

Hells Canyon Flows Update

We are sending out this email to provide information about Snake River flows this spring and summer. As you are likely already aware, flows along the Snake River this year have been and continue to be extremely low. The National Weather Service River Forecast Center in Portland is predicting the April through July inflow into Brownlee Reservoir to be just 3.0 million acre-feet or about half of normal. These low inflows will have an impact on the operations of Idaho Power's Hells Canyon Complex this spring and summer.

The information contained in this email is intended to keep the boating community below Hells Canyon Dam informed about conditions on the Snake River. We intend to provide periodic email updates this spring and summer in an effort to provide information on flow and operation conditions to the boating community. For the most current information, we recommend that boaters in Hells Canyon utilize the flow monitors located at the Hells Canyon Visitors Center, Pittsburg Landing, Cache Creek, Heller Bar, Hells Gate Marina and at the Forest Service's Hells Canyon National Recreational Area office in Clarkston Washington. River users may also call 1-800-422-3143 for the latest stream flow and Brownlee reservoir water level information. Flow information for Hells Canyon can also be found on the [Idaho Power water information website](#) . If you have any questions or comments, you may contact us at hccflow@idahopower.com.

According to the National Climate Data Center, the January through March precipitation in Idaho was fifth lowest in the last 119 years. This low precipitation contributed to extremely low flows for the month of April. Based on records from 1960 through 2012, the average daily inflow to Brownlee for the month of April is 28,457 cfs. Current inflows to Brownlee Reservoir have averaged 11,092 cfs for the month of April, or 39% of the April average Brownlee inflow. On April 1, the three day average inflow to Brownlee Reservoir was 12,116 cfs. On April 30, the three day average flows were 8,799 cfs, a decline of 3,317 cfs over the course of the month. The lower than average inflows are the result of poor base flow conditions in the mid-Snake, low snowpack levels, continuing low precipitation, and low reservoir content in the reservoirs above Brownlee.

Below Hells Canyon Dam, Idaho Power will make a concerted effort to maintain minimum flows above 8,700 cfs until emergence of Fall Chinook from redds located in Hells Canyon and the Nez Perce Tribe have released salmon from their acclimation tanks at Pittsburg Landing. Fall Chinook emergence is generally complete by mid-May and the Nez Perce Tribe generally release salmon by the third week of May. We are less certain about the magnitude of flows at the end of May and into early June. Consistent with our existing license, Idaho Power will vary flows from Hells Canyon Dam to meet peak load demand through the spring and summer months. The current water supply outlook makes imperative the judicious management of water to ensure customer demand continues to be reliably met, and may lead to Hells Canyon Dam outflows below 8,500 cfs as early as late May or early June. Brownlee Reservoir is approximately 24 feet below full pool and is projected to refill to full pool by late June. We plan on sending out our next update in a few weeks. If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact us by email at hccflow@idahopower.com.

