

MEMO

Operational Guidelines in Consideration of a 5-Day Summer Work Schedule at the Merwin Fish Collection Facility

Prepared by PacifiCorp

Reviewed and Accepted by the Aquatic Coordination Committee

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Background

During the June 2015 monthly Aquatic Coordination Committee (ACC) meeting, PacifiCorp requested that operations of the Merwin Fish Collection Facility (MFCF) be modified to a five (5) day per week work schedule during the summer months of July and August. Currently the facility operates seven (7) days a week. Rational for this request is that during this timeframe, catch at the facility consists almost exclusively of adult hatchery summer steelhead. These fish are either transported back downstream as part of the WDFW angler recycling program or are taken directly to a hatchery; summer steelhead are not transported upstream. PacifiCorp's proposal is to go to a schedule in which the fish lift and conveyance system remains operational seven (7) days per week, however daily sorting of fish would only occur Monday through Friday. Fish collected on Saturday and Sunday would be held in the presort pond and then processed the following Monday. The following section provides a summary of the protocols that would be used to guide operational decisions for the MFCF during the summer and returning to a seven (7) day per week schedule in the fall.

Proposed Operational Protocols

An adaptive management type approach will be used for determining if/when the abbreviated summer work schedule is implemented each year. The reason for this is that conditions can change from year to year, and full fish reintroduction has not yet been established. Currently, all spring Chinook are being transported to the hatchery as part of brood stock collection. While the majority of these fish arrive at the MFCF in May and June, some of these fish are also collected in July and August. Once full reintroduction has been established, transport of these adults into the upper basin will need to be considered. PacifiCorp will consult with the ACC prior to implementing the five (5) day per week summer operations schedule each year.

PacifiCorp will resume a seven (7) day per week sorting and transport schedule when early-run coho begin to arrive at the MFCF and no later than the first day of September. Returning to an extended schedule prior to September would occur when a combined total of five (5) early run coho are collected over the preceding five (5) day work period or conditions are forecasted that would stimulate fish to pass (i.e., increased flows at Merwin Dam). Coho counts downstream at Lewis River Hatchery will be used to guide this decision.