

**TESTIMONY OF  
THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY TRIBES  
BEFORE PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
March 5, 2006  
Seattle, WA**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Council. My name is Bruce Jim. I am a member of the Fish and Wildlife Committee of Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. I am here today to provide Testimony on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on mass marking and the Coded Wire Tag Expert Panel Report. The tribes appreciate the hard work of the Expert Panel in developing a comprehensive report in such a short timeframe. The report raises many issues that the tribes believe need to be addressed relative to the effects of mass marking and mark selective fisheries on allocation and conservation. For many years the tribes voiced concerns about the implementation of mass marking and mark selective fisheries, which were ignored. The findings and recommendations of the Expert Panel validate many of the tribal concerns. A more extensive version of the tribal comments, as well as the comments of other agencies, can be found on the Pacific Salmon Commission website.

Mass marking escalated several years ago when Congressman Norm Dicks added appropriations language requiring virtually all federally funded hatchery programs to adipose fin clip the salmon. These actions were carried out without much consideration on the effect to the Coded Wire Tag program, which provides the information needed to manage fisheries on a stock-specific basis. As a result the Expert Panel found the usefulness of the Coded Wire Tag program to be degraded. The Expert Panel made several recommendations to upgrade the Coded Wire Tag program, since no alternative technology currently exists to provide necessary management information. The tribes support the actions of the Pacific Salmon Commission to develop a plan to implement the recommendations of the Expert Panel. The tribes will actively participate on the work group that develops the action plan.

The Expert Panel Report raises issues about the level of sampling, regardless of the stock identification method used. The lack of sampling in certain areas, particularly in freshwater sport fisheries and escapement areas, introduces large uncertainties into the estimates of fisheries impacts. There appears to be plenty of financial support to mass mark the fish, but little interest in supporting sampling activities to adequately measure fishery effects. None of the agencies advocating mass marking and mark selective fisheries have indicated where the money for the increased sampling costs will come from. Without increased attention to improving sampling, we will in effect be managing fisheries nearly blind.

It is our understanding that no new mark selective fisheries will be proposed for 2006. However, as

more Chinook salmon are mass marked, there will be more and more pressure to implement more extensive selective Chinook fisheries. Increasing selective fisheries will not benefit wild fish, in part, because of the increased mortality rates from handling wild fish in many fisheries.

There will be significant costs from the implementation of increased mass marking and mark selective fisheries. No one has explained to us how these costs will be paid for. Money being spent on mass marking and mark selective fisheries would be better spent on salmon recovery.

The Columbia River tribes strongly disagree with increased mass marking and mark selective fisheries. Mass marking and mark selective fisheries go against the tribal traditional cultural values towards salmon. The Creator blessed us with the salmon to provide food for our people and the salmon must be respected.

This concludes my statement. Thank You.