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May 31, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Jim Ruff — Manager, Mainstem Passage and River Operations

SUBJECT: Status of Research Fish for the Snake River Fall Chinook Transport Evaluation

At the May Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, I was asked to provide an update on the current status of availability of research fish for the Corps of Engineers' Snake River fall Chinook transport evaluation. After discussing this with both the Corps and NOAA Fisheries researchers, I've determined that the sampling rate for the adult fish trap at Lower Granite Dam has been increased to 18 percent from the 13 percent rate of last summer. This increase in sampling rate should result in more fish being trapped and more of the *U.S. v. OR* production needs being met this summer, i.e., it increases the likelihood of obtaining sufficient numbers of fish for the transport study next year, depending on overall run size and run composition.

Presently, the long-term Snake River fall Chinook study design for assessing transport and in-river migration is still at issue. The Corps was actively working this issue until other BiOp remand issues overwhelmed it. Currently, there are many areas of agreement with the study design; however, there are also some areas of disagreement. The Corps believes that holding a regional workshop this summer, which would be conducted under its Study Review Work Group process, may be the most reasonable way to move forward on this issue at this time. The proposed regional workshop would be conducted over 2-3 days to present all the available data on this issue, review and debate it, and attempt to come to some resolution on the areas of the study design that remain at issue.

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