

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022

On Wednesday, July 27th, 2022, the KRSMWG meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. and adjourned at 11:40 a.m. Meeting time was approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes. A quorum was established with 8 full voting members in attendance. Alissa Rogers chaired the meeting.

## **AGENDA ITEMS AND SUMMARY INFORMATION:**

### **A. USFWS/KRITFC UPDATE:** *Audio for this update begins at 15:50 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

- Boyd Blihovde gave a brief update. Mr. Blihovde reminded the group that federal restrictions had been lifted the week prior. He said that US Fish and Wildlife was still interested in the data being collected and were particularly interested in coho salmon.
- Immediately following Mr. Blihovde's update there was a short discussion about juvenile salmon studies project at the Kwethluk weir between members and USFWS staff. *Audio for this conversation begins at 17:05 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

### **B. ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:** *Audio for this update begins at 19:38 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

- Nick Smith said that he had no current management recommendations and was waiting for coho salmon run to pick up. A question was asked by a member about coho salmon studies. Mr. Smith answered that sonar has been approved for this year and the last two years to continue operating until September to count coho salmon.

### **C. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:**

- There were no people to be heard at this meeting.

### **D. CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

- Subsistence Reports: Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, ONC In-season Subsistence Report
  - Lower River
    - Alissa Rogers (Bethel) said that she was going to go fishing for the first time this season. *Audio for this update begins at 19:38 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
    - Avery Hoffman (Bethel) said that he had taken the kids fishing that were attending the science and culture camp on Saturday, July 23rd. The kids and him completed 2 drifts at high tide and caught about 3 silver and 4 chum salmon. *Audio for this update begins at 25:06 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
    - John Andrew (Kwethluk) said that he had fished on July 23<sup>rd</sup> above a sandbar. Mr. Andrew said that he caught 5 chums, 1 King, 1 sockeye, and 1 coho salmon that he shared with neighbors. *Audio for this update begins at 26:02 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
    - James Nicori (Kwethluk) said that he had fished a couple times with a 60-foot net. Mr. Nicori said that he caught 2 chum, and 1 silver salmon on Sunday, and 3 chums, 1 pink, and 1 silver on Tuesday. *Audio for this update begins at 27:55 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
    - Mike Williams (Akiak) said that there was very little fishing effort in his area, and most were waiting for silver salmon to start running. *Audio for this update begins at 30:03 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

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- Albert Kawagely (Bethel) said that he has not been our fishing but maybe he will go out for silver salmon. Mr. Kawagely mentioned his sister had said that she was all done with fishing. He is glad people got the fish they needed. *Audio for this update begins at 31:48 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- Middle River
  - Walter Morgan (Lower Kalskag) said that fishing has been slow, and he hasn't seen any setnets the last few days, but he intended to fish with a dipnet that day. *Audio for this update begins at 33:18 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
  - Lamont Albertson (Aniak) said that he had heard that the water has been muddy in the Aniak River. He stated that fish were hard to catch in the main river at this time. *Audio for this update begins at 35:15 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- Upper River
  - There were no reports from the Upper River area.
- Headwaters
  - Kevin Whitworth (McGrath) said that he heard a homesteader in Takotna was catching a few fish, but the water is high, and most people are waiting on coho salmon. *Audio for this update begins at 36:42 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- ONC In-season Report
  - Jamin Crow stated that ONC had nothing to report and has been concentrating on the science and culture camp. *Audio for this update begins at 23:45 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
  - *37:40 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- KRITFC In-season Report
  - Lamont Albertson, speaking as the KRITFC Working Group Representative, stated that he is pleased with the King and chum salmon returns and comments that conditions were good. Mr. Lamont said that he was concerned about the relatively low returns of chum salmon and the marine derived nutrients that they bring to the valleys and spawning grounds. *Audio for this update begins at 57:30 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- Overview of the Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment
  - Sean Larson gives an update on the Bethel Test Fishery, Sonar, and the weirs. Information can be found on pages 3-31. *Audio for this update begins at 38:30 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
  - Highlights from the Bethel Test Fish overview include that chum salmon run is better than the last couple years, the sockeye salmon run is about 95% finished and will most likely reach goals, and the coho salmon run is slow to start and it is very early in their run.
  - Highlights from the sonar project include that the project has been counting coho salmon only for the last couple years and has funding approved for this

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year and next. The chum and sockeye salmon runs are proving better than last year.

- Highlights of the weir data overview is that the Kwethluk and George River weirs will likely reach their goals, but the Pitka Fork weir is the lowest on record, although Pitka Fork has seen some fish the last couple days.
- Boyd Blihovde (USFWS) asks a question about coho salmon, run timing and weir goals for salmon which is answered by Sean Larson. There is a brief discussion on this topic, including some questions about the Aniak River. *Audio for this update begins at 44:55 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- Subsistence Division Project Update
  - Katie Hayden gives a brief update on current and upcoming projects that the subsistence division is involved in including post season surveys, lower river village ethnography project and possible continuation of the upper river ethnography project. *Audio for this update begins at 51:05 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- NVN Report
  - Dan Gillikin (NVN) gave a brief update about ongoing projects. Mr. Gillikin said that the Aniak Test Fish project was concluded. Last week, the George River weir internship went well and data concerning conditions of the river was collected. Mr. Gillikin said the Salmon River weir had been struggling with high water but were still able to count fish, however the ASL samples had not been done. *Audio for this update begins at 13:30 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- Sport Fish:
  - Lamont Albertson said sport fishing upriver and on the Aniak River has not been good due to the cloudy water. John Chythlook (ADF&G) added that most people are waiting for silver salmon but have not caught much yet. *Audio for this update begins at 1:00:55 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

## E. OLD BUSINESS:

- There was no old business to address at this meeting

## F. NEW BUSINESS:

- Sonar Operation – Jamin Crow
  - Jamin Crow (ONC) gave a presentation on the sonar project in Church Slough summarizing site selection, how sonar counts fish and operates, and his 10-day internship at the sonar camp. *Audio for this update begins at 1:03:45 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

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- There are some questions at the end of Mr. Crow's presentation regarding the visibility gap and a previous project at Birch Creek Crossing. *Audio for this update begins at 1:16:51 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

## G. COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- John Andrew made a comment about bear raiding fish camps. *Audio for this update begins at 1:33:37 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- **Motion 1:** Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*
  - Motion made by Avery Hoffman and seconded by Mike Williams
  - *Audio for this update begins at 11:50 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- **Motion 3:** For the next meeting to be held on August 10<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:00 a.m. (Unanimous)
  - Motion made by Lamont Albertson and seconded by Albert Kawagely
  - *Audio for this update begins at 1:34:50 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*
- **Motion 2:** To adjourn at 11:40. *Passed (Unanimous)*
  - Motion made by Avery Hoffman and seconded by Lamont Albertson
  - *Audio for this update begins at 1:38:26 – Meeting Audio – 07/27/22*

## WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	John Andrew
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams Sr.
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Walter Morgan
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE SEAT 1	Albert Kawagely
MEMBER AT LARGE SEAT 2	<i>Absent</i>
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Kevin Whitworth
YK DELTA RAC	Alissa Rogers
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Absent</i>
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
ADF&G	Nick Smith
CHAIR	Fritz Charles
<u>ADF&amp;G Comm. Fish:</u> Nick Smith, Sean Larson, Chuck Brazil, Keegan Birchfield, Iris Fletcher <u>Sport Fish Division:</u> John Chythlook <u>Subsistence Division:</u> Katie Hayden	

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<u>Commissioner's Office:</u> John Linderman	
<u>USFWS:</u> Boyd Blihovde, Spencer Rearden <u>OSM:</u> Brooke McDavid, Nissa Pilcher, Kevin Foley <u>NVN:</u> Dan Gillikin <u>ONC:</u> Jamin Crow <u>AVCP:</u> <u>KRITFC:</u> Jim Simon, Avery Hoffman, James Nicori <u>UAF:</u> <u>WIRAC:</u> Kevin Whitworth <u>YK Delta RAC:</u> John Andrew	
<u>WG Alternates:</u> (not already listed above)	<u>Media:</u> Anna Rose MacArthur (KYUK) <u>Other:</u> Maridon Boario (Sen. Hoffman's office)

**GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), 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**), ADF&G Subsistence Division (**SD**), 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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