

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

June 7, 2016

Meeting called to order at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday June 7, 2016 and adjourned at 2:20 p.m. Meeting time was two hours and 20 minutes. Ten full voting members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Management Actions Under Consideration:

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Management Update:

People to be Heard:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

Old Business Discussion Topics:

- Upriver Elder seat update

New Business Discussion Topics:

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *No Action Items at the time of this meeting.*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous).*
2. If the current trend continues in the Bethel Test Fishery, the Working Group supports an opening on the entire Kuskokwim River on June 12, 2016 by both federal and state managers. *Passed (Unanimous).*
3. To extend the Working Group meeting seven minutes. *Passed (Unanimous).*
4. To accept the recommendation for Nastasia Avakumoff to serve on the KRSMWG Upriver Elder seat. *Passed (Unanimous).*
5. To adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous).*

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Aaron Poetter (ADF&G Area Management Biologist) reported that ADF&G was not considering any management actions prior to June 11. Opportunities after June 11 would be made with consultation from USFWS and further assessment of the inseason projects.

USFWS MANAGEMENT UPDATE: Ray Born (USFWS) reported that the Federal Subsistence Board had closed subsistence Chinook and chum salmon fishing in federal waters within the Kuskokwim River on June 1 to non-federally qualified users. Under a special action, USFWS closed the river to all users for Chinook and chum salmon conservation. Mr. Born commented that USFWS expected to announce a subsistence opportunity by June 10. Mr. Born informed the group that USFWS was working with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) to resolve concerns regarding their consultation process. Six federal officers had been patrolling and doing outreach on the river. USFWS conducted an aerial subsistence harvest survey on June 4 and found all fishers to be in compliance with the regulations.

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Angela Morgan from Aniak commented that during the past five years, few fish had been in the middle river and she was running out of fish by December.
- Tim Zaukar from Crooked Creek requested clarification on the time frame of the next potential opener.
- Patricia Yaska of Chuathbaluk asked for clarification on the mesh size that would be allowed during the upcoming opener. Mr. Poetter explained that gear type would be addressed within the ADF&G news release when an opener had been determined.

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>

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

- **Lowest River:** James Charles (Downriver Elder) commented that a family in Kongiganak had caught ~6 king salmon.
- **ONC Subsistence Report:** Greg Roczicka (ONC, Lower River Subsistence alternate) commented that with the restrictions, people had not started processing fish and many were not at their fish camps. He reported that ONC had begun to distribute BTF fish to Elders and surrounding villages; 285 people were on the distribution list.
- **Lower River:** Mike Williams Sr. (Lower River Subsistence) reported that people had been harvesting whitefish and pike; however the amount being caught had recently decreased along with the water level. Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing) had observed setnets in the Gweek River.
- **Middle River:** Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) reported that Walter Morgan from Lower Kalskag distributed a list of open tributaries for subsistence fishing to community members. Ms. Feyereisen commented that she had traveled to Kalskag and observed four active fish wheels on June 6.
- **Upriver:** Mark Leary (Upriver Subsistence) reported that he had been delivering fish wheels to middle and upriver communities. He observed people preparing their fish camps.
- **Headwaters:** Dan Esai (Headwaters Subsistence) commented that the water level was getting high. He reported that a fisher caught a salmon on May 28 downriver from Blackwater. Mr. Esai commented that people were grateful for the king salmon conservation.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:**

- **Bethel Test Fish:** Zach Liller (ADF&G) reported that water temperature was warmer than average, water clarity was clearer than average and water level was below average. All were within the historical range. Mr. Liller reviewed the daily CPUE for Chinook salmon at the BTF (*For more information on the BTF, please see the June 7 Informational Packet*).
- **Aniak Test Fish:** Mr. Liller reported that ATF operations began on June 1 and to date were consistently catching Chinook salmon. One chum salmon had been caught. (*For more information on the ATF, please see the June 7 Informational Packet*).
- **Weirs:** Mr. Liller reported that ADF&G, MTNT Limited (McGrath, Takotna, Nikolai, and Telida), the Native Village of Napaimute and the National Park Service (NPS) were operating the middle headwater weir projects. ADF&G had a total of six weirs that were expected to be installed between June 15-20. Mr. Born reported that the Kwethluk River weir was under water. The Tuluksak River weir was scheduled to be installed during the week of June 13.
- **Radio Tagging Project:** Mr. Liller reminded the Working Group that the goal of the tagging project was to estimate the total number of king salmon that entered the Kuskokwim River. The project began on May 26 and to date had caught 226 king salmon and released 48 radio tags. Lew Coggins (USFWS) reported that he flew the second telemetry flight on June 6 surveying the river up to Aniak and observed 17 tagged fish. No tagged fish were observed in the Kwethluk River.
- **Sonar:** Mr. Liller commented that ADF&G was in its second year of the sonar feasibility project located below Kwethluk. Dan Esai (Headwaters Subsistence) reported that one of the telemetry sites near Blackwater had been knocked down by a moose.
- **Processor:** Mr. Poetter informed the group that to date there were no processors registered with ADF&G.

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>

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

- Sport Fishing: Working Group members reported some sport fishing for trout and pike within the tributaries.
- Intercept Fishing: Bev Hoffman requested information from ADF&G on the Area M salmon fishery.
- 2. **Discussion of ADF&G Management Consideration and Discussion of Possible Alternatives**: ADF&G and USFWS reported they would announce management intentions for a possible opener by June 10. (*See Motion 2*)

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Upriver Elder seat update**: (*See Motion 4*)

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. **Approve the agenda as amended. Passed (Unanimous).**
2. **If the current trend continues in the Bethel Test Fishery, the Working Group supports an opening on the entire Kuskokwim River on June 12, 2016 by both federal and state managers. Passed (Unanimous).**

Lisa Feyereisen commented that in the past, upriver communities had not had equal fishing opportunities compared to the lower river communities. She added that due to the few people living upriver, fishing would not have a negative biological impact. Some members commented that the entire river should be open to avoid “combat” fishing.

3. **To extend the Working Group meeting seven minutes. Passed (Unanimous).**
4. **To accept the recommendation for Nastasia Avakumoff to serve as the KRSMWG Upriver Elder seat. Passed (Unanimous).**

Mark Leary reported that Ms. Avakumoff accepted the Upriver Elder seat.

5. **To adjourn. Passed (Unanimous).**

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

- Nick Kameroff (Middle River Subsistence alternate) commented that people should prepare for a possible opener. Mr. Kameroff told the group that the villages of Kalskag and above did not harvest as many fish as down river. He requested that the upriver remain open following the first subsistence opportunity.
- Bev Hoffman announced that she sat on an advisory seat of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. She requested that people from the Kuskokwim region share their concerns with her. She would add them to the fall agenda.
- Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) suggested that salmon by-catch be frozen and distributed to communities affected by the decline in fish.
- Bob Aloysius (YK Delta RAC) commented on the importance of local Elder knowledge. He added that upriver communities have not always been given equal treatment.

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>

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	VACANT
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams Sr.
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Lisa Feyereisen
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Dan Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	Bob Aloysius
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Charlie Brown
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	Absent
ADF&G	Aaron Poetter
CHAIR	LaMont Albertson

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Aaron Tiernan, Colton Lipka, Jen Peeks, Jan Conitz, John Linderman, Chuck Brazil

Sport Fishing: Tom Taube

Subsistence Division: David Runfola, Lisa Olson

Commissioner's Office: Jill Klein

USFWS: Ray Born, Lew Coggins,

OSM: Pippa Kenner, Karl Lindberg

David Dorris (Kalskag)

Nastasia Avakumoff (Chuathbaluk)

Walter Morgan (Lower Kalskag)

Dan Gillikin (Napaimute)

Gerald Kameroff (Kalskag)

Golga Frederick (Nunapitchuk)

Lynn Polacca (BIA)

James Nick (Kwethluk)

Janessa Esquible (ONC)

Alissa Joseph (ONC)

Bill Bechtol (KRITFC)

Megan Leary (Aniak)

Robert Golley (Chuathbaluk)

Angela Morgan (Aniak)

Tim Zaukar (Crooked Creek)

Bill Alexie (Kalskag)

Media:

WG Alternates:

John Andrew

Greg Roczicka

Mary Sattler

Nick Kameroff

Bev Hoffman

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), 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**), Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (**KRITFC**)

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>