Ireland, Fish and Wildlife Department Director

DATE: May 4, 2017

SUBJECT: September through first week of November 2017 Libby Dam Outflow for Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program, Lower Meander Project

SPECIFICATIONS:

Release 6,000 cfs or less from Libby Dam during September through the first week of November, 2017.

Provide gradually declining discharge to the target flow following ramping rate guidelines in the 2006 USFWS BiOp for bull trout and white sturgeon.

JUSTIFICATION:

Low flows in the Kootenai River during September through the first week of November, 2016 are requested to allow the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's contractor to implement in-water work

associated with the Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program - Lower Meander Project during September through first week of November, 2016.

The purpose of restoration activities in the Lower Meander project area is to improve habitat conditions in the Kootenai River to help adult sturgeon migrate upstream, improve spawning habitat, increase juvenile rearing habitat, and improve overall ecosystem function. The strategy for this area includes: establishing a longitudinal sequence of high-quality, deeper pools to support migration of Kootenai river white sturgeon to upstream habitats in the Braided and Canyon reaches; adding fill and plantings to existing islands to promote riparian development and provide food web support; grading and planting eroding banks to establish sustainable riparian buffers; installing bank structures to promote bank stability and to maintain pools; and installing woody debris structures in side channels and along bank margins to improve habitat complexity. The project will be constructed in two phases, the first of which will occur in 2017. The second phase of the project is scheduled for construction during 2018.

The proposed operation will ensure Action Agency compliance with the USFWS Biological Opinion regarding the Effects of Libby Dam Operations on the Kootenai River White Sturgeon, Bull Trout, and Kootenai Sturgeon Critical Habitat (1901F0279R) as clarified (2008). Action 2.1 under RPA Component 2 (Management of Sturgeon Habitat) calls for Action Agency cooperation in implementing the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's Kootenai River Restoration Project Master Plan.