

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decreasing water releases at Libby Dam

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SEATTLE -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water managers will slowly decrease water being released from Libby Dam in Montana starting at noon today.

Forecasts, generated which are by the National Weather Service River Forecast Center and are used by the Corps to make decisions on dam operations, indicates inflows to Libby reservoir will decrease. The Kootenai River was above flood stage at Bonners Ferry, Idaho, at 1766.33. The National Weather Service River Forecast Center is forecasting that the stage at Bonners Ferry will drop below flood stage (1764.0 feet) sometime on Thursday.

The Libby reservoir elevation today was 2458.26 ft, which is within 0.8 ft from full. Water managers are reducing the water released by 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) every 4 hours until total project outflow is 45,000 cfs. As inflows continue to recede this week, additional decreases in outflow are expected.

Corps emergency management teams are on the ground providing technical assistance at sites that have been affected. In Bonners Ferry the Corps is assisting local emergency management officials with strengthening levees and providing assessments on weakened structures. In Montana, the Corps is working with local emergency management officials on areas of concern.

The public is urged to be aware and take caution near the river during these higher flows. The water velocities are high and water temperatures are still quite cold. An added danger is debris accumulation along the river and possible stream bank erosion in some locations.

River forecasts are being monitored and Libby operations may be adjusted as new information becomes available.