

Albeni Falls Dam starts winter draft operations Saturday

Contact: Paul Koski (503) 808-3947

SEATTLE -- Lake Pend Oreille will start falling to its winter level beginning Saturday, according to the Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

The Corps regulates the level of Lake Pend Oreille with the operation of Albeni Falls Dam. Current discharges are approximately 13,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). Starting at 4 a.m. until 6 a.m. on Saturday (Oct. 7), outflow will be increased 10,000 cfs to a total discharge of 23,000 cfs. On Sunday (Oct. 8) at 4 a.m. outflow will once again be increased 5,000 cfs for a total discharge of 28,000 cfs. The project is being operated to draft to elevation 2,051 feet above sea level by mid-November. The ending elevation depends on precipitation received in the basin.

Residents and users of the lake and river areas are cautioned to be aware of changing water levels. The time of the release, however, should have minimum impact. Water safety is always urged by the Corps.

The winter operation was submitted in a System Operational Request (SOR) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), National Marine Fisheries Service and the Pend Oreille/Priest Lakes Commission on Sept. 15. It was submitted to the Regional Forum Technical Management Team (TMT), created by the 2000 National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Opinions. Consensus of TMT members was to implement the SOR. The Corps has agreed to implement it.

Lake Pend Oreille's winter level is managed in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Idaho fish managers as part of a 10-year test of lake levels on kokanee. These fish serve as a major food source for Lake Pend Oreille's threatened bull trout.

Information about the lake level for Lake Pend Oreille is on-line at:

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nws/hh/basins/pend.html>