



Nez Perce Tribe

Department of Fisheries Resources Management

Administration • Enforcement • Habitat/Watershed • Harvest • Production • Research • Resident Fish
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February 8, 2012

Mr. Kevin Kytola
Sapere Consulting, Inc.
103 E. Main Street, Suite 301
Walla Walla, Washington 99362

Re: Nez Perce Tribe Expectations for NWPCF Fish Tagging Forum

Dear Kevin,

I appreciated the opportunity to attend the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's (NWPCF) Fish Tagging Forum kickoff meeting on November 17th and subsequent meeting in December. Fish marking is an essential tool for fish research and management of both hatchery and natural origin fish. The Nez Perce Tribe currently implements a significant amount of fish tagging of Snake River salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon with various types of tags and marks. It is important for the region to acknowledge/understand that extensive coordination of fish marking already occurs through Annual Operation Plans, *U.S. v Oregon* meetings, and collaborative studies. At the meeting I shared the following Nez Perce Tribe expectations for the Fish Tagging Forum and trust they will be considered throughout the Fish Tagging Forum process.

- 1) The Nez Perce Tribe's guiding principle that "*minimizing intrusive marking and handling of fish supports cultural and spiritual beliefs, respect for the fish, and maximum survival*" should be taken into account throughout the process.
- 2) Marking is done for multiple purposes: research and monitoring, brood stock/escapement management, and selective harvest; all must be considered jointly.
- 3) Marking agreements are under the jurisdiction of *United States v. Oregon* and the 2008-2017 United States v. Oregon Management Agreement and Court Order must be respected.
- 4) 100% marking recommendation DOES NOT require 100% external marking; be careful not to mask selective harvest desires with research, monitoring and evaluation justification.
- 5) Utilization/role up of population (tributary) specific tagging should be priority over mainstem tagging.
- 6) Assessment and acknowledgment of tag effects on adult returns is just as important as efficiencies in costs.

For the Fish Tagging Forum to be a productive and useful process it must address fish marking holistically and not be confined to tagging under the NWPCC Fish and Wildlife Program. Likewise, as specific types of tags are reviewed, all aspects of their application must be taken into consideration. For example, Coded-wire Tag (CWT) use is much broader than the traditional CWT program to monitor harvest. Finally, I am very concerned about the time requirements of participants and more important potential assignments requiring project specific staff time. Our staff resources for regional process are very limited.

At this point, I feel the Fish Tagging Forum is not structured to develop meaningful recommendations and lacks a real connection to regional decisions. As such, the Nez Perce Tribe will not be actively participating. I do intend to monitor the Fish Tagging Forum progress and will reengage if areas directly related to Nez Perce Tribe fisheries program and Treaty protected resources are addressed. Please contact me if the Nez Perce Tribe's expertise, experience, and/or position are needed as the Fish Tagging Forum proceeds.

Sincerely,



Jay A. Hesse
Department of Fisheries Resources Management
Research Director

CC: Dave Johnson, Joe Oatman, Becky Johnson, and Jason Vogel – NPT
Tom Rien – ODFW
Guy Norman - WDFW
Peter Hassemer – IDFG
Phil Roger – CRITFC
Tony Grover – NPCC
Therese Hampton - NW River Partners