



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:
March 31, 2010
Release No. 10-16

Contact:
Greg Graham
(509)-527-7316

Public Affairs Office
(509) 527-7020
Joe Saxon
Bruce Henrickson

Corps of Engineers Releases Dam Breaching Plan of Study

Portland, Ore. - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers today released a plan of study identifying steps if needed for evaluating the breaching of one or more of the lower Snake River dams.

The plan of study, a requirement of the Adaptive Management Implementation Plan released in September 2009, defines how a lower Snake River fish passage improvement and dam breaching feasibility study would be managed and conducted if such a study were to be initiated.

“Overall, the status of the Snake River species has improved,” said Lt. Col. Michael Farrell, District Commander of the Corps’ Walla Walla District. “This plan of study is ready should the Administration determine that an examination of the risks and benefits of breaching is needed.”

While the Obama Administration views dam breaching as a contingency of last resort, it recognizes that conditions may change and we need to lay out the steps to be taken.

The Corps completed a comprehensive feasibility study in 2002. The study evaluated, but did not recommend, the implementation of dam breaching. The lower Snake River dams affect only four of the 13 listed species of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River Basin. The Corps’ preferred alternative focused on improving juvenile salmon migration through the Lower Snake River Project using changes in river operations and making major system passage improvements.

The plan of study describes two phases: the completion of technical studies, followed by a review by the Administration, and, if necessary, the development of an environmental impact statement (EIS), which includes a comprehensive public involvement process. The new feasibility report and EIS would be used to seek congressional authority to breach one or more of the Lower Snake River dams.

“Any decision regarding dam breaching will be guided by the best available science and any biological effects on the species,” said Farrell. “The Corps operates its dams to meet expectations assumed in the NOAA Biological Opinion for adult and juvenile fish passage.”

The plan of study is posted at: www.nww.usace.army.mil/amip/lrrip/default.asp.

-30-

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – WALLA WALLA DISTRICT

Phone (509) 527-7020 FAX (509) 527-7824

E-mail: cenww-pa@usace.army.mil

Web site: www.nww.usace.army.mil