

To: Deputy Project Leader, Columbia River Fish Program Office, USFWS

From: Lee Hillwig, Supervisory Fishery Biologist, Region 1, USFWS

Subject: Mass Marking Meeting with Congressman Norm Dicks (March 17, 2003)

On March 17, 2003 Congressman Norm Dicks held a meeting at his Bremerton, WA office to address FY 2003 congressional appropriations language that calls for the mass marking of salmonids produced at federally funded or operated hatcheries, including, but not limited to, steelhead, coho salmon and chinook salmon. Attendance at the meeting consisted of representatives of the State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Tribes of the Puget Sound and Olympic areas, Northwest Indian Fish Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA-Fisheries, Northwest Marine Technologies, and Mr. Dicks' staff assistants.

The meeting was focused on identifying issues and concerns regarding the implementation of a west coast salmon mass marking strategy and agreement on a strategy to address those issues and concerns. There was general consensus that full implementation of a mass marking program in FY 2003 would not be reasonable because of logistical and funding problems. It was further recognized a transitional period of at least a year would allow the management agencies time to identify any additional concerns and develop a strategy for implementation. The congressman recognized the need for additional funding resources, as well as the possible need to refine legislative language to clarify direction for mass marking, including exceptions where mass marking is not an appropriate management strategy.

It was agreed by the participants that a team consisting of the various co-managers should be established to address implementation of the mass marking legislation. Jeff Koenings, Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Jim Anderson, Northwest Indian Fish Commission agreed to lead an effort to establish a such a team made up of representatives from all interested co-managers. The team would be tasked with identifying logistical and technical issues and developing an appropriate implementation strategy.