

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

July 21, 2021

This meeting of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group was called to order at 10:03 a.m. and adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m. A quorum was established with 7-9 full voting members present throughout the meeting. Mary Peltola (2nd Member at Large) chaired the meeting.

## AGENDA ITEMS

### **A. USFWS/KRITFC UPDATE:** *Audio for this update begins at 14:50 – Meeting Audio – 07/14/21*

- Boyd Bilhovde (USFWS) spoke about Tuesday's meeting with the KRITFC where there was a unanimous vote to relinquish the emergency special action for chinook conservation. This action turns management back over to the state for the remainder of the year.

### **A. ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:**

- Nick Smith (ADF&G) Reiterated last week's recommendation- that we follow a similar opening schedule as has been recently announced (Friday (7/23) drift/set, weekend (7/24-25) set) until the end of July, which would be where historically the chum salmon run was >95% through Bethel. At that time (7/31), he recommended that the lower river be opened 24/7 using similar gillnet restrictions as enacted in the past.

### **B. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:** *None for this meeting.*

### **C. CONTINUING BUSINESS:** *Audio for subsistence reports begins at 30:50 – Meeting Audio – 07/14/21*

- Subsistence Reports: Lowest River, ONC Inseason Subsistence Report, Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, Headwaters
  - Lowest River
    - Charlie Brown (Eek, Commercial Fishing) stated that the kings were through the lower river and that there was no real concern for them now.
  - ONC Inseason Subsistence Report:
    - No report given this meeting.
  - Lower River
    - Mary Peltola (Bethel; 2<sup>nd</sup> Member at Large) caught 206 salmon (3 were chums) during the past openings. She asked a question regarding the false pass, area M fisheries.
    - Albert Kawagely (Bethel; 1<sup>st</sup> Member at Large, alt.) set nets in the Gweek over the past week and caught some whitefish.
    - Mike Williams, Sr. (Akiak, Lower River Subsistence) said he was pretty much finished with fishing and wanted to get out and pick berries. He was pleased with the amount of red salmon returning this year but concerned for the chums.
    - John Andrew (Kwethluk; Downriver Elder / YK Delta RAC) said he did well on the previous openings. In a couple of hours he had caught a good amount of reds, a few chums, and a jack king.
  - Middle River
    - Walter Morgan (Kalskag, Middle River Subsistence) people are pretty much finished fishing and have been happy with the run. People are now out looking for berries. When silvers show up people will want to go out after them.
  - Upper River
    - Barbara Carlson (Sleetmute; Upriver Subsistence) has been operating the community fish wheel but turned it off last Friday. She estimated it was catching 50-60 reds a day, a few kings, and fewer chums. She said she would turn it back on soon for those that needed more fish.
  - Headwaters
    - Dan Esai (Nicolai; Headwaters) said that not much fishing was going on in Nicolai. People hoped to get about 10 kings per household and some sheefish.
    - Kevin Whitworth (McGrath, WIRAC) stated that people were fishing but not catching much.

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- Inseason Harvest Report (ONC/KRITFC):
    - *Please see the Information Packet – 07/21/21 pages 3–6 for this presentation.*
  - Overview of Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment:
    - Test Fisheries (Bethel and Aniak):
    - Sonar/Weirs/Aerial Surveys/Other
      - Sean Larson (ADF&G) gave an overview of the Kuskokwim River salmon assessment. *Audio for this presentation begins at 51:40 – Meeting Audio - 07/21/21; Also see the Information Packet – 07/21/21 pages 8–32.*
    - Subsistence Division Project Update.
      - No report given this meeting.
    - NVN Report:
      - No report given this meeting.
  - Working Group KRITFC Representative Report
    - No report given this meeting.
  - Sportfish Report
    - John Chythlook (ADF&G) Stated that there has been trouble fishing due to high and turbid water, and that the king and chum salmon fisheries are closed.
  - Trawl Bycatch Report
    - Sean Larson (ADF&G) presented a weekly trawl bycatch report. *Please see the Information Packet – 07/21/21 page 33 for more information.*
  - Donlin Gold
    - No report given this meeting.
  - Intercept fishery
    - There is growing concern from people in Kuskokwim and Yukon River areas about fishing in Area M. There was a desire among members to discuss this topic in future meetings.
  - Discussion of ADF&G Management considerations and discussion of possible alternatives (recommendations from the Working Group): *Audio begins at 1:15:25 – Meeting Audio - 07/21/21*
    - There were two motions made that unanimously supported ADF&G management actions for this week (See section A for explanation). Avery / LaMont
  - Motion for Discussion and Action.
    - 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: To support a drift or setnet fishing opportunity in sections 1-3 on Friday, July 23 from 6 am to 10 pm, and setnet only opportunity beginning 10:00 pm Friday, July 23 through 11:59 pm Sunday, July 25. Passed (Unanimous).**

- **The motion was made by Avery Hoffman and seconded by LaMont Albertson.**

**Motion 2: To open subsistence sections 1-3 to fishing, until further notice, beginning 12:01 am Saturday, July 31. Passed (Unanimous).**

- **The motion was made by Avery Hoffman and seconded by Mike Williams. Sr.**

**Motion 3: For the next Working Group meeting to convene on Wednesday, July 21 at 10:00 am. Passed (Unanimous)**

- **The motion was made by LaMont Albertson and seconded by Avery Hoffman.**

**COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP: None at this meeting.**

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## WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	Absent
UPRIVER ELDER	Absent
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams, Sr.
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Walter Morgan
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Absent
1 <sup>st</sup> MEMBER AT LARGE	Albert Kawagley
2 <sup>nd</sup> MEMBER AT LARGE	Mary Peltola
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Kevin Whitworth
YK DELTA RAC	John Andrew
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Charlie Brown
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
KRITFC	Avery Hoffman
ADF&G	Nick Smith
CHAIR	Mary Peltola

Other Participants:	
<u>ADF&amp;G</u> <u>Comm. Fish:</u> Nick Smith, Ben Gray, Sean Larson, Chuck Brazil <u>Sport Fish:</u> John Chythlook <u>Subsistence Division:</u> Caroline Brown <u>Commissioner's Office:</u> Ben Mulligan	
<u>USFWS:</u> Boyd Bilhovde, Aaron Moses, Gary Decossas, Karen Deathridge <u>OSM:</u> Cory Graham	
Terese Schomogyi (KRITFC) Jim Simon (KRITFC) Adolph Lupie (KRITFC)	<u>Media:</u> Anna Rose MacArthur (KYUK)  <u>WG Alternates:</u> Alissa Rogers (Lower River Subsistence)

## 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**), Alaska Wildlife Troopers (**AWT**)

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