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Limited spill to help fish passage will continue

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Bonneville Power Administration

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PORTLAND, Ore. – The Bonneville Power Administration and other federal agencies decided on June 1 to continue the current level of limited spill operations for fish passage at Bonneville, The Dalles, John Day and McNary dams. The agencies will monitor the situation and have not set a specific date for how long spill will continue.

While spill has been limited this year due to the combined effects of the second worst drought year on record and an ongoing power emergency, the federal agencies have been targeting spill operations to provide maximum benefit to the most species while maintaining power system reliability.

The primary benefit of spring spill is for juvenile steelhead and spring chinook that originate in the mid- and lower Columbia River and associated tributaries since many of these fish do not have access to transportation by barges.

Spill is water that goes over a spillway at a dam rather than through turbines. It is intended to minimize the number of juvenile fish traveling downstream that pass through hydro turbines. BPA and the other agencies intend to return to normal operations next year if there is sufficient water supply.

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