

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

August 12, 2014

Meeting called to order at 1:30pm on Tuesday August 12, 2014 adjourned at 3:50pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours and 20 minutes. Nine voting members were present and a quorum was maintained throughout the meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS:

People to be heard

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions

Old Business Discussion Topics:

1. Update on the request to open a dipnet fishery all season long.
2. Discussion of the USFWS project proposal for a graduated-field array.
3. Discussion of the current escapement goals.

New Business Discussion Topics:

- Discussion of Bev Hoffman's appointment to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *these items were not called "action items" at the time of meeting; however work was assigned or volunteered.*

1. Post a sign by the BTF bin to discourage community members from "dumping" subsistence caught fish back into the bin. (ADF&G, 8/14/14).
2. Request for more information on the use of fish for subsistence purposes along the Kuskokwim River. (ADF&G, distributed subsistence harvest studies 8/14/14).
3. Develop a proposal for the BOF regarding a dipnet fishery all season long on the Kuskokwim River. (LaMont Albertson, Barb Carlson, ADF&G assistance).

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approval of the agenda as amended. *Motion passed (unanimous).*
2. To support the department's recommendation for an additional commercial period on Thursday August 14, 2014 and continued assessment of the BTF for a potential commercial opener early in the following week. *Motion passed (9 yeas, 0 nays).*
3. To support the USFWS's project proposal for a graduated-field electrode array salmon counting system. *Motion passed (9 yeas, 0 nays).*
4. Adjournment. *Motion passed (unanimous).*

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PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

1. Alice Kameroff from Lower Kalskag said she was thankful for the delay in commercial fishing during the front end of the silver salmon run. She said that the silver salmon had arrived in the Kalskag area and people were catching them. She put some fish in her freezer and hung a few. She thanked the commercial fishers.
2. Nastasia Levi from Lower Kalskag said that people were thankful for the opportunity to fish for silver salmon. She said almost everyone had met their subsistence needs. She said they were happy and hoped upriver communities would also meet their needs.
3. Robert Lekander from Bethel suggested there be a sign on the BTF bin to prevent people from dumping their extra harvest back into the bin. He mentioned that it was difficult drying silver salmon, but he would freeze and jar them. He asked how the upper river communities processed the silver salmon because he was not familiar with upriver subsistence fishing practices. He said that it appeared that the later silver salmon run had more males and he wondered what tributaries they were headed for.
4. Adolph Lupie from Tuntutuliak commented that Elders and others with English as a second language could benefit from translation of the Working Group discussions, especially when using scientific and technological terms.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Subsistence Reports:

- **Lowest River Reports:** John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) said that on August 8th he used a full shackle, 51/2 inch mesh drift net and caught 98 fish without drifting. He commented that most people were done fishing for silver salmon in that portion of the river. He said that people were wanting to commercial fish. Mr. Andrew reported that a few people went commercial fishing from his area during the August 11th opener and had mixed catches.
- **ONC In-season Subsistence Report:** N/A
- **Lower River Subsistence:** Fritz Charles (Member At Large) said that people in the Bethel area were mostly finished salmon fishing other than for dinner food and jarring. Bev Hoffman (Co-Chair/ Sport Fishing) reported that people were using silver salmon for jarring and freezing due to the lack of king salmon harvests. She said that people appreciated the BTF bin.
- **KNA Inseason Subsistence:** Rebecca Frye (KNA) reported that people in Kalskag were doing fairly well with harvesting silver salmon. She said that one family in Aniak caught 120 fish within 3 drifts.
- **Middle River Subsistence:** Dave Cannon (Middle River Subsistence) reported that people in Aniak were doing "pretty good". He said that one fisher in Napaimute caught 30 fish with one drift. He commented that people were out fishing, getting what they needed and fairly happy. Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) said that people in the middle river were thankful for the opportunity to meet their subsistence needs and most were confident their needs would be met. She said that a few people, who hadn't drifted in years, had gone out fishing over the weekend. Ms. Feyereisen commented that many families had gone out drifting.
- **Middle and Upper River Creel Survey:** Kevin Schaberg (ADF&G) reported through Dave Runfola (ADF&G) that Aniak and Kalskag were catching silver salmon. Dave Runfola reported that in Chuathbaluk they were utilizing the fish wheel and there were 2 active fishers. He reported that there was a small amount of fishing activity in Sleetmute. He said people in the upper river were looking forward to an increase in the abundance of silver salmon.
- **Upriver Subsistence:** Barb Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate) reported that the coho salmon had arrived in the Sleetmute area. She said that Red Devil and Sleetmute were catching ~20-35 fish in setnets

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overnight. She commented that people were rod and reel fishing and smokehouses were in use. Ms. Carlson said the coho salmon were small but good quality.

- **Headwaters Subsistence:** Ken Harper (USFWS) relayed a subsistence report from McGrath. He said they had been fishing for ~4 days and had put up some silver salmon along with whitefish and Sheefish. He said that people were still confused on the fishing regulations and restrictions. One person fished with a 3 inch mesh net and caught 43 fish: half were chum salmon, 15 silver salmon and some whitefish. Another person had fished for 3 days and caught ~4-5 fish per day.
- 2. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:**
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reported that the water temperature was slightly above the historical average, water clarity was above average and slightly above the range, and the water level was reflecting average. Mr. Lipka reviewed the daily CPUE's for the BTF. He said that 60-70% of the coho salmon run had passed Bethel. *(For more information on the BTF, please see the August 12 Informational Packet.*
 - **Radio Tagging Project:** N/A
 - **Weirs:** Brittany Blain (ADF&G) reported on the USFWS and ADF&G weir projects for coho salmon. She reported that the Salmon River weir had 3.5 days when it was not in operation. *(For more information on weirs, please see the August 12 Informational Packet).*
 - **Aerial Survey:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported that the Chinook salmon aerial survey escapement goals had been met for the 2014 season. Ken Harper (USFWS) said that USFWS conducted a helicopter survey of the Takotna River. He pointed out that there was no comparative data available for this survey.
- 3. **Commercial Catch Report:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported on the commercial harvest for August 11, 2014 for Subdistrict W 1-B. He said a total of 23,999 coho salmon had been caught with 187 permit holders. The average weight of the coho salmon was 6.38 lbs. He commented on the historical coho salmon commercial harvest from 2004-2013.
- 4. **Processor Report:** Henry Mitchell (Processor) commented on the processor report for the Subdistrict W1-B commercial period on August 11, 2014. He reported that the lower portion of the subdistrict delivered 48,857 lbs. of salmon and the upper portion delivered 106,194 lbs. of primarily coho salmon. He said it was a successful period and the catch rate was significant.
- 5. **Sport Fishing Report:** LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) reported that Aniak was catching a lot of silver salmon and that the Aniak Tribal Council was sponsoring the Silver Salmon Derby. Dave Cannon (Middle River Subsistence) said the Aniak River was muddy so rod and reel fishing had slowed down. Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing alternate) said rafters reported good trout fishing on the Kwethluk and Kisaralik Rivers. She said the water was high but dropping and it was muddy. She commented that people were doing well with rod and reel fishing near the Little Kasigluk, Kisaralik and Kwethluk Rivers.
- 6. **Intercept Fishery Report:** N/A
- 7. **Weather Report:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reported on the weather for the lower, middle and upper river.
- 8. **Recommendations:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) recommended that there be an additional commercial period on Thursday August 14, 2014. The department would monitor the BTF for the remainder of the week and weekend with a potential commercial opportunity during the early portion of the following week.
- 9. **Motion for Discussion and Action:** A motion was made to support the department's recommendation. The motion passed. *(See Motion #2 below).*

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OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Update on the request to open a dipnet fishery all season long.** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) said that the emergency dipnetting regulation in 2014 had been adopted into permanent regulation for the conservation of Chinook salmon. He said it would take additional Board of Fish (BOF) action to utilize dipnets for the entirety of the season and that the process would need to be generated through a user or the Working Group. John Linderman (ADF&G) explained the process for such a request and was willing to assist Working Group members who were willing to pursue this. LaMont Albertson and Barb Carlson volunteered to seek more information regarding submission of a proposal for a subsistence dipnet fishery all season on the Kuskokwim River. Don Rivard with OSM reported that there had been 2 proposals submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board to make dipnets a legal gear type on the Kuskokwim River for federally qualified users.
- 2. Continued discussion of the USFWS project proposal for a graduated-field array.** (*See Motion #3 below*).
- 3. Discussion of the current escapement goals.** Some Working Group members expressed concern regarding the current escapement goals and the use of outside peer reviews. A few members commented on the importance of stream carrying capacity and escapement quality. LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) said he was hopeful for a boarder review of the escapement goals during the next revision. He said he had concerns that the lowered goals had been created to support commercial interests rather than subsistence interests. Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate) said she was concerned of having a drainage-wide escapement goal. Kevin Schaberg (ADF&G) said that ADF&G had a thorough review process for escapement goals that included outside peer review. He commented that there was also a public comment period and a public meeting to receive input from users and the public. John Linderman (ADF&G) said that ADF&G constantly evaluated escapement monitoring programs for improvements and they would continue to do so.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Discussion of Bev Hoffman's appointment to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission:** Bev Hoffman requested that the Working Group familiarize themselves with the Commission and email her with any concerns they would like shared.

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WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion 1: To approve the agenda as amended. *Motion passed (unanimous):*

Motion 2: To support the department's recommendation for an additional commercial period on Thursday August 14, 2014 and continued assessment of the BTF for a potential commercial opener early in the following week. *Motion passed (9 yeas, 0 nays).*

Some Working Group members suggested that the department set commercial period hours starting as early as 9:00am for the downriver section of Subdistrict W1-B so fishers would not have to be out late into the evening. It was suggested that CVS add an additional tender in the lower river commercial section. USFWS supported the commercial opener for Thursday August 14, 2014.

Motion 3: To support the USFWS's project proposal for a graduated-field electrode array salmon counting system. *Motion passed (9 yeas, 0 nays).*

Brian McCaffery (USFWS) explained the purpose of the project and its uses in other locations to modify the behaviors of fish.

Motion 4: Adjournment. *Motion passed (unanimous).*

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP

Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate) said that although there had been some strong support for Chinook salmon conservation during the 2014 season she said that everyone along the river would need to be active "citizen managers" of the resources. She commented that people needed to consider personal intake of the resource and balance that with preservation of the species.

James Charles (Downriver Elder) commented that the downriver section of Subdistrict W1-B was wider than the upper portion and should have an extended commercial fishing period to compensate. He said that the notice time for commercial fishing should be extended because some people had not received the announcement for the August 11th commercial opener and were confused about the times.

John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) commented that the Village of Kwethluk was upset due to no formal agreement between Kwethluk and the USFWS on the operation of the Kwethluk weir during the 2014 season.

Dave Cannon (Middle River Subsistence) said he was thankful that the silver salmon numbers had increased and people were getting what they needed for subsistence purposes.

Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) said that people in the middle river were grateful for meeting their subsistence needs.

Barb Carlson (Upriver alternate) thanked ADF&G for delaying the commercial fishing for silver salmon and said people in her area appreciated being able to harvest silver salmon.

Dan Esai (Headwaters) thanked the Working Group for the conservation of the Chinook salmon and the delay of commercial openings for coho salmon.

Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) said he was thankful for the early fishing closure in May 2014 and said it made a difference in the amount of Chinook salmon making it to the headwaters. He said that he would have liked to have had the Takotna weir in operation for the 2014 season for increased assessment accuracy.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Vacant</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Dan Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	<i>Absent</i>
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Greg Hoffman, Jr.
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	Henry Mitchel
ADF&G	Aaron Poetter
CHAIR	Bev Hoffman

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Aaron Poetter, Aaron Tiernan, Brittany Blain, Chris Shelden, Kevin Schaberg, John Linderman, Jennifer Yuhus, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook

Subsistence Division: Hiroko Ikuta, Jim Simon, Dave Runfola

USFWS: Brian McCaffery, Steve Miller, Neil Lalonde, Ken Harper

OSM: Don Rivard

Rebecca Frye (KNA)	Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate)
Dan Gillikin (KNA)	John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate)
Tim Andrews (AVCP)	Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate)
Doug Molyneaux (Unaffiliated)	Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate)
Robert Lekander (Bethel)	Ben Matheson (KYUK Radio)
Nastasia Levi (Lower Kalskag)	Adolph Lupie (Tuntutuliak)
Alice Kameroff (Lower Kalskag)	

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**)

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