



## **MEDIA ADVISORY/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY**

### **Salmon complete magnificent journey Biologists count redds made by spawning fall Chinook salmon at Vernita Bar**

**Bonneville Power Administration**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MONDAY, Sept. 17, 1997**

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**What:**

The annual fall run of Northwest salmon is one of nature's most awe-inspiring events. Biologists will monitor salmon spawning at Vernita Bar, the last major fall Chinook spawning area on the mainstem of the Columbia River. The bar represents nearly 40 percent of the spawning area in the Hanford Reach, one of the only free-flowing stretches of the 1,214 mile long Columbia River.

**Who:**

Biologists from the Bonneville Power Administration, Nation Marine Fisheries Services, Grant County Public Utility District, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Northwest tribes will pull on their rubber boots to look for redds, nests made in the gravel bar. The biologists counted about 460 redds on the bar in 1996.

**When:**

Sunday, Nov. 23, 1997 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Where:**

Vernita Bar is located on the Columbia River near Desert Aire, Wash. The gravel bar is about four miles downstream from Grant County PUD's Priest Rapids Dam. (See attached directions)

**Why:**

The anadromous fish overcome many obstacles to spawn and renew life. The eggs they lay must be protected with the same ambitious effort. BPA teams up with other mid-Columbia dam operators to manipulate the flows of water in this reach to ensure the eggs are deposited in an area where water levels are kept high enough through the winter so that the redds remain covered until all the eggs hatch sometime between mid-April and late-June. The biologists will count the redds and determine the level of flow needed over Vernita Bar to protect them.