

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

June 23, 2021

This meeting of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group was called to order at approximately 10:01 a.m. and adjourned at 12:31 p.m. A quorum was established with 9 full voting members present at the start of the meeting. Alissa Rodgers (Lower River Subsistence) chaired the meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS

A. USFWS/KRITFC UPDATE: *Audio for this update begins at 08:35 – Meeting Audio – 06/23/21*

- Boyd Bilhovde (USFWS) spoke about the situations surrounding the announcement of the June 19 subsistence opener. He said that it was hectic to get the opener information out due to the new Juneteenth holiday. He apologized for any confusion that came from that. He thanked Dan Gillikin, Nick Smith, and others for information about the Aniak Box.

A. ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: *Audio begins at 13:40 – Meeting Audio - 06/23/21*

- Nick Smith (ADF&G) stated that assessment data supported a 12-hour subsistence opener in Subsistence Sections 1-3 and that he was looking at Monday, June 28 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. to coincide with the tides.
- There was discussion between Kevin Whitworth, LaMont Albertson, Nick Smith that followed regarding salmon run timing and assessment data. *Please refer to the meeting audio for more on this discussion.*

B. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: *Non-Working Group Members: Audio begins at 21:20– Meeting Audio – 06/23/21*

- Adolph Lupie (Tuntutuliak) spoke about the tide cycles for the coming week and said that more fish would be coming in. He said that chum salmon will be increasing near the mouth of the Tuntutuliak River and the peak will be around July 3 or 4.

C. CONTINUING BUSINESS: *Audio for subsistence reports begins at 30:49 – Meeting Audio – 06/23/21*

- Subsistence Reports: Lowest River, ONC Inseason Subsistence Report, Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, Headwaters
 - – Lowest River
 - Adolph Lupie (Tuntutuliak) see statement above for people to be heard.
 - ONC Inseason Subsistence Report:
 - Deja Jackson and Delen Hooper (ONC) presented the ONC Inseason Subsistence Report. *Please see the Information Packet pages 3–5 and meeting audio for this presentation.*
 - Lower River
 - John Andrew (Kwethluk; Downriver Elder / YK Delta RAC) stated that he had participated in the June 19 opener and used a 5.5-inch net to target red salmon. He said that in 3 hours he caught 17 reds, 5 chums, and 5 kings. He noticed that people mostly caught fish towards the end of the opener time.
 - Mike Williams, Sr. (Akiak, Lower River Subsistence) noticed an increase in fish above Akiak during the June 19 opener. He stated that the average catch was 20-30 per fisherman and that most did not fish the entire opener. He remarked that families needed another opportunity to fish before the weather changes and flies come out.
 - Avery Hoffman (Bethel, KRITFC) went out to fish camps during the past opener. He said that he had seen some fish jumping in the river. People that he had talked to had quit early.
 - Middle River
 - Allen Simeon (Aniak, Upriver Elder) said that he had done well fishing near Aniak at his setnet location. He stated that the 6-inch mesh regulation worked well because some of the larger female kings were able to get out of his net while he caught some smaller and more medium-sized kings. He said those that drifted all day were getting about 10 kings. He stated that the water in Aniak has been

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- clearing up and red and chum salmon numbers should be improving this upcoming week.
- Walter Morgan (Lower Kalskag; Middle River Subsistence) noticed that in the past week there were only a few boats out on the river. The average catch per day has been about 10 kings and not many reds or chums. He stated that not too many people were out fishing from Kalskag to Aniak, they are taking their time and waiting for reds and chums to arrive.
 - Dan Gillikin (Aniak) stated fishing had been hit or miss and that the fish wheel had just been installed in Napaimute.
 - Upper River
 - Ruby Egrass (Red Devil; Upriver Subsistence) stated that about 6 kings, of all sizes, had been caught near Red Devil in the last week.
 - Headwaters
 - Kevin Whitworth (McGrath, Western Interior RAC) stated that the water has been coming up in McGrath and has brought in lots of debris. He said that not many people had been fishing because of this. There had been maybe 10 kings caught so far in his area, most people were catching pike, whitefish, and sheefish.
 - Inseason Harvest Report (ONC/KRITFC):
 - Katie Russel (ONC) gave an inseason harvest report for the June 19 opener. *Please see the Information Packet pages 6–13 and meeting audio for this presentation.*
 - Overview of Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment: *Audio for this presentation begins at 1:24:45– Meeting Audio - 06/23/21*
 - Test Fisheries (Bethel and Aniak):
 - Sonar/Weirs/Aerial Surveys/Other:
 - Sean Larson (ADF&G) gave an update on the status of ADF&G assessment programs. He presented the assessment packet for June 21 (see *Informational Packet pages 15–25*).
 - There was some discussion between Working Group members, Boyd Blihovde (USFWS) and Spencer Rearden (USFWS) about chum and king salmon concerns along with red salmon / chum salmon to king ratios. *Please refer to the meeting audio for more on this discussion.*
 - Weir installs are currently underway and aerial surveys will take place in late-July.
 - NVN Report:
 - Dan Gillikin (NVN) – The fish wheel has been put in at Napaimute.
 - Working Group KRITFC Representative Report
 - LaMont Albertson (Sportfishing, KRITFC) gave some information on the structure of the KRITFC inseason management team. He said that KRITFC was waiting to see more information come in prior to making an announcement for another opening. He stated that they would be meeting again Friday.
 - Sport Fish Report: *Nothing to report.*
 - Trawl Bycatch Report
 - Sean Larson (ADF&G) presented a weekly trawl bycatch report and there was discussion that followed. *Please see the Information Packet – 06/23/21 page 26 for more information.*
 - Donlin Mine Report –
 - LaMont Albertson gave a brief overview on the mine and said that he had reached out to a Donlin Representative to potentially brief the Working Group.
 - Discussion of ADF&G Management considerations and discussion of possible alternatives (recommendations from the Working Group): *Audio for begins at 2:21:10– Meeting Audio - 06/23/21*
 - Discussion on this topic led to Motion 4.
 - Motion for Discussion and Action.

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- See below summary of Working Group motions.

D. OLD BUSINESS: None at this meeting

E. NEW BUSINESS: None at this meeting

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion 1: Approve the agenda. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 2: To allow Walter Morgan (Middle River Subsistence) to give his subsistence report during the normally scheduled people to be heard section. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 3: To extend the meeting until 12:30 p.m. and no longer Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 4: In order to ensure continued conservation, to oppose any ADF&G Emergency Orders providing any openings until the Chinook and chum runs are assessed on Friday by USFWS and the

KRITFC Passed (7 yes, 1 no)

- **This motion was made by Mary Peltola and seconded by LaMont Albertson. Nick Smith had proposed a drift and setnet opener for Monday, June 28. Working Group members voted to oppose any announcements made by ADF&G.**

Motion 5: To adjourn. Passed (Unanimous)

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

There were no further comments from the Working Group at this meeting.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	Absent
UPRIVER ELDER	Allen Simeon
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams, Sr.
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Walter Morgan
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Ruby Egrass
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Absent
1 st MEMBER AT LARGE	Absent
2 nd MEMBER AT LARGE	Mary Peltola
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Kevin Whitworth
YK DELTA RAC	John Andrew
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Charles Guest
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
KRITFC	Avery Hoffman
ADF&G	Nick Smith
CHAIR	Alissa Rogers

Other Participants:		
<u>ADF&G Comm. Fish:</u> Ben Gray, Sean Larson, Keegan Birchfield, John Linderman, Chuck Brazil <u>Sport Fish:</u> John Chythlook <u>Subsistence Division:</u> Dave Runfola		
<u>USFWS:</u> Boyd Bilhovde, Aaron Moses, Spencer Rearden, Ellis Johnson, Chris Tulik <u>OSM:</u> Cory Graham, Eva Patton		
Janessa Esquible (ONC)	Jim Simon (KRITFC)	<u>Media:</u> Greg Kim (KYUK)
Danielle Lowery (ONC)	Dan Gillikin (NVN)	
Katie Russel (ONC)	Adolph Lupie (KRITFC)	<u>WG Alternates:</u> Alissa Rogers (Lower River Subsistence)
Jaden Andrew (ONC)	Joe Spaeder (KRITFC)	
Terese Schomogyi (KRITFC)		
Jennifer Hooper (AVCP)		

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsararmiut Traditional Native Council (**OTNC**), 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**), Native Village of Napaimute (**NVN**), Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (**YKHC**), Alaska State Troopers (**AST**), University of Alaska Fairbanks (**UAF**)

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