



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

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SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST (SOR): 2025 C-2

TO: Brigadier General 'Bill' Hannan COE-NWD Commander
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Steve Barton COE-NWD-PDW Chief
Aaron Marshall COE-NWD-PDW-RC (Team Lead)
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T. Mackey, P. Koski, T. Norris BPA-KEWR-4/PGPO-5 (operations planning)

FROM: Aja K. DeCoteau, Executive Director

DATE: August 15, 2025

SUBJECT: **Operation of the Lower Columbia Pools for the fall-season 2025 Treaty Fishery**

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), on behalf of its member tribes, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, requests the following (Zone 6) reservoir operations (BON to MCN dams) during the fall-season 2025 treaty fishery. This effort supports the 2025 ceremonial, subsistence, and commercial treaty fishery times as set by the tribes and the Columbia River Compact (see additional attachment).

SPECIFICATIONS: Implement the following pool operations, as follows:

Monday, August 18, 2025, 6 am, through Thursday, August 21, 2025, 6 pm

Monday, August 25, 2025, 6 am, through Saturday, August 30, 2025, 6 pm

Monday, September 1, 2025, 6 am, through Saturday, September 6, 2025, 6 pm

Bonneville: Operate the pool within a 1.5-foot band during the treaty fishing period.

The Dalles: Operate the pool within a 1.5-foot band during the treaty fishing period.

John Day: Operate the pool within a 2-foot band during the treaty fishing period.

CRITFC will notify the Corps with specific times for any additional fishery openings on a weekly basis after the tribes set the openings.

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2025 fall-season treaty fishing season is of critical importance to CRITFC's member tribes. The run size forecast (Columbia River at the Columbia River Mouth) of 594,400 adult upriver fall chinook (near 10-year average). Additionally, 114,500 coho (near 10-year average), and 149,500 A and B-Index steelhead (above 10-year average) are forecast at Bonneville Dam. These will collectively create harvest opportunities for tribal fishers who will exercise their treaty rights by participating in this harvest using platform and gillnet fishing methods. This harvest will provide for the cultural, religious, and economic needs of the treaty tribes.

CRITFC will conduct aerial counts of set-nets each week in each Zone 6 pool. The survey data will be shared with COE-RCC staff within 2-7 days of the flight day.

Achieving good river conditions through managed river operations during the treaty fishery has been the basis of past litigation that have been supported by federal courts and are consistent with the trust and fiduciary responsibilities that the federal operators have with respect to CRITFC's member tribes.

In past meetings with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials, tribal fishers have explained that a pool fluctuation of more than 1.5 feet disrupts fishery operations. Specific problems include: (1) increased local currents that sweep debris into fishing nets, (2) rapid water level drops lead to entanglement of nets or change local currents that affect fishing success, (3) boat access problems, and (4) nets and gear are costly to replace and may become lost or torn from their anchors if pools are raised after nets are set.

Delays or disruptions to tribal fishing operations caused by the excessive pool fluctuations in Zone 6 can negatively impact tribal incomes, food resources, and cultural practices. For many tribal fishers, much of their annual income and food is generated during the brief treaty fishing season. The fishers have expressed to Corps officials that the loss of fishing opportunity during the extremely limited treaty fishery period cannot be replaced.

If this SOR cannot be accommodated, CRITFC requests a verbal response with an explanation from the federal operators by COB, Friday August 15, 2025. Thank you for considering this request. Please contact Kyle Dittmer or Stuart Ellis should you have any questions at (503) 238-0667.

[Attachment]

cc: Tribal staffs and attorneys

2025 FALL SEASON TRIBAL FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

The Four Columbia River Tribes set the following fishery plan, and the Columbia River Compact has concurred:

Commercial Gillnet Fishery

Area: Zone 6

Dates/Times: 6:00 AM Monday, August 18 to 6:00 PM Thursday, August 21 (3-nights)

6:00 AM Monday August 25 to 6:00 PM Saturday, August 30 (5-nights)

6:00 AM Monday September 1 to 6:00 PM Saturday, September 6 (5-nights)

Gear: Set and Drift Gillnets with an 8-inch Minimum Mesh size Restriction

Sanctuaries: Standard river mouth and dam closed areas applicable to gillnet gear, including the standard sanctuary at Spring Creek Hatchery is in effect for all three openings.

Allowable Sales: Salmon (any species) may be sold or kept for subsistence. Shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish and carp may also be sold or retained for subsistence. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes. Sturgeon may not be sold, but sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool and sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day Pools and may be kept for subsistence purposes.

Tributary Fisheries and Fisheries Downstream of Bonneville Dam

For information on these fisheries, please consult tribal fishery departments directly.

Note: This announcement is an informational document and does not constitute a fishery regulation. Individual tribes determine actual fishing regulations for their members. Copies of regulations are available from tribal fishery departments.

If you have any fishing enforcement problems or need assistance or information, day or night, contact the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Enforcement Office, 4270 Westcliff Drive, Hood River, Oregon. Phone: (541)-386-6363 or toll-free (800)-487-FISH (3474). Show pride in your Tribe's treaty rights by carrying your tribal ID. **Please consult your tribal Fisheries Department for additional details on tribal regulations. PLEASE WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKETS FOR SAFETY and avoid overloading your boats.**