

Corps to release full power house capacity at Libby Dam for several weeks
Contact: Cindy Henriksen (503) 808-3945

SEATTLE - Corps water managers are advising that high flows over the weekend of May 20-21 were the result of low elevation runoff from streams between Libby Dam and Bonners Ferry, and that there is more high elevation snow pack above Libby Dam remaining to continue to fill Koocanusa Reservoir. Because of this remaining snow pack water, Corps water managers will be releasing full power house capacity of 25,000 cfs from Libby Dam for several weeks in order to slow the refill and allow storage volume in Lake Koocanusa to accommodate as much of the high elevation runoff as possible to minimize the risk of Kootenai Valley flooding and Libby Dam spilling. The high elevation runoff is expected to continue into June and July

Corps water managers note that prior to Libby Dam flood control operations, the unseasonably warm mid-May weather over the weekend of May 20-21 would have sent over 100,000 cfs down the Kootenai River, and the towns of Libby, Troy and Bonners Ferry would have been flooded. Without Libby Dam flood control, Bonners Ferry and the Kootenai Flats area would have seen flooding similar to that experienced in 1954 and 1961. When the nearly 80,000 cfs flowing into Koocanusa Reservoir over this weekend were combined with local flows from the flooding Moyie and Yaak Rivers of over 30,000 cfs, there would have been extensive flooding throughout the entire river valley.