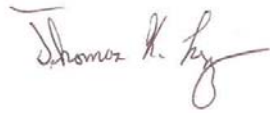


# State, Federal and Tribal Fishery Agencies Joint Technical Staff Memo

*Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
US Fish and Wildlife Service*

TO: Paul Ocker, Northwestern Division, Corps of Engineers



FROM: Thomas K. Lorz, Vice Chairperson  
Fish Passage Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Special SRWG meeting regarding ISAB Spill-Transport Review

DATE: December 1, 2008

We thank the Corps of Engineers for initiating a special SRWG meeting to discuss how to bridge information gaps for some of the key uncertainties highlighted in the ISAB's Snake River Spill - Transport Review regarding transportation and straying issues. We also appreciate the Corps' efforts to begin developing a plan to reduce the uncertainties that were identified. We offer the following summary of the main technical issues that were discussed and appeared to have broad support among the attendees at the meeting:

## I. Snake River sockeye survival study:

- If a sockeye transportation evaluation is initiated, PIT-tagging efforts should be focused at hatcheries and traps above the Snake River dams. The potential for appreciably increasing sample size by tagging sockeye at the dams appeared small and additional harm or differential treatment effects could be introduced by tagging these fish during this time in their migration.
- A proper evaluation of smolt-to-adult survival for sockeye would require monitoring and comparisons between a transported group and an in-river group consisting of non-bypassed smolts with access to surface passage routes (e.g., spill, RSWs, and TSWs). Further, because of the large inter-annual variation that can occur in survival rates, it is apparent that several years of tagging would be necessary in order to rigorously evaluate the factors influencing these survival rates.
- Annual T/I ratios should be the primary focus, as strong seasonal effects over the 3-week migration period are unlikely and would be difficult to detect.
- Based on discussions at the meeting and the subsequent information distributed by IDFG, it appeared that a sufficient number of hatchery sockeye were available to tag

in 2009. Therefore, sockeye availability does not appear to be an issue hindering the initiation of tagging in 2009.

II. Adult straying:

- Several ideas and pieces of information were shared regarding straying issues at the meeting. It appeared that convening a technical workshop to synthesize the existing information, examine the weight-of-evidence about candidate factors affecting straying, and identify future research needs would be very valuable.

III. Pacific Lamprey:

- Conversations on Lamprey are being held in another forum and will be addressed in more detail there.

In the Corps consideration of Snake River sockeye survival study, these technical points of agreement should be brought forward to the Regional Implementation Oversight Group as soon as possible. We are willing to assist in this effort and look forward to continuing to work with the Corps regarding these important subjects.