

**TESTIMONY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY TRIBES  
BEFORE PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**April 5, 2014, Vancouver, WA**

Good day members of the Council. My name is Bruce Jim Sr. I am a member of the Fish and Wildlife committee of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. I am here with Johnny Jackson who is a member of the Yakama Nation, a Commissioner for CRITFC and also a treaty fisherman on the Columbia. We are here to provide testimony on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

We have several items we would like to bring to the attention to the Council.

We are very concerned about how the pre-season planning process is going this spring. As parties to *U.S. v. Oregon* we have worked hard to do an analysis of proposed fisheries to assure we are protecting, restoring and enhancing Columbia River stocks. Yet, this doesn't seem to be the approach the states or federal agencies want to take with analyzing impacts. This is not good fisheries management. We have only just recently received from the states copies of the chinook model used to plan non-treaty Columbia River fisheries. But apparently the linkage between the in-river coho model and coho FRAM is still not working correctly and we have not been provided with any coho model results relative to Columbia upriver coho. Up until now we have been unable to analyze how these fisheries fit with the requirements of the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement or how they may impact our tribal fisheries. Both the chinook and coho models are needed and we expect these models to be shared with the tribes on a more timely basis.

The *U.S. v. Oregon* Policy Committee has asked its Technical Advisory Committee to examine the research done to investigate release mortality rates for possible Columbia River fall season mark selective seine fisheries. Release mortality rates are important for this fishery because of the possible impacts to ESA listed stocks that we are trying to rebuild as well as to treaty/non-treaty sharing. We would like to report that members of the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee have made progress in reaching a technical consensus recommendation for release mortality rates to use for any mark selective seine fisheries in the Columbia River. This was not an easy task and it took time to reach consensus. But because of the rush to try to implement these fisheries the state and tribal staff have not had sufficient time to do the best job in reviewing the results of the complicated release mortality research. We will be reviewing this information with our staff and will discuss it later with the states.

While mark selective seine fisheries are not needed or appropriate for the lower Columbia, if the states do choose to implement them, we want to see rigorous monitoring of this new fishery to ensure that the impacts are within modeled levels. We also support enhanced monitoring of mark selective sport fisheries and especially support the on-board monitoring used in the ocean charter fishery.

We recognize that there are challenges for the Council in crafting ocean fisheries this year especially given the scale of some of the northern fisheries, but we continue to think that the early season chinook ocean mark selective fishery is simply not necessary in order to provide reasonable fishing opportunity. We do however support the concept that the states should give themselves the opportunity to implement full retention fisheries whenever possible as has been done for September coho fishing.

Placing unreasonable demands to set a mark selective fisheries at all costs just to satisfy certain interest groups is not good management. Part of the incentive for the states to implement mark selective fisheries in the fall is simply the lack of real progress in recovering wild lower river tules. For decades the tribal approach has been a gravel to gravel management approach, which means we look at all stages and try to protect them. Part of the reason that the lower river tules along with some other stocks have been difficult to restore is that avian predation remains at unacceptably high levels. Avian predation both in the estuary and far upriver is responsible for the loss of many millions of juvenile salmon and steelhead each year and serves as a major drag on our recovery efforts.

As a way to help more fully inform people about the total impacts of avian predation along with the complicated and difficult steps needed to reduce it, tribal staff are hosting a presentation at 7:00 PM on Sunday evening in the Heritage E Room. Staff will provide detailed information on avian predation impacts both in the estuary and inland, along with information on the tribal perspectives for reducing this predation. We hope that many of you will be able to attend. We also hope that this presentation will provide information useful to the Council and public as we consider the USACE Double Crested Cormorant Management Plan and the companion EIS to be released in June 2014.

Besides populations of predatory birds that are out of balance with the ecosystem, we have many other predators in the Columbia that are not in balance with our fish populations. These include sea lions and a variety of non-native fish among others. All of this out of balance predation needs to be addressed and plans need to be made to reduce excessive numbers of predators. It is not right that we manage fisheries so carefully to keep harvest in balance with the number of fish we have and yet we do almost nothing to manage all these other predators.

We plan on continuing to carefully review the proposed ocean fisheries to ensure that the modeled impacts on upriver chinook and coho stocks don't violate the harvest and allocation limits under the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement and we are hoping that the other Parties to the *US vs. Oregon* will do the same. We will likely have more comments on these proposed fisheries at a later time.

This concludes our statement. Thank You.