

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET) Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433

July 29, 2015

Meeting called to order at 10:00am on Wednesday July 29, 2015 and adjourned at 12:00pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours. Eight full voting members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

People to be Heard:

Old Business Discussion Topics:

New Business Discussion Topics:

- Kuskokwim Subsistence Salmon Panel (KSSP) update- Glenn Haight
- Placement of *People to be Heard* on the Working Group agenda- *Tabled*

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *There were no action items at the time of meeting.*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. Adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous)*

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **ADF&G Management Actions under consideration:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported that the department would consider additional management actions once the strength of the coho salmon run could be further assessed.
2. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:**
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** Zach Liller (ADF&G) reported that the Chinook salmon run was effectively over in the lower river. The Chinook salmon cumulative CPUE was above the average but lower than 2014. He commented that run timing for 2015 was near average but considerably protracted; however the current run size estimate was within the pre-season forecast range. Mr. Liller reported that the sockeye salmon run was effectively complete in the lower river. The 2015 sockeye salmon run timing was late but strong. The chum salmon run remained weak. Mr. Liller commented that the run continued in low numbers at the BTF, however on average ~97% of the chum salmon run had passed Bethel by July 29th. Mr. Liller reported that coho salmon were building and would soon surpass chum salmon as the most abundant species in the lower river. Early inseason projections indicated that the coho salmon run would be average. *(For more information on the BTF, please see the July 29nd Informational Packet).*
 - **Aniak Test Fish:** *ATF was completed on August 14. No further reports will be given in 2015.*
 - **Weirs:** Zach Liller reported that the Chinook salmon escapement appeared healthy. The Kogruklu and George rivers' escapement goals were achieved. Kwethluk River Chinook salmon escapement exceeded the upper bound of the goal range. Other Kuskokwim River escapement projects appeared similar to or better than 2014 for Chinook salmon. Mr. Liller reported that sockeye salmon escapement performance remained mixed. He commented that Kwethluk River and Telaquana Lake weirs had record breaking escapements. Kogruklu River sockeye salmon escapement remained low; however due to the late run it could potentially meet the lower bound of the escapement goal. Mr. Liller reported that chum salmon escapement was below average at all weir locations except on the Kwethluk River. He reported that it was likely that the lower bound of the Kogruklu escapement goal would be met for chum salmon. Coho salmon had been observed at all upriver weirs. Mr. Liller reported that coho salmon swim ~14 miles per day, and historically 50% of coho salmon have passed Bethel as of August 8th. *(For more information on weirs, please see the July 29th Informational Packet).*
 - **Radio Tagging Project:** The radio tagging project completed on July 24th. *(For more information on the tagging project, please see the July 29nd Informational Packet).*

Meeting summaries are prepared and distributed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in cooperative agreement with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management (USF&WS OSM). The department is responsible for summary content. Summaries are not comprehensive or considered meeting minutes, and are designed to provide context on meeting proceedings for the convenience of interested parties/participants. Audio recordings of meetings can be found at: <http://www.ADF&G.alaska.gov/index.cfm?ADF&G=commercialbyareakuskokwim.kswg#/2013>

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- **Aerial Surveys:** Zach Liller reported that Chinook salmon peak spawning abundance aerial surveys began on July 20. He commented that aerial surveys were an index for a very broad geographic area and operations were standardized. Mr. Liller reported that of the four tributaries flown with escapement goals, one goal was exceeded, one was achieved, and two were not achieved. *(For more information on the aerial surveys, please see the July 29th Informational Packet).*
 - **Sonar Feasibility Project:** Naomi Brodersen (ADF&G) provided an overview of the sonar feasibility project in the Kuskokwim River. She reported that the sonar had been tested near the upper end of Church Slough from June 18-26 and July 11-17 and near Akiak from June 27-July 10. Ms. Brodersen commented that it appeared that complete river sonar coverage could be achieved and be operational on the Kuskokwim River.
 - **Inseason Subsistence Harvest Assessment Project:** Andrew Brenner (ADF&G) summarized the inseason subsistence salmon assessment in the middle river. The project's goal was to better understand the middle river's subsistence inseason progress and needs. They contacted 45.4% of households in the middle river. *(For more information on the subsistence assessment project, please see the July 29th Informational Packet).*
3. **Subsistence Reports:**
- **Down River:** Charlie Brown (Commercial Fishing) commented that people in his area were only using coho salmon for salting or freezer fish. James Charles (Downriver Elder) reported that people would harvest coho salmon for canning, drying, and salting. He had not seen many people fishing.
 - **Lower River:** Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing alternate) commented that on average people needed ~30 coho salmon to meet subsistence needs. Greg Roczicka (Lower River Subsistence alternate) commented that people from Bethel and Napaskiak wanted to harvest coho salmon to meet their subsistence needs. John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) commented that he had not seen many people fishing during the previous two weeks. He reported that some people would harvest coho salmon for salting, freezing, drying and half-drying. Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate) commented that her family would need ~50 coho salmon. Greg Hoffman Jr. (Commercial Fishing alternate) remarked that his family would need ~25 additional silver salmon for their subsistence needs. Mike Williams Sr. (Lower River Subsistence) reported that the majority of residents in his area needed fewer silver salmon than in 2014, with the exception of Tuluksak since they had not taken part in the Community Harvest Permit program.
 - **Middle River:** Wayne Morgan (Middle River Subsistence alternate) reported that people would need silver salmon for jarring and drying. LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) commented that there was a wide variation on the amount of silver salmon people needed in 2015. He commented that the majority of people would be relying on more silver salmon than in previous years.
 - **Upriver:** Mark Leary (Upriver Subsistence) reported that people needed twice as many coho salmon than average.
 - **Headwaters:** Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) commented that people set nets and use hook and line to harvest silver salmon. He added that harvest effort would depend on the strength of the run. Mr. Collins reported there would be some harvest effort in Nikolai, however due to the late arrival of coho salmon many residents were more focused on hunting.
4. **Sport Fishing:** LaMont Albertson commented that several sport fishing guides were on the Aniak River. Bev Hoffman reported that rafters had observed several king salmon in the Kwethluk and Kisaralik rivers.
5. **Intercept Fishery Report:** LaMont Albertson commented on the amount of Chinook salmon caught during the June Area M Chinook salmon harvest.
6. **Discussion of ADF&G Management consideration and discussion of possible alternatives:** There were no discussions or motions made.

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: N/A

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

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NEW BUSINESS:

- **Kuskokwim Subsistence Salmon Panel (KSSP):** Glenn Haight (ADF&G) reported that the BOF KSSP's next meeting was scheduled for August 24-25 in Bethel. Focus would be to review the current AYK proposals and see if additional opportunities could be proposed to the BOF to assist with the Kuskokwim subsistence fishery.
- **Placement of *People to be Heard* on the Working Group agenda- Tabled**

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion 1: To approve the agenda as amended. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 2: Adjourn. Passed (Unanimous)

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

- Charlie Brown (Commercial Fishing) recommended a commercial opener in the lower river.

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mary Sattler
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE	<i>Absent</i>
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	John Andrew
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Absent</i>
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	Henry Mitchell
ADF&G	Aaron Poetter
CHAIR	Bev Hoffman

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Aaron Poetter, Zach Liller, Chris Shelden, Brittany Blain, Naomi Brodersen, Nick Smith, Dan Bergstrom, Jan Conitz, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook, Tom Taube

Subsistence Division: Andrew Brenner, Odin Miller, David Runfola

USFWS: Lew Coggins, RIT's

OSM: Don Rivard

Ben Matheson- KYUK
Wayne Morgan (Middle River Subsistence alternate)

Greg Roczicka (Lower River Subsistence alternate)
Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate)

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), Georgetown Traditional Council (**GTC**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG**, **Working Group**, or **WG**), Sustainable Escapement Goal (**SEG**), Biological Escapement Goal (**BEG**), Management Objective (**MO**), Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence (**ANS**), Emergency Order (**EO**), Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (**BSFA**), Law Enforcement (**LE**), Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (**ITFC**)

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