

SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: 2018-XX

TO:

MG Scott Spellmon	COE-NWD Commander
COL Mark A. Gerald	COE-NWS Commander
Jim Fredericks	COE-NWD-PDD Chief
Steven Barton	COE-NWD-PDW Chief
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Julie Ammann	COE-NWD-PDW-R
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Kevin Shaffer	COE-NWS-EN

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Jason Sweet	BPA-PGB-5
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Tony Norris	BPA-PGPO-5
Scott Bettin	BPA-EUP-4

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

DATE: May 8, 2018

SUBJECT: September through first week of November 2018 Libby Dam Outflow for Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program, Lower Meander Project – Phase 2

SPECIFICATIONS:

Release 6,000 cfs or less from Libby Dam during September through the first week of November, 2018.

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, 2018 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, 2018.

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. Implementation of the Lower Meander Project was divided into two construction periods (Phase 1 and Phase 2). Phase 1 was completed in 2017 and Phase 2 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.