

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ramping back Libby Dam outflows for flood control today

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Portland, OR. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is reducing the outflows from Libby Dam today in response to higher flow down the unregulated rivers below the dam due to the warm temperatures and melting snowpack.

"We are decreasing water releases from Libby Dam, decreasing it from 13,800 cubic feet a second (cfs) down to 8,800 cfs in two steps this afternoon," said Cathy Hlebechuk, a hydraulic engineer with the Northwestern Division Water Management Division.

"The peak Bonners Ferry elevation is expected tomorrow, so given the uncertainty of the flows out of the unregulated rivers – the Moyie, Yaak and Fisher – we coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials to have lower flows so we could protect against flooding. There is plenty of space in Koocanusa Reservoir, impounded by Libby Dam and we can use that to give a cushion to ease any downstream flooding that could occur," said Hlebechuk.

Once the peak has passed, the project will return to passing the VARQ Flood Control Flow, currently 13,800 cfs. The project will hold this outflow until the sturgeon flows commence sometime in late May or early June. River users should note that the river conditions can change rapidly.

The Corps operates and maintains Libby Dam for multiple uses that are consistent with project authorizations and applicable laws and regulations. The Corps' primary consideration is minimizing risk to human life, health and safety while meeting Libby Dam's multiple purposes and responsibilities.

More information about Libby Dam operations is available on the Corps Seattle District Web site at www.nws.usace.army.mil under hot topics, "Libby Dam 2008 Operations."

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