



PIT Tag Information System Columbia Basin

Newsletter

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We welcome input from the PTAGIS community, so email us at ptagis_newsletter@ptagis.org with your story ideas.

If you have questions regarding the contents of this publication, or about the PTAGIS program, please contact PTAGIS Staff.

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UPDATED PIT TAG MARKING PROCEDURES MANUAL

NICOLE TANCRETO (PTAGIS Portland Office)

A new version of the [PIT Tag Marking Procedures Manual](#) was finalized after the PTSC Annual Meeting and was published to the PTAGIS website. This version of the manual includes revised guidance for **tagging smaller fish and lamprey**, supporting consistent application of marking practices across a broader range of species and life stages. This version of the document should replace the 2014 and earlier versions. [🔗](#)

P4 SUPPORT ENDING DECEMBER 2026

NICOLE TANCRETO (PTAGIS Portland Office)

As announced in the [November 2025 newsletter](#), **support for P4 and P4 files will end on December 1, 2026**. After that date, PTAGIS will no longer accept data files in the P4 format or provide technical support for P4 software.

P5 (*Fig. 1*) is designed as a drop-in replacement for P4 and can be installed alongside it for a smooth transition. When both programs are installed on the same computer, data and configuration settings can be imported directly from P4 into P5. P5 has a familiar interface and includes the same features in the same locations.

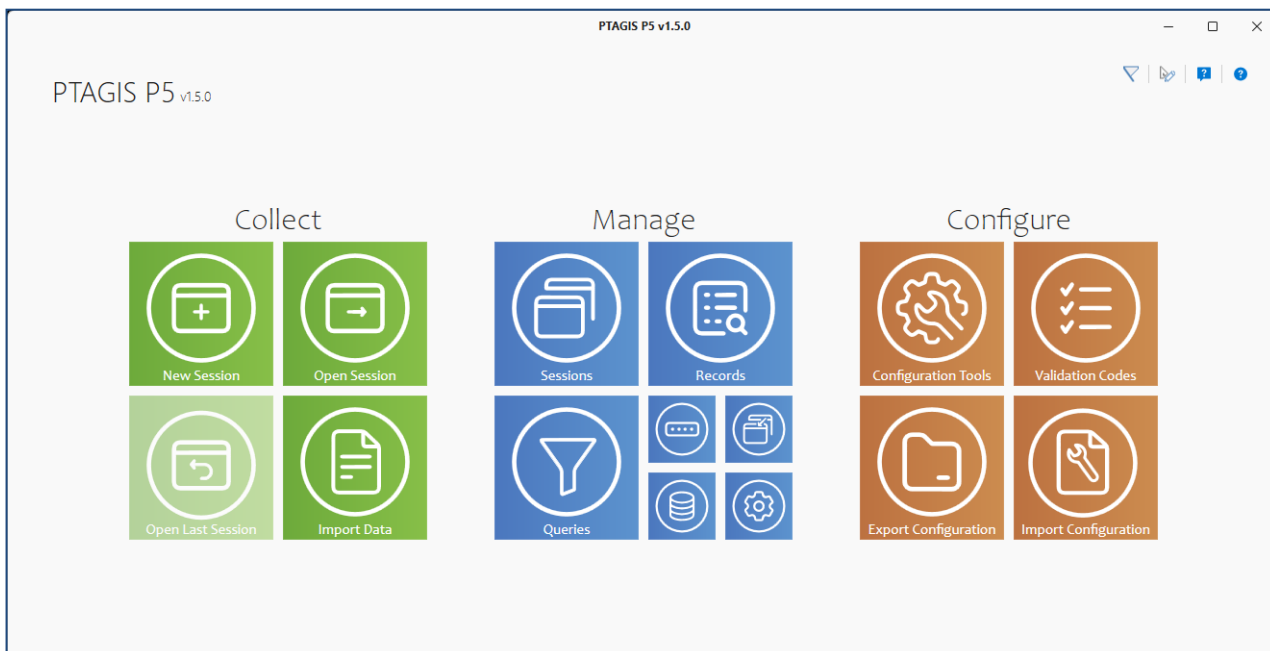


Figure 1. P5 Home Window

P4 SUPPORT ENDING DECEMBER 2026 - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

NICOLE TANCRETO (PTAGIS Portland Office)

P5 recently reached an important milestone with the release of [version 1.5.0](#) on June 9, 2026. Since version 1.0.0, many bugs have been fixed and several useful features requested by PTAGIS data contributors have been added:

- Custom Validations can now be enabled for real-time validation during data entry.
- Added support for Wacom digitizer boards and resolved spurious-click issue with CalComp boards.
- Added a post-data-entry validation procedure to check for duplicate values in Genetic ID, Scale ID, and other tag fields.
- Added support for GPS + GLONASS satellite systems in external GPS units.
- Added multi-user database support.

The P5 file format differs from P4, using JSON instead of XML, and the submission process has been modernized and simplified. See the PTAGIS Data Specification sections on the [P5 file specification](#) and [submission process](#) if you plan to build and submit data files outside of P5.

We have also begun a series of P5 video tutorials, starting with one that shows how to install P5 and import data and configuration from P4. You can find it in the [P5 Tutorial](#) section of the PTAGIS [Video Library](#).

CalComp Digitizer Boards End of Life

PTAGIS recently learned that GTCO/CalComp will stop manufacturing digitizer boards and accessories after this summer. Combined with the spurious-click issue reported on some CalComp boards, this prompted us to evaluate replacement options for the long-used Drawing Board VI. The following alternatives are now available and supported in P5:

- A mobile android tablet can be paired with P5 running on a laptop as a touchscreen data-entry form. This [tablet map feature](#) does not currently support measuring fork length, so we are investigating other ways to measure and enter that data.
- Support for Wacom drawing boards was added to P5. We successfully tested a Wacom Intuos Pro in the office and are now working with NOAA on a field test planned for later this summer.

For users who have experienced spurious clicks on CalComp digitizer boards, this issue was resolved in P5 version 1.4.0. Anyone still using P5 version 1.3.0 or earlier should upgrade as soon as possible. 🌀

BIOMARK PRELOADED PIT TAG TRAYS RECYCLING OPTION

VERL MILLER (Bonneville Power Administration)

Disposal of Biomark preloaded PIT tag trays, such as pictured below, (*Fig.2*) was a topic of discussion at the 2026 annual PIT Tag Steering Committee Meeting.

These trays are made from Type 5 polypropylene, which is recyclable but not as widely accepted as Type 1 or Type 2 plastics. As of late 2024, within the City of Boise, Biomark can place Type 5 polypropylene into curbside recycling. Users of Biomark preloaded PIT tags have the option now to return trays to Biomark for recycling and are asked to coordinate in advance before shipping.

Biomark is also working with its French R&D team to develop a more sustainable tray, with the long-term goal of transitioning to a recyclable or reusable option rather than biodegradable materials that still end up in landfills.

Single-use stainless steel needles remain a challenge; Biomark previously recycled needles at a Boise facility, but that facility no longer accepts surgical stainless-steel needles with plastic hubs. While several alternatives—including potential paid turn-in programs—have been discussed, no solution is currently in place.

If anyone is aware of facilities or programs that accept Type 5 polypropylene trays or stainless-steel needles with plastic hubs for recycling, please contact us with that information. 📞

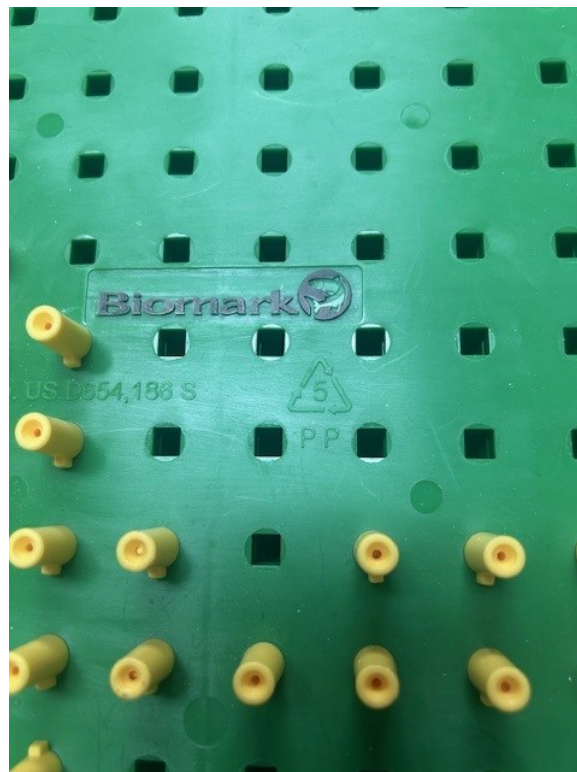


Figure 2. Biomark Preloaded PIT tag tray

ANNUAL PTSC MEETING AND MEMBER UPDATES

NICOLE TANCRETO (PTAGIS Portland Office)

There have been two recent changes to [PTSC membership](#):

- Brittany Beebe has replaced Pat Keniry, who retired earlier this year, as the ODFW member.
- Erin Cooper has replaced Brandon Chockley as the FPC member.

The 2026 annual meeting was held on March 18, 2026, at PSMFC headquarters in Portland, OR, and included online access for those who could not attend in person.

Meeting highlights include:

- **PTAGIS Portland Update:** Program coordination updates, software releases (P5, M5, I5), infrastructure improvements, and progress toward cloud migration.
- **PTAGIS Kennewick Update:** Detection performance, PIT tag QA results, ongoing maintenance activities, and status of major dam and facility projects.
- **PIT Research & Development Update:** Estuary detection research, flexible array and trawl work, ELAM modeling, and emerging detection strategies.
- **PIT Tag Marking Procedures Manual:** Discussion and resolution of outstanding questions related to tagging methods, anesthesia guidance, and documentation updates.
- **PIT Tag Procurement and Distribution:** Updates on new tag types, testing responsibilities, and distribution logistics.
- **Digital Field Guide for SRR and Condition:** Progress toward a standardized, digital reference for species, run, rearing type, and condition.
- **PTSC Business:** Confirmation of PTSC chair and co-chair roles.

View the full [meeting notes](#) in the PTAGIS [Document Library](#). Please feel free to [contact us](#) or a [member of the PTSC](#) if you have any questions or comments. ☺

STREAMS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING DECEMBER 2025

NICOLE TANCRETO (PTAGIS Portland Office)

The STREAMS Subcommittee met in December 2025 to share updates on PIT tag detection infrastructure, research and development, and member activities.

Highlights include:

- The PIT tag research and development project has been restructured with PSMFC developing technology and NOAA evaluating it. Gabriel Brooks has been hired by PSMFC to handle technology R&D, while Sandy Downing and Jesse Lamb will take on the NOAA portion of the project.
- PTAGIS Kennewick is building antennas for the Bonneville Ice and Trash sluiceway project and designing systems for Klickitat Hatchery, Cle Elum Dam and McNary Dam.
- Starlink is successfully being used as the network connection for several PTAGIS sites.
- Updated SOP for setting up and securing M5 on a Raspberry Pi to deploy at instream sites is available by [contacting PTAGIS](#).
- PTAGIS can only test tags for the BPA bulk purchase contract and tags that meet spec are listed on the PTAGIS website and those tag masks are added to the PTAGIS validation codes.
- Round-robin updates from the subcommittee members.

View the full [meeting notes](#) in the PTAGIS [Document Library](#). 