

State, Federal and Tribal Fishery Agencies Joint Technical Staff Memorandum

*Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*

*Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Yakama Nation*

TO: Scott Fielding, Chief of Fisheries, John Day/Willow Creek Project
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SUBJECT: Support of MOC 20JDA21 COVID-19 Daytime Condition Sampling Proposal
(Updated Jan. 25, 2021)

DATE: February 9, 2021

On January 25, 2021 the Condition Monitoring Task Group met to further discuss modifications to sampling at John Day Dam in 2021, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Based on these discussions, the COE issued an updated version of MOC 20JDA21 (updated January 25, 2021), which was circulated via e-mail to the Task Group for further comment and discussion by the larger Fish Passage Operations and Maintenance (FPOM) committee at the scheduled February 11, 2021 meeting.

The purpose of this Joint Technical Staff memorandum is to communicate our support of the proposed sampling schedule that is outlined in the updated version of MOC 20JDA21 (updated January 25, 2021; attached for reference). Sampling at John Day Dam in 2021 should follow what is outlined in this updated MOC, as written on January 25, 2021. Our support of the sampling schedule and regime outlined in this updated MOC is for 2021 only, under COVID-19 restrictions. Any other proposals for sampling at John Day Dam in 2021, outside of what is currently written in this updated MOC, should be considered separately, with a separate review process.

OFFICIAL COORDINATION REQUEST FOR NON-ROUTINE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

COORDINATION TITLE– *20JDA21 COVID-19 Daytime condition sampling proposal*

COORDINATION DATE– 9 December 2020 Updated 25 January 2021

PROJECT– John Day Dam

RESPONSE DATE – 7 January 2021

Description of the problem

○

○ Current COVID-19 restrictions and preventative measures will limit the number of staff at the John Day Dam Smolt Monitoring Facility (SMF). These restrictions include reducing staff to a maximum of two Corps personnel, social distancing, face coverings when six feet of social distancing is not possible and maximizing teleworking. To achieve these COVID-19 restrictions, John Day Fisheries proposes to reduce juvenile salmon and steelhead sampling to a level needed to meet condition sampling during the 2021 fish passage season. Starting 1 March 2021 (weather dependent), the John Day maintenance staff will start deploying screens in Main Units 1-4 with deployment expected to be completed in one day. Following deployment of the screens, condition sampling will start the following morning with the sample starting at 0700. Condition sampling will target 100 fish of the predominate salmonid species for condition sampling every other day from 0700 – 1300. Condition sampling will continue every other day until warm water temperatures are reached. When river temperatures exceed 70 degrees, the SMF will follow Fish Passage Plan protocols for warm water sampling and condition sampling will occur twice per week (Monday and Thursday) until water temperatures fall below 69.5 degrees or until 15 September.

Type of outage required - None

Impact on facility operation (FPP deviations) Change in 2021 operations from 24 hour, every other day sampling to a modified sampling schedule of every other day between 0700-1300 (6 hours). Condition sampling will target 100 fish of the predominate salmonid species migrating in the river. This will impact the index sampling in a manner similar to the COVID sampling protocols implemented with MFR 20JDA02.

Impact on unit priority No impacts to unit priority. The FPP will be followed for unit priorities.

Impact on forebay/tailwater operation No impacts to forebay/tailwater operations.

Impact on spill None, spill would follow the FPP.

Dates of impacts/repairs These measures are anticipated to begin 1 March 2021.

Length of time for repairs Condition sampling will be for the entire 2021 fish passage season. The end of COVID-19 restrictions is unknown so condition sampling will likely be in place for the entire fish passage season in 2021.

Analysis of potential impacts to fish

1. 10-year average passage by run during the period of impact for adults and juvenile listed species, as appropriate for the proposed action and time of year;

Adult passage season is from 1 March to 30 November and the proposed action will not impact adult passage. Juvenile bypass system (JBS) is operated from 1 March through 15 September for juvenile passage. Changing the sampling strategy could decrease the number of adult fallbacks passing over the wetted separator during SMF operations and reduce the number of juvenile fish passing over the wetted separator. Condition sampling will decrease the number of juvenile fish being held prior to sampling conducted by PSMFC personnel. The average holding time for juvenile fish in the collection tanks at John Day is approximately 9.5 hours. Reducing this holding time will not impact juvenile fish collected in the SMF.

2. Statement about the current year's run (e.g., higher or lower than 10-year average);
No impact to current year's run.

3. Estimated exposure to impact by species and age class (i.e., number or percentage of run exposed to an impact by the action); The COVID-19 condition sampling will decrease the exposure to all species and age classes. The reduction in sampling hours reduces the impact to adults crossing the wetted separator, and reduces juvenile holding times and handling times.

4. Type of impact by species and age class (increased delay, exposure to predation, exposure to a route of higher injury/mortality rate, exposure to higher TDG, etc.);
No significant impacts are anticipated with changing the sampling strategy from 24-hour every-other-day to the proposed COVID-19 protocol which is a 6-hour sample, every other day.

Summary statement - expected impacts on:

Downstream migrants No impacts to downstream migrants. The alternative sampling strategy will benefit juvenile migrants since fewer juvenile fish will be handled or held. The JBS does have full flow PIT tag detection, which will allow fisheries managers to analyze the number of PIT tagged fish passing through the JBS during non-sampling hours.

Upstream migrants (including Bull Trout) No impacts to adult bull trout and no evidence that adult bull trout are falling back through the JDA JBS.

Lamprey No impacts to adult lamprey but reduced numbers of juvenile lamprey collection is likely with the COVID-19 condition sampling strategy which reduced hours of sampling that eliminates evening samples. SMF staff will be ready to assist researchers to collect lamprey outside of the proposed hours of collection when needed. SMF staff has the flexibility to start the collection up to three hours earlier to accommodate researcher needs. Specific collection needs and timing of additional collection will need to be coordinated between the researcher and SMF staff.

Comments from agencies

Final coordination results

After Action update (After action statement stating what the effect of the action was on listed species. This statement could simply state that the MOC analysis was correct and the action went as expected, or it could explain how the actual action changed the expected effect (e.g., you didn't need to close that AWS valve after all, so there was no impact of the action). List any actual mortality noted as a result of the action)

Please email or call with questions or concerns.
Thank you,

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