



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Mr. Don Kowal  
Executive Secretary  
Pacific Salmon Commission  
600-1155 Robson Street  
Vancouver, B.C., V6E 1B5

Dear Mr. Kowal:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the "Report of the Expert Panel on the Future of the Coded Wire Tag Recovery Program for Pacific Salmon". The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) appreciates the time, thought and work contributed by the Expert Panel (EP) to produce this report, and agree with much of the substance and recommendations in the document. It is our hope that work will proceed to address many of the challenges to the current Coded Wire Tagging (CWT) program, with foresight for ever-changing fisheries, their management and the identification of contributing salmon stocks.

Overall, we support the corrective measures to address current deficiencies in the CWT program as outlined in the EP Report. ODFW will continue to support the efforts of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) and technical committees to improve analytical methods compromised by the increasing complexity of the CWT program and implementation of Mass Marking (MM) and Mark Selective Fisheries (MSF).

The CWT program has provided a framework for the assessment of salmon stocks and their management for the past three decades. The EP has done a comprehensive job in detailing the current and emergent challenges for the CWT program to continue to supply the needed information for a viable harvest management scheme, as well as exploring new alternatives for generation of the needed information. We concur with the EP that the CWT System is the only reasonable management alternative for the short term (5-10 years) to provide for the needs of both the treaty and local management agencies. New technologies for the identification of specific stocks seem to hold promise and should be further pursued, however, we must work to improve the current system for the time being.

Specific comments on the EP findings and recommendations are as follows:

**Finding 7:** We have concerns about the demands and relevancy of expansion of Double Index Tagging (DIT) groups given impacts on sampling programs and methodology issues raised that question whether DIT can meet PSC requirements to estimate age- and fishery-specific exploitation rates (Finding 8).

**Recommendations 1-5:** We support all of these recommendations that are designed to correct current deficiencies in the CWT system. Consistent with Recommendation 4, ODFW tagged (Ad+CWT) wild fall chinook on the Siuslaw River in 2002 to determine the adequacy of use of the Salmon River Hatchery stock as the Exploitation Rate Indicator for North Oregon Coast aggregate chinook stocks.

**Recommendation 6:** ODFW's Mark Selective Fisheries are already consistent with this recommendation. We have conducted limited MFS's since 1999 designed to meet very specific conservation objectives for coho and chinook.

**Recommendation 7:** We support an approach similar to the example presented in which tagging and analytical methods are linked to the anticipated intensity of MSF. It is our understanding that the Selective Fishery Evaluation Committee (SFEC) will develop the specific methodologies to implement this approach.

**Recommendation 8:** The PSC should explore the interest of fishery agencies in participating in a "Grand Experiment" to improve the basis for harvest management decisions coastwise. The recommendation may have merit, but needs to be further developed by PSC technical committees.

**Recommendation 9:** The PSC should consider follow-up discussions or workshops to facilitate application of new and improved technologies for the CWT program.

**Recommendation 10:** We support assigning the bi-lateral SFEC to search available literature and agency information relative to mortality rates of alternative marks compared to adipose clips and determine whether additional experiments should be conducted on use of alternative external marks.

**Recommendation 12:** We recognize that this issue is still under debate within the genetics community, and do not presume to interject comment as to the appropriateness of either technology at this time. However, we are aware of the use of a blend of both technologies, and their utility in stock identification in other mixed-stock fisheries (e.g. Bristol Bay Sockeye). While the continued advancements in single nucleotide polymorphism (SNPs) technology is promising, it would seem ill-advised to abandon the substantial investment already made in the development of microsatellite markers and their proven record in stock identification. We assert, therefore, that consideration be made to develop a melding of current and emergent genetic methods (microsatellite, SNPs, and Full Parental Genotyping) to provide for the stock identification needs of current and future fishing regimes.

Again, we compliment the Expert Panel for their comprehensive effort that will lead to improvements in the CWT program and other tools for fishery management. We recognize the importance of a collaborative approach to the implementation of the necessary changes, and stand ready to contribute with the PSC toward practical solutions for the challenges before us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Elicker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roy Elicker  
Interim Director

C: Rollie Rousseau  
Burnie Bohn  
Curt Melcher