

Dam operations for 2026 under the Preliminary Injunction

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2026 LSRCF Annual Meeting

April 23, 2026

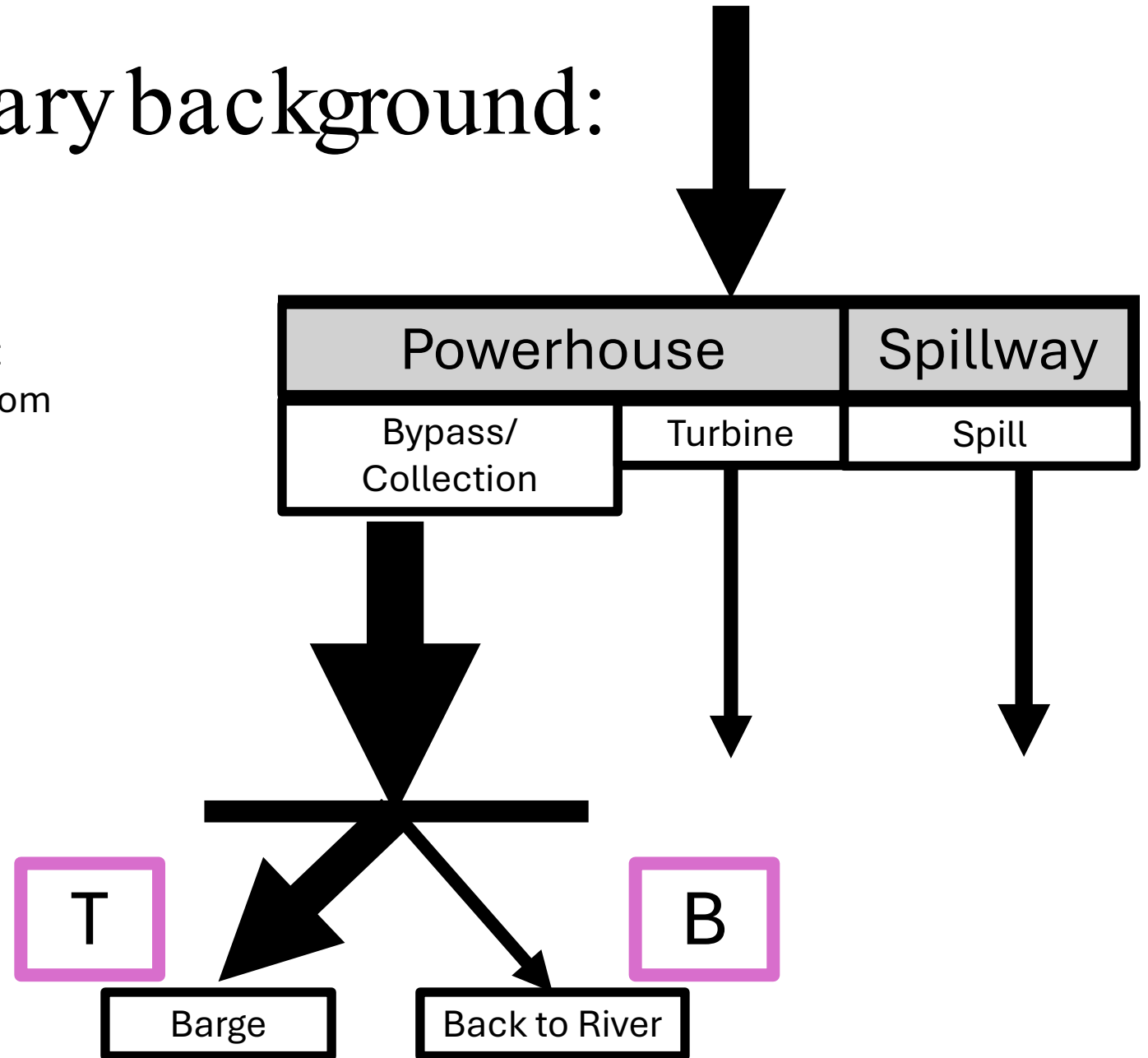


Itinerary

- Relevant & necessary background
- 2026 operations as dictated by the Court in the Preliminary Injunction (PI)
- Fish passage issues the PI addresses
- Fish passage issues the PI does not address
- Will we see meaningful changes in salmon and steelhead survival and return rates?

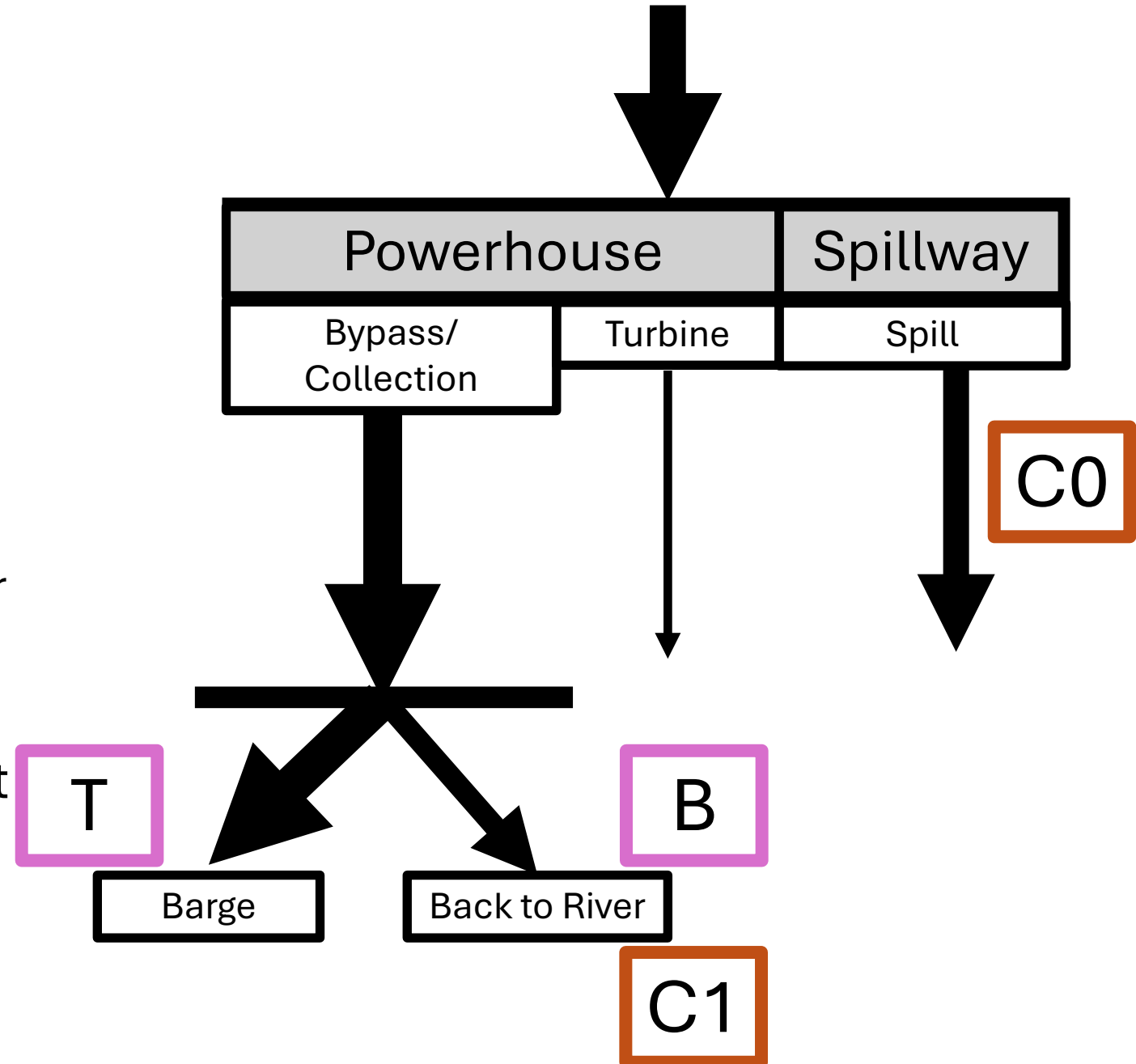
Relevant & necessary background:

- 1968: Research on transport efficacy begins
- 1989: USACE declared transport as the primary management strategy
 - Maximum transport (80-95%)
- 1991-1992: ESA listing of SR sockeye and sp/su Chinook



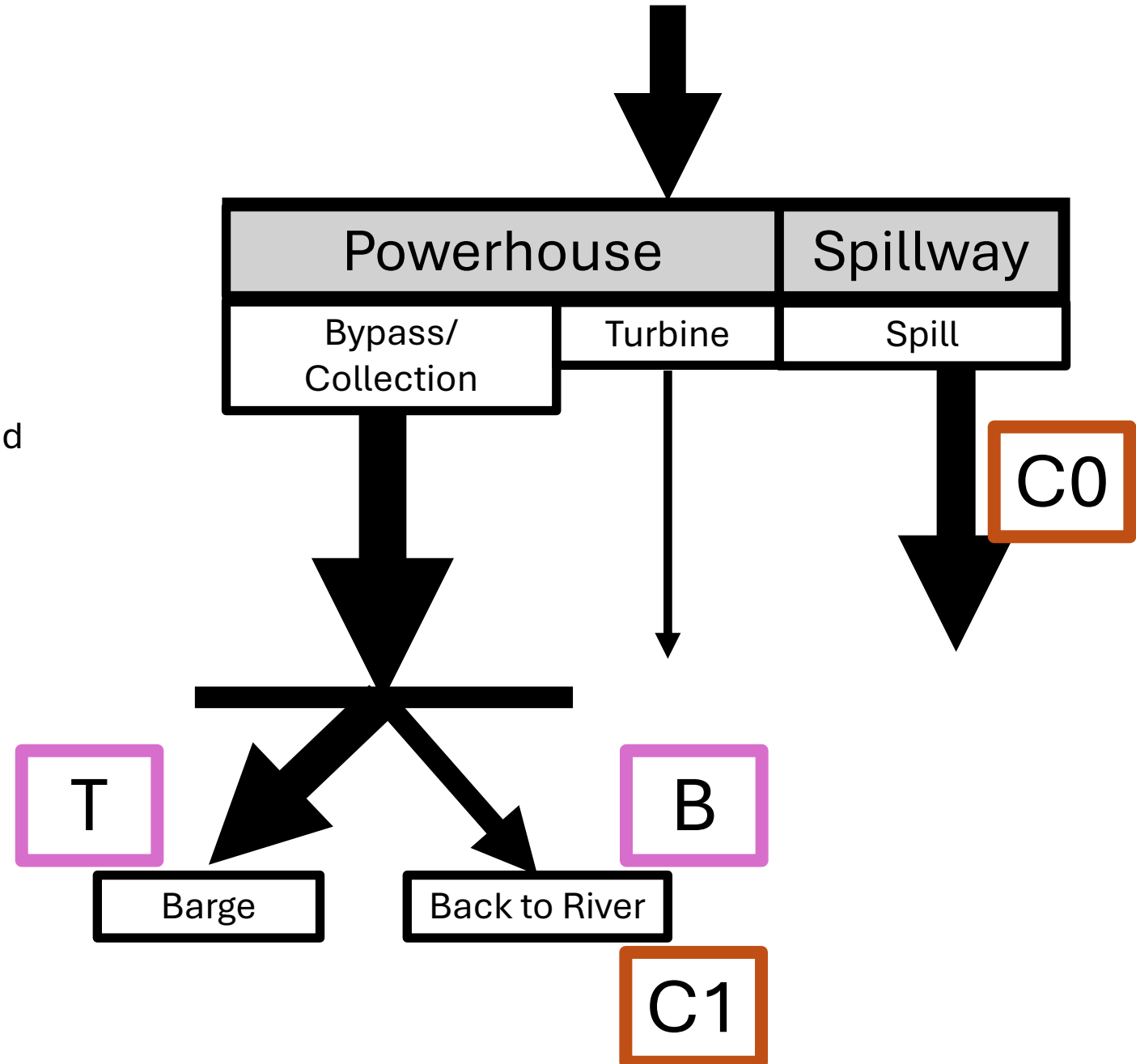
1995-2005

- Spill provided when SR flows exceeded 100kcfs (then 80kcfs)
- Comparative Survival Study introduces a “control group” to transport evaluations
 - (C0) = not detected at collector dam
 - C1 = detected, but not transported
- Fish passage infrastructure at dams is improved
 - Spillway weirs



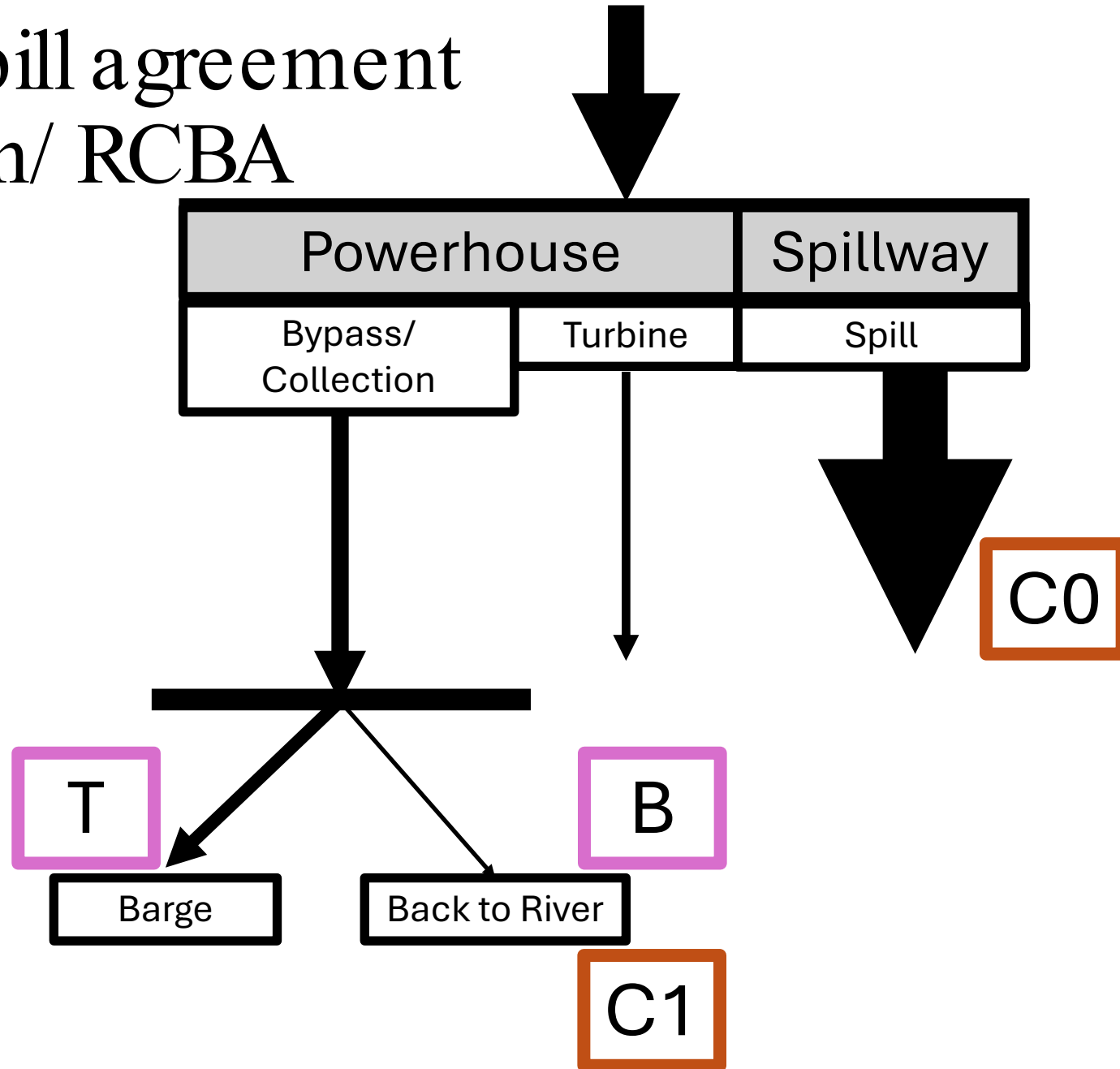
2006 - 2017

- River discharge limits removed from spill implementation
- Observation #2: Barge Transportation is insufficient to recover Snake River salmon and steelhead
- Spillway weirs completed
- “Performance standard” spill implemented
- Spill experiment proposed and reviewed by Independent Science Advisory Board (CSSOC 2023, 2017)



2018-2025: Flexible spill agreement / 2020 Proposed Action/ RCBA

- Spill proportion increased significantly
- Transport proportion decreased significantly



Some observations on high spring spill: Total dissolved gas

- If 125% total dissolved gas saturation was killing all of the smolts, shouldn't it show up in the monitoring data?

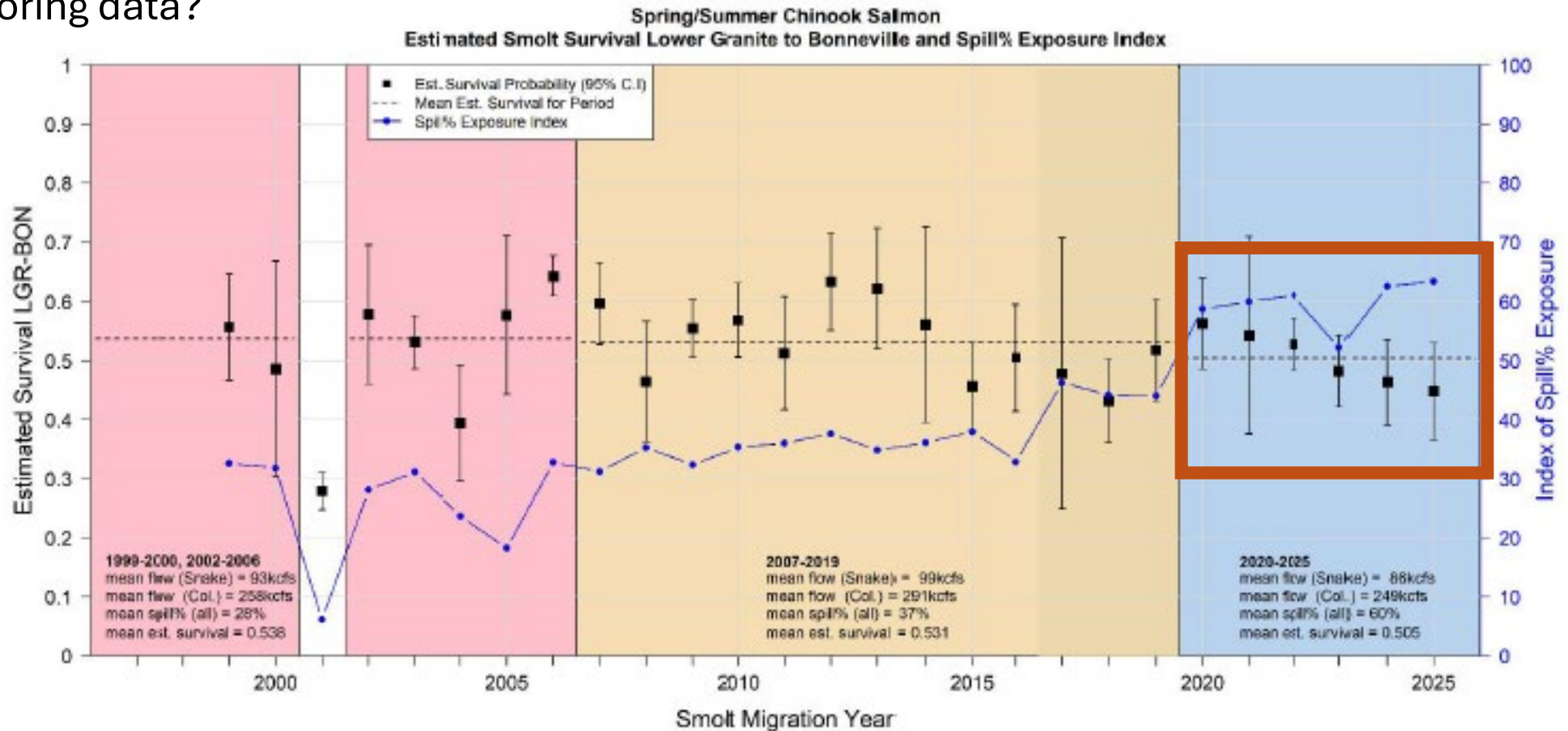


Figure 2 in Decl. of S. G. Smith, Case 3:01-cv-00640-SI, Filed 12/16/25

Conditions matter more now that 90-95% smolts are migrating in-river

- Example 1: Barge Transport from Lower Monumental
 - Spill needs to be reduced during barge loading
 - Causes large swings in outflow and pool elevations from Little Goose Dam to below Ice Harbor Dam

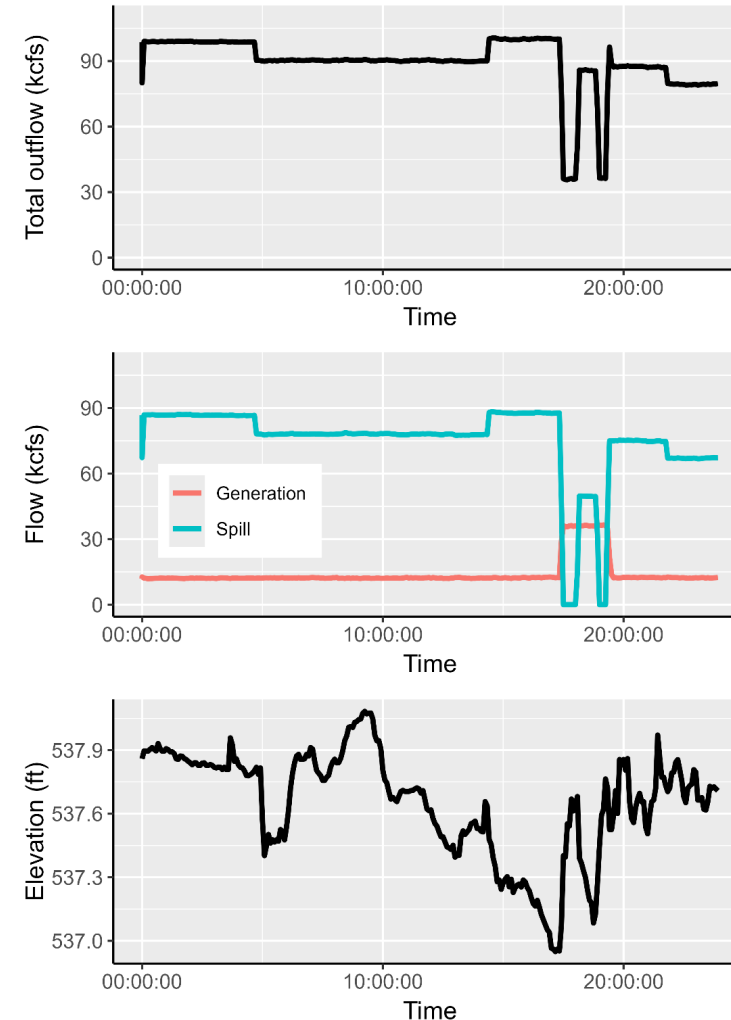


Figure from Ebel 2025 presentation to RIOG 19 February 2025

Operations matter.

- The transport operation required at LMN could negate any possible benefits of transport as a whole

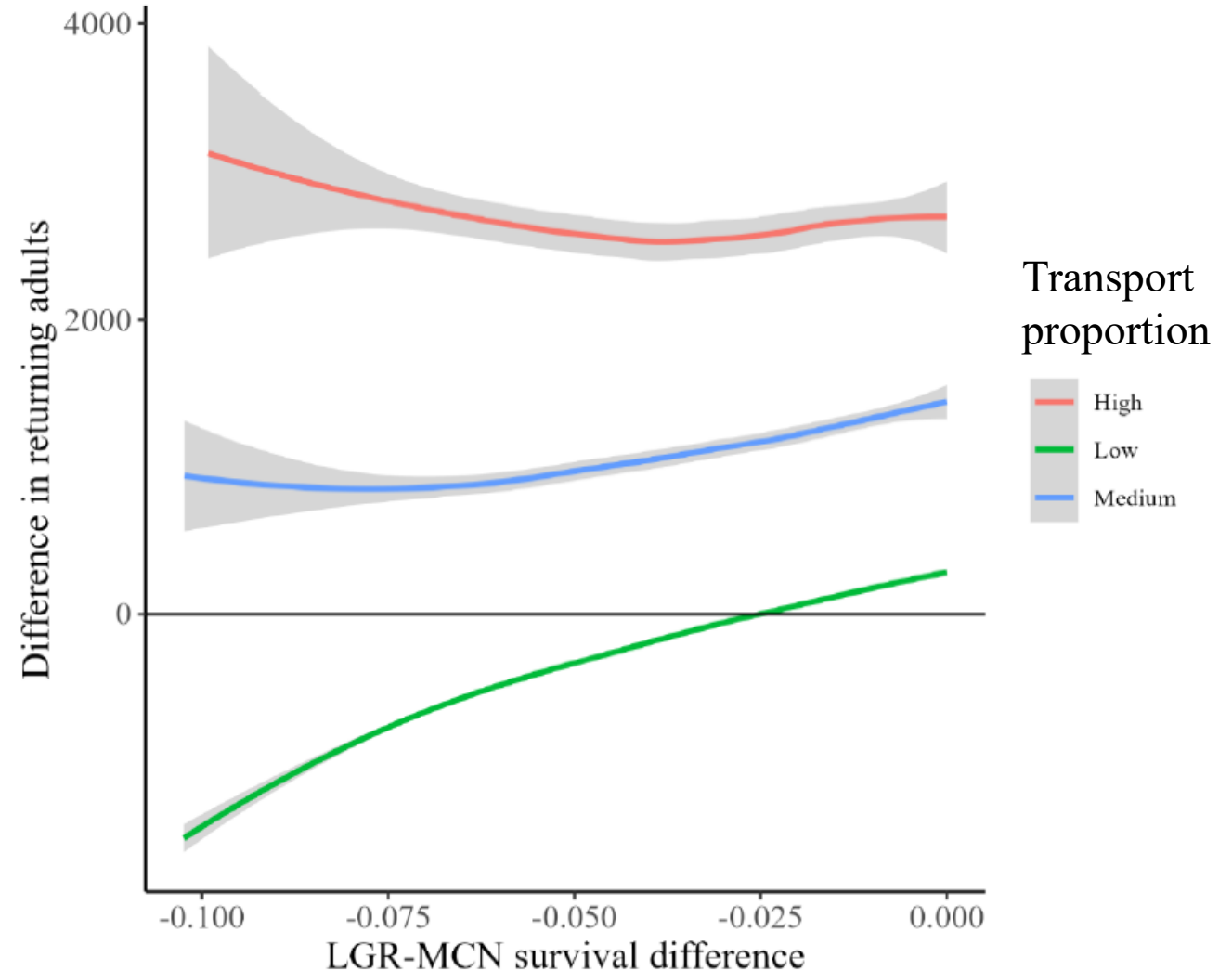


Figure from Ebel 2025 presentation to RIOG 19 February 2025

Infrastructure matters



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, WALLA WALLA DISTRICT
201 NORTH 3RD AVENUE
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362-1876

CENWW-EC (1130)

29 September 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR Chief of Operations Division

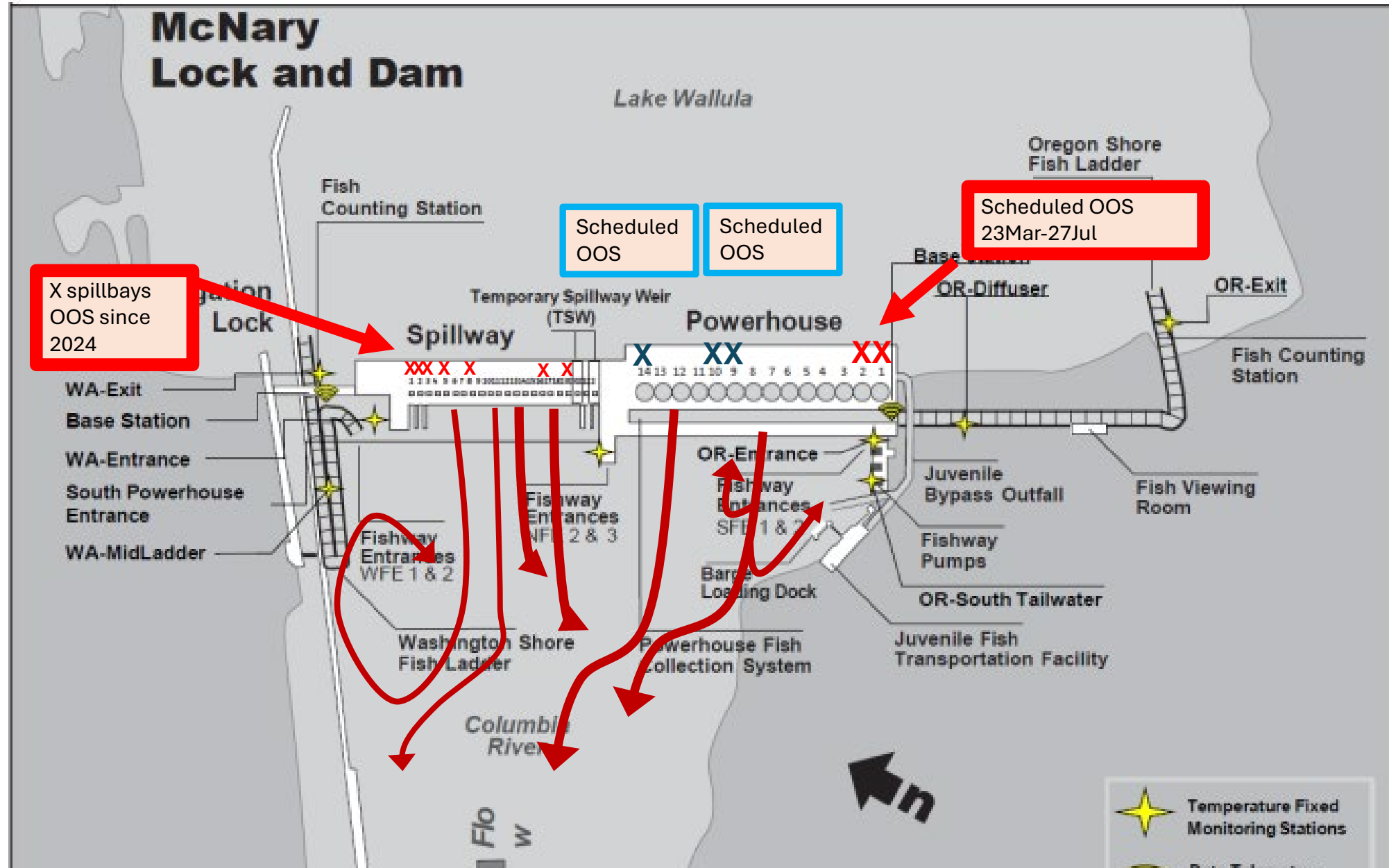
SUBJECT: McNary Lock and Dam, Spillway Hoist Restrictions

1. Purpose: Outline the engineering, limitations, and restrictions of the spillway hoist at McNary Dam in consideration of operational, dam safety, life safety mission requirements.

Infrastructure function matters.

McNary Dam

- Many OOS spillbays since 2024
- Operating gates are in untested “split-leaf” mode
- OOS turbines



Flow matters

- 18 of the past 78 years with April-July Runoff below 70 thousand acre feet (Kaf) at Bonneville Dam
- 4 of those occurred since 2020

Location	Year	Apr-Jul Runoff (Kaf)
BONO3	2006	93258.08
BONO3	2007	74807.41
BONO3	2008	87225.95
BONO3	2009	75028.39
BONO3	2010	69556.44
BONO3	2011	115778.2
BONO3	2012	108671.9
BONO3	2013	79509.31
BONO3	2014	86503.09
BONO3	2015	53793.58
BONO3	2016	73916.16
BONO3	2017	102745.3
BONO3	2018	95457.56
BONO3	2019	75719.6
BONO3	2020	85658.75
BONO3	2021	66832.4
BONO3	2022	88721.04
BONO3	2023	69924.79
BONO3	2024	59802.99
BONO3	2025	62213.81



Operations under the Preliminary Injunction

- Not a lot different from 2024-2025
 - 125% TDG spill cap
 - Exceptions:
 - LGS (8hr – 30% spill for adult passage)
 - BON (150 Kcfs cap due to maintenance)
 - TDA – 40% spill
 - *Barge transportation halted at Lower Monumental
 - *Summer spill levels extended [back to] August 31st
 - *24 h spill through spillway weir in early spring (March) and fall (Sep-15Nov)

Federal defendants have appealed decision to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals

Ask a question