

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

June 21, 2016

Meeting called to order at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday June 21, 2016 and adjourned at 1:32 p.m. Meeting time was approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Eight 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 Update:

People to be Heard:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

Old Business Discussion Topics:

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. To adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous)*

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Aaron Poetter (ADF&G Area Management Biologist) reported that ADF&G had no management actions under consideration at this time.

US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE UPDATE: Ray Born (USFWS) reported that a subsistence opportunity started at 12:01 p.m. noon on June 21 from a line below Kalskag to the Kuskokwim River mouth. From the line below Kalskag to the refuge boarder near Aniak subsistence fishing would be open starting at 12:01 p.m. noon on June 21 until further notice, with net size restrictions in place. Lew Coggins (USFWS) provided an overview of the decision making framework used for subsistence opportunities. Mr. Coggins reported that USFWS was willing to meet with people at a later date if they desired greater detail of the framework process. He commented that during the June 19 meeting with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) managers expressed a wide range of opinions regarding further management options.

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: *No public comments at the time of this meeting.*

SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

- **Lowest River:** James Charles (Downriver Elder) commented that he fished on June 16 and caught 14 king, 9 chum and 2 red salmon using a 5 ¾ driftnet. Mr. Charles observed fish drying on racks in his community. He reported that Charlie Brown of Eek started fishing on June 21.
- **ONC Subsistence Report:** Alice Lincoln (ONC) summarized the ONC subsistence report. *(For more information on the ONC report, please see the June 21 Informational Packet).*
- **Lower River:** Greg Roczicka (Lower River Subsistence alternate) commented that many people were halfway complete with their Chinook salmon harvest. He added that a few people had not started fishing due to king salmon conservation. Fritz Charles (Member at Large) commented that he caught 33 salmon during the June 16 opener. He wanted to harvest a few more Chinook salmon to dry and freeze. John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) reported, prior to the meeting, that he caught 14 Chinook and 3 red salmon within 2-3 hours of drifting on June 16. He had concerns that people may catch too many Chinook salmon. Mr. Andrew reported that he still needed a few more for his own needs since he shared many of the fish he had caught. He supported using 25 fathom nets during the next opener and thanked the managers for the chance to harvest additional salmon for their families.

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>.

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- **Middle River:** Dave Cannon (Middle River Subsistence) commented that many people in Aniak had met their Chinook salmon harvest needs and were glad that had earlier fishing opportunity in 2016 compared to previous years. Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) observed a relaxed fishing effort in State waters above Aniak. She commented that Kalskag was looking to have additional opportunity. Ben Staton (USFWS) reported that Kalskag fishers were putting in more fishing effort and were harvesting fewer fish than other areas of the river system.
- **Upriver:** Mark Leary (Upriver Subsistence) thanked the State and federal managers for the subsistence opportunities provided to the middle and upriver communities. He reported that many people were almost done fishing for Chinook salmon and that his family completed their king salmon harvest on June 17.
- **Headwaters:** Ray Collins (Headwaters Subsistence) reported no harvest of king salmon near McGrath.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:

- **Bethel Test Fish:** Zach Liller (ADF&G) reported that water temperature was near average, water clarity was below average and water level was near average. All were within the historical range. Mr. Liller reviewed the daily CPUE for Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon at the BTF. BTF was consistently catching Chinook salmon to date and on average 39% of the Chinook salmon run had passed Bethel as of June 20. At this point in the season, the chum and sockeye salmon numbers were similar to 2015. *(For more information on the BTF, please see the June 21 Informational Packet).*
- **Aniak Test Fish:** Mr. Liller reported that Chinook salmon were the predominant species at the ATF. *(For more information on the ATF, please see the June 21 Informational Packet).*
- **Weirs:** Mr. Liller reported that many of the State weirs were installed during the week of June 13. A total of eight weirs would operate during the 2016 season. Mr. Liller commented that the first few salmon were observed in the spawning tributaries and daily counts remained low. Telemetry flights were flown in the lower portion of the Kwethluk and Aniak Rivers, and the Holitna River. The majority of fish remained in the main stem of the Kuskokwim River.
- **Radio Tagging Project:** Mr. Liller reported that the tagging crew caught and tagged 782 Chinook salmon. To date, 92 tagged fish had been harvested. All the telemetry stations were installed and operating. USFWS and ADF&G had begun their tracking flights.
- **Subsistence Division:** David Runfola (ADF&G) reported on the subsistence feasibility study. He commented that during the June 16 opener, on average, the sample of fishers caught 11 Chinook salmon and on June 17 the average catch was 5 fish.

2. Discussion of ADF&G Management Consideration and Discussion of Possible Alternatives:

ADF&G had no management actions under consideration. USFWS planned to analyze the 72 hour harvest opportunity and meet with the KRITFC on June 27 for further harvest consideration.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1. Approve the agenda as amended. Passed (Unanimous)**
- 2. To adjourn. Passed (Unanimous)**

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP: *No additional comments were made at the time of this meeting.*

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	Nastasia Avakumoff
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Greg Roczicka
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	<i>Absent</i>
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Absent</i>
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	<i>Absent</i>
ADF&G	Aaron Poetter
CHAIR	Fritz Charles

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Aaron Tiernan, Colton Lipka, Jen Peeks, Zach Liller, Chris Shelden, Nick Smith

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook

Subsistence Division: David Runfola, Lisa Olson, Chris McDevitt

Commissioner's Office:

USFWS: Ken Stahlnecker, Ray Born, Lew Coggins, Ben Staton, David Phillips

OSM: Pippa Kenner, Karl Lindberg, Gary Decossas, Zach Stevenson

Janessa Esquible (ONC)

Alice Lincoln (ONC)

Bill Bechtol (KRITFC)

Paula Schieffer

Media: Rhonda McBride KTVA

WG Alternates:

Lisa Feyereisen

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**)

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