

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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## Meeting Summary

**March 21, 2013**

Called to order at 9:17 am at the William Jackson Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery in Anchorage and adjourned at 5:00 pm. Ten of thirteen member seats were represented and a quorum was established.

### AGENDA ITEMS:

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1) Status of KRSWMG funding and a call for OSM proposals.
- 2) Discussion of possible management approaches/strategies for Kuskokwim River Salmon Fisheries for 2013.
- 3) Casie Stockdale a led discussion about engaging in a MSE process.
- 4) Dave Cannon gave a presentation regarding the possible effects of using different types of fishing gear in the subsistence fishery in the Kuskokwim River.
- 5) Dave Cannon gave a presentation about improving outreach strategies.
- 6) KRSWMG elections for Chairs, Primary Members, and Alternates.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- 1) Follow-up: Bev Hoffman's letters of recruitment for the Upriver Elder seat.
- 2) Discussion: the Iyana Gusty Award.
- 3) Follow-up: LaMont's letter regarding House Bill 332 (2012) and House Bill 49 (2013).
- 4) Discussion: a letter thanking USFWS for their participation in the KRSWMG.
- 5) Review: KRSMWG bylaws.
- 6) Review: KRSWMG roll call and Alternate members.
- 7) Talking Points: this was not officially an agenda item, but enough discussion on the point occurred to warrant separate documentation here.

### WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1) Provide a copy of KRSWMG budget requested for review-*ADF&G (provided March 23, 2013).*
- 2) Table for discussion the possibility of a motion for the KRSMWG to support 2013 closures to subsistence salmon fishing on Kuskokwim River tributaries similar to those implemented in 2012; with the addition of a buffer area from the upstream side of the island at the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim Rivers to below the west end of the Aniak village runway, and the addition of closure of the Owhat, Holukuk, and Kolmokof Rivers including a buffer area to one mile below the their confluences with the Kuskokwim River.
- 3) Compose a PowerPoint to send to KRSMWG members with requested information-*ADF&G.*
- 4) Contact WG members who have never attended a meeting, or attended three or fewer meetings in 2012, to determine if they wish to have a hearing for retention-*KRSMWG members.*

- 5) Work on an idea to honor Iyana Gusty by the next meeting-*Bev Hoffman*.
- 6) Provide a news release to define several technical terms that may be used in 2013 and in future years. This will be available at the first meeting in May, if not before. The news release will include a description of "2<sup>nd</sup> degree of kindred" for the Elder's Fishery-*ADF&G*.
- 7) Provide a link to instructions on how to sign up for ADF&G news releases- *ADF&G (provided March 23, 2013)*.
- 8) Public outreach regarding ADF&G news releases through spring meetings of BNC, ONC, and YKHC- *Bev Hoffman*.
- 9) Investigate the upcoming outreach session planned in Bethel by Senator Murkowski- *Bev Hoffman*.
- 10) Form a committee to discuss the possibility of a full Management Strategy Evaluation process for the Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon-*LaMont Albertson and Working Group members*.
- 11) Approach the BSFA for their involvement as a stakeholder in this process, and for use of their facilities – *Casie Stockdale*.
- 12) Compose a letter on behalf of the KRSMWG regarding House Bill 49 (a reintroduction of HB 332 from 2012 to establish a research endowment for Chinook salmon) – *LaMont Albertson*.
- 13) Compose a letter on behalf of the KRSMWG to the Alaska delegation to the US congress thanking them for USFWS involvement in the Working Group.
- 14) Provide information on traditional salmon forecasting at the next meeting- *ADF&G*.

#### **WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:**

- 1) Approval of the Agenda as Amended. Items were moved within the New Business section, and the rules were suspended to facilitate a more freeform discussion. *Discussions of several New Business items were eventually combined.* Motion passed unanimously.
- 2) The KRSMWG accepts the ADF&G 2013 escapement goals for Chinook salmon of 65,000-120,000 Chinook salmon. Motion passed unanimously.
- 3) The KRSMWG recommends that ADF&G manage Chinook salmon within the confines of the 2013 Management Plan. Motion passed unanimously.
- 4) The KRSMWG recognizes that subsistence salmon fishing on the mainstem Kuskokwim River in 2013 will begin as open, until inseason assessment indicates possible restrictions. Motion passed.
- 5) In the event that closures are implemented in the mainstem Kuskokwim River, the KRSMWG supports having at least one subsistence salmon fishing period per week, as stated in the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management plan. Motion passed unanimously.
- 6) The KRSMWG recommends the restriction of subsistence salmon fishing to 6-inch or less mesh gillnets starting at the beginning of the 2013 fishing season, in an effort to increase the number of large female king salmon on the spawning grounds. Motion passed unanimously.
- 7) The KRSMWG recognizes that sacrifices made by subsistence fishermen in 2012 narrowly resulted in escapements that ensured future returns of King salmon. The KRSMWG also recognizes that without these sacrifices future runs of King salmon would have been in jeopardy. Motion passed unanimously.
- 8) KRSMWG recognizes and supports the intent of the "Elders' Fishery" in order to allow elders the ability to harvest some king salmon when limited opportunity exists and to

- help pass on cultural knowledge. Motion passed unanimously.
- 9) The KRSMWG will support 2013 closures to subsistence salmon fishing on Kuskokwim River tributaries similar to those implemented in 2012. Motion passed.
  - 10) The KRSMWG will have five Co-chairs: Casie Stockdale, Fritz Charles, Mark Leary, Beverly Hoffman, and LaMont Albertson (as backup). Motion passed unanimously.
  - 11) KRSMWG members will contact those members who have never attended a meeting, or attended three or fewer meetings in 2012, to determine if they wish to have a hearing for retention. Motion passed unanimously.
  - 12) Barbara Carlson from Sleetmute was elected alternate member for the Upriver Subsistence seat. Motion passed unanimously.
  - 13) Mark Leary was elected as primary member for the Upriver Subsistence seat. Motion passed unanimously.
  - 14) A committee of Co-chairs and Bob Aloysius will work with KRSMWG coordinators and volunteers to review the KRSMWG by-laws and make recommended changes, which will be reviewed at the next KRSMWG meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

### **PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:**

**Joe Spaeder**, Research Coordinator for AYK AYK SSISSI, handed out 3 documents: *Fisheries Risk Assessment Framework* (case study of Yukon Fall Chum), *Uncertainty in Fisheries Management* (case study from the Great Lakes), and a printout of his Management Strategies Evaluation process (MSE) Power point presentation. Joe explained that for more than 3 years AYK SSI has been supporting a project in conjunction with other agencies called the Escapement Goal Expert Panel, which reviews and attempts to identify the best scientific models that address the management of salmon across their full life cycle. He stated that the expert panel has been discussing the use of the modeling component of the MSE. The process includes the following components:

- The modeling/analytic component had been presented at previous interagency meetings.
- An integral stakeholder deliberation process.

There is a potential for MSE in the AYK region if there is stakeholder interest to understand the uncertainty of management of Chinook and to understand the tradeoffs of harvest strategies.

- Mike Jones will call in and talk about the process in a general way, not specifically Kusko
- Risk Assessment and Decision Analysis is another way to call this process.

### **Mike Jones, Michigan State University Quantitative Fisheries Center (on telephone):**

- A management strategy process is only effective if has these two elements, which “should have a relationship of transparency and trust: Analysis and Stakeholder interest (including opportunities to deliberate, discuss, and interpret the results of the analysis.)
- The Analysis cycle consists of six steps:
  - define the problem,
  - specify objectives,
  - identify options,
  - evaluate outcomes,
  - explore tradeoffs, and
  - decide and implement.

- Mike Jones suggested that MSE participants investigate how to deal with a lack of consensus, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and the relationship of the stakeholders to the larger process.
- The length of the MSE process depends on availability of stakeholders and the length of the analysis cycle. Mike's walleye project on Lake Erie had taken two years.

Joe Spaeder asked Mike for clarification on the role of disinterested participant. He also inquired about the value of tradeoffs.

- Mike Jones replied that for this process to be viewed as transparent and objective, it is important that disinterested parties facilitate the process and contribute in a subsequent way to the analytical work. A third party of peers should check the quality of the analytical work. For example, it is important to weigh the risks of not meeting escapement versus not meeting subsistence needs.

Bev Hoffman, Sport Fishing alternate, thought that stakeholders should have an equal place at the table when decisions are made. She asked when the KRSMWG makes a recommendation and it's "vetoed" by agencies, how members they handle the situation?

- Mike Jones responded that the MSE process would give stakeholders a more effective place. Instead of reacting to decisions of higher authority, they would be helping the authority making decisions. He was not suggesting that his MSE process replace the existing decision making process, but inform it. He said that in the short term, the MSE process would still exist in strong institutional contexts.

LaMont Albertson, Sport Fishing representative, reiterated that the KRSMWG process has already been implemented. He was more interested in appropriate ways to evaluate it.

- Mike stated that the current KRSMWG process has aspects of the MSE process, but is missing crucial aspects, such as stakeholder deliberation. He would want to "revisit" all the analytical work that has been done in order to make everyone involved feel like they owned the analytical component.

Dan Gillikin, USFWS, had been at the workshop in fall 2012 where agency staff explored the MSE tool. Dan told Mike: "We have just gone through a very extensive and difficult planning process [in preparation for the 2013 Board of Fish Meeting], developing new escapement objectives, gaining public input from various stakeholders, rewriting the management plan where we essentially laid out all of our harvest rules." The two potential applications Dan saw for the suggested MSE were:

- Using it as a "beta testing" tool for the current objectives and management scenarios that we use, especially to inform us of the trade-offs that we would be making for a particular decision. It seems like we all struggle in the KRSMWG meetings when "something has to give," and we don't know the magnitude of a decision.
- Another option would be a much more intensive process of stakeholder deliberation, which could take years, then develop new objectives or revise current objectives. This would put us on schedule for the next Board of Fish cycle.

Travis Elison, ADF&G Kuskokwim Area Commercial Fisheries Manager asked Mike Jones to clarify the depth of his suggested MSE:

- Mike said in the interest of the efficiency, it would best to rely on representatives of points of view, instead of surveying village to village and using a large source of people.

- The process would address situations where stakeholders disagree and a decision is made anyway. The suggested model would be fundamentally different because each management strategy would be aligned with a specific implication, so options would be easier to compare.
- Mike said disagreement about what the “truth” can be is allowed. For example, some people believe ocean conditions are going to get worse, others believe they will stay the same. The model will show the results if either or each scenario were true. Stakeholders could then make decisions in light of these tradeoffs.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

### NEW BUSINESS:

#### **1. Status of KRSWMG Funding and a call for OSM proposals.**

Don Rivard, USFWS OSM, reported that the House of Representatives approved funding for current projects for the remainder of the fiscal year until September 30, which includes OSM's portion of 2013 Working Group funding. April 4, 2014, was the deadline for proposals for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

The Chair asked what percent OSM pays for KRSWMG meetings. Chris Shelden, ADF&G Working Group project leader, replied that OSM manages the majority of costs. ADFG picks up the rest with its General funds. Chris had prepared a request for 4 more years of OSM funding as part of his responsibilities as the Working Group Coordinator.

Mark Leary, Upper River Subsistence alternate, asked how much the KRSWMG costs annually. Chris Shelden explained that the entire grant proposal for 4 years requested less than \$200,000. However, the large pre-season meetings in Anchorage costs about \$12,000 each year. Additional annual costs include teleconference bills, payroll, and other travel costs. ADF&G asks about \$75,000-80,000 a year from OSM, with additional funds provided by ADF&G to pay Chris's salary, Alice's salary, travel, teleconference, meeting supplies and other contractual costs.

The Chair asked about rental costs for the spring meetings.

- Chris Shelden said that the facilities used for spring meetings are ADF&G owned and don't cost anything additional, however were the meetings to be held in Bethel this would not be the case. The Hatchery was open to all ADF&G business, and hatchery staff had been very accommodating. Members agreed that they liked the Hatchery as a meeting place.
- Bob Aloysius, YK Delta RAC representative, asked what the cost had been for a meeting in Bethel or Aniak, versus Anchorage. Chris replied that the meeting held in August of 2012 had cost over \$20,000 and had been paid for by the ADFG Federal Subsistence Liaison. He stated that ADF&G Kusko management could not afford to hold a full three day interagency and Working Group meeting with multiple staff in Bethel. Therefore, a meeting held in Bethel would be a Working Group meeting only, forgoing the involvement of other agencies and multiple presentations. Chris believed that Aniak

would be more difficult and more expensive because of fewer accommodations and more travel.

- Bob Aloysius and the Chair offered to help find accommodations for a meeting in Aniak, and Casie Stockdale, Lower River Subsistence alternate, offered to find reduced rent for a facility in Bethel. Chris Shelden recognized that according to the By-laws, the spring Working Group meeting should be held in Bethel and that it was only held in Anchorage to allow Working Group members to benefit from the Interagency Meeting. Also, according to the By-laws the spring meeting was designed to be only a “housekeeping meeting” where administrative items should be addressed rather than a management meeting discussing strategies for the coming season. He suggested that the group should consider this when planning the spring meeting, or amend the By-laws.

## **2. Discussion of possible management approaches/strategies for Kuskokwim River Salmon Fisheries for 2013.**

As he presented had presented the previous day at the Interagency Meeting, Travis Elison, the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area Commercial Fisheries Manager, reported that ADF&G was still waiting on 2013 forecast information before announcing any firm management strategies.

Travis stated that since ADF&G was confident in the types of management tools to use, the agency is concentrating more on the outreach at this point. He had listened to comments made at the previous day's meeting and agreed with providing a brief and clear “cheat sheet” and news release in the next few weeks. The purpose would be to describe management tools and the intention behind them (such as 4-inch mesh restrictions and the new Elder's Fishery). In conjunction with this outreach effort, Travis planned to go from village to village in May with Wildlife Trooper Ken Actin to get the word out. He asked for other suggestions from the KRSMG.

- Dave Cannon, Middle River Subsistence alternate, commented that he has been brainstorming outreach for the Aniak area. He wanted to concentrate efforts to change the minds of people who participate in civil disobedience and who do not participate in the KRSMWG. The Napaimute website that Dave maintains is one good tool. He urged AVCP and OSM to make more of an outreach effort to that segment of the population. Ken Actin pointed out that KNA had posted notices by gas pumps in 2012, which seemed to help.
- Bev Hoffman requested talking points before the next meeting. She knew that people would want answers from her immediately after this meeting. Bev was not comfortable giving them a report unless she had agreed-upon talking points.
- Bev also suggested creating a new radio show in English and Yupik with KRSMWG members called “Let's Talk Fish.” Bev explained that people need an opportunity to “vent” and KRSMWG members need to stay calm and talk to them. A radio show was effective because people from different communities could call in.

James Charles, Downriver Elder, and Charlie Brown, Commercial Fisher representative, commented on management strategies in the lower river.

- James described the difficulty of affording gas to set 4-inch mesh nets in Tuntutuliak and Eek during 2012 rolling closures. When subsistence salmon fishing was closed last year, fishermen had to travel far to set their whitefish nets, unlike Bethel residents who could set nets in front of their house. James is “tired of 4-inch nets.”

- James also wanted management to know that he was not happy last year when a photograph of his fish rack was published in the Delta Discovery newspaper. The article implied that lower river people were fishing illegally, when instead; he had traveled to get fish. He said that he was fortunate to be able to afford to do that because many people cannot.
- Charlie agreed with James on the impracticality of fishing with 4-inch mesh in Eek. He had to send his son to fish in Quinhagak to get his family's subsistence harvest during rolling closures. Charlie did not want his fish racks to be photographed, either.

Greg Roczicka, Lower River Subsistence alternate, recommended writing more focused newspaper articles to improve outreach.

- The KRSMWG's first priority should be to address what he called the "Bethel situation": a large transient population, including people who want to put fish in the freezer. Greg said that members should encourage these fishermen to catch chum, reds, or silvers and to "leave kings for drying."
- Greg also wanted to better explain to people the concept of quality vs. quantity of escapement in explaining why they should use 6-inch gear instead of 8-inch. He said that "We must educate people of the power of fleet we have with the modern gear and technology. If that is used to the extreme that it can be, we have the power to wipe out that which we are trying to protect." These conversations will be difficult and may be "political suicide" at times, but such outreach is imperative.

Ken Actin, Fish and Wildlife Trooper, said that he and Travis, visiting two villages per day pre-season, should help keep the lines of communication open. He hoped that some of the misunderstandings that occurred in 2012 would be prevented. He referred to an occasion in which Kalskag and Aniak had received incorrect fishing closure information from KYUK resulting in citations that otherwise would not have occurred. Ken believed that news releases should go through one distribution center for checking prior to release. Also, troopers need to communicate with each other between the McGrath, Aniak, and Bethel Trooper stations.

**At this point, the KRSMWG group began to draft ideas for talking points.** Travis Elison provided input but cited that drafting talking points this early in the year could be confusing. Inseason information could change everything. He provided the following input:

- Preseason indicators suggest that restrictions are very possible, but inseason information would be needed to be sure.
- 6-inch mesh restriction very likely to happen. Especially toward the end of June, once chum and sockeye show up.
- Rolling closures will likely not last as long as in 2012, but this could change if the run does not materialize. The current plan would be to include at least one fishing opening per week.
- Don't say similar than last year, because hopefully restrictions will be less severe.

**The Chair summarized these points: *Good chance for restrictions, perhaps rolling closures, and expect similar to last year (but less severe).*** Chris Shelden asked for clarification about the likelihood of 6-inch mesh restriction. Travis Elison replied that mesh restrictions would probably not occur prior to June 20 to first week of July.

*The talking point discussion was then suspended for People to be Heard presentations, and revisited later in the meeting in the form of Motions. The discussion resumed later including the following comments:*

Travis Elison explained that the 2013 escapement goals were presented to the Board of Fish and given in Zachary Liller's presentation yesterday at the Interagency Meeting.

- **65,000 to 120,000 Chinook salmon is the 2013 drainage-wide recommended escapement goal for the Kuskokwim River**
- There will be three new recommended tributary escapement goals for Kwethluk, Kogrukuk, and George Rivers.
- The 2013 escapement goals will affect management. Last year we still needed many restrictions in order to achieve escapement levels, this year may be different.
- This year ADFG has a better way of identifying periods of fishing opportunity. Even with run size similar to last year, we may be able to have one open period per week during rolling closures in order to harvest a surplus.

Bob Aloysius made a motion to accept the 2013 escapement goal for Chinook salmon (see motion 2 below).

Don Rivard clarified that last year we agreed on a *set* escapement goal of 127,000 Chinook salmon. This year the department wants to shoot for a *midpoint of an escapement range*, which is more than 65,000 Chinook. He explained that if you agree on what to shoot for, that sets up everything else. For instance, if you agree on 65,000 Chinook it will seem that there are plenty of fish.

Ray Collins, Western Interior RAC representative, liked the idea of having a number for a target somewhere in the midrange.

Travis Elison asked what amount of uncertainty the KRSMWG was willing to accept in the management of escapement goals. The midpoint was discussed during the drafting of the management plan, but the concept of managing for the midpoint was not used. Instead, as presented by Kevin Schaberg, ADF&G Kuskokwim Area Research biologist, at the Interagency Meeting, the Bethel Test Fish Tool will be used and uncertainty will be offset to err on the side of conservation. Travis suggested a motion of acceptance of the escapement goals, then another motion to accept the Bethel Test Fish tool as one assessment tool.

### **3. Casie Stockdale led discussion about engaging in a MSE process.**

Casie wanted to review her perspective on "how things have gone to date."

- At the 2012 KRSWMG Meeting, Matt Catalano gave a MSE presentation and facilitated a group discussion. The KRSMWG then ranked suggested Chinook management objectives. It was a quick exercise, not a long process.
- The ranked objectives were then used at a workshop that ADFG, USFWS, that she had taken part in. The goal of the workshop had been learning how the analytical process would work. Some of the ranked objectives were taken into consideration, in her opinion, "the parts that the Department felt could be incorporated." Other parts were not incorporated because the tools were not available at the time, for example, quality



of [2012 Chinook] escapement. Other priorities not used were predictability of closures, minimizing loss due to weather, and timing of closures.

- o Doug Molyneaux later facilitated a process that she thought would be the beginning of a larger, more stakeholder involved MSE process. Casie said, "What was lacking was a fleshing out of a larger group of stakeholders of what our objectives would be...And the main thing that is lacking at this point is an evaluation of those harvest policies that we have developed."
- o Therefore, we have taken parts of the MSE process, and there seems to be interest in engaging in a full process, but it would have to have a longer timeline.

Mike Jones responded that Casie's summary seemed accurate, and he agreed that pieces of the MSE process had been used, but not all the components he suggests for desirable decision-making.

John Linderman, ADF&G AYK Regional Supervisor, commented that Casie gave a good outline with respect to what has occurred over the past year since the topic of MSE had been introduced at the 2012 Interagency Meeting. Some MSE concepts for obtaining stakeholder feedback were used to help guide the upcoming Board of Fish meeting and 2013 inseason management. However, the MSE guidelines were more introductory, not implementation, of formal MSE on the Kuskokwim river. "Moving forward it would be something much more comprehensive and formalized," with familiar components.

Casie Stockdale agreed and reiterated that a full MSE process could be valuable on the Kuskokwim. For instance, the process could help evaluate the predictability of closures. Mike Jones stated that her and John Linderman's comments seemed correct.

LaMont Albertson agreed that the full MSE process could be important. However, he did not think that ADF&G was the appropriate entity to facilitate it. John Linderman agreed that state and federal agencies are part of the stakeholder group, and that a neutral party needs to mediate.

Henry Lupie, Member-at-Large, asked for an example of "possible tradeoffs" as they are referred to in the Decision Analysis slide on handout. Mike Jones replied that in the case of salmon management, the most obvious trade off is salmon meeting escapement versus salmon providing for subsistence food and economic needs. Another trade-off to consider is commercial and recreational use of the area. One way to think of trade-offs is in terms of risks. To get outcomes of one objective you might have to give up aspects of another objective. Kevin said that last year was a perfect example of a tradeoff: Not meeting subsistence needs for Chinook in order for Chinook to meet escapement.

When asked what she hoped to gain from a discussion on MSE at this time, Casie Stockdale responded that it has been a year since the last discussion, that we were still at the beginning of a process, and didn't want to lose momentum. She stated that she would like to see this process completed by the next Board of Fish meeting. She wanted to know if the KRSWG and ADF&G were interested in participating.

Bob Aloysius commented that every year he has been in the KRSWG, "There have always been "band-aids, band-aids, band-aids, year after year. The biggest problem we are facing is that we as human beings are killing our King salmon."

- Pollution from copper and lead are seeping into the Kuskokwim, and gravity brings it down to where the young fish are growing. Before Chinook can get back upriver to spawn, "they are intercepted in every conceivable way that you can think of."
- Bob stressed that, "As human beings we are responsible for the decrease of salmon in the Kuskokwim River, "especially us!" It is happening on the Yukon and all over the United States. He was frustrated that "We as a Working Group have no power at all to make sure that some of the human causes of obstacles to salmon evolution are stopped, or reduced." He urged that, "We really need to evaluate what we can do, as the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, to address it." He would like the power of the Working Group to initiate something in federal, state, and even international legislation to address these issues.

Ray Collins referred back to what Bob Aloysius had said about humans being responsible for the decline of Chinook. Ray reminded the group that the tradeoff last year was to give up subsistence salmon for escapement. He asked, how do we shift some of this so that others, like the Pollock fishery, make tradeoffs? McGrath, for instance, gets the end of the run.

- LaMont Albertson said that we need to make the Pollock fishery feel like a stakeholder, because as things are currently structured "they are above us because we have no influence over them whatsoever." They have been at WG meetings before, but never showed an effort toward the MSE approach.
- Bev Hoffman reminded the group that CVS was a stakeholder, and thought that the processor should be involved in KRSMWG meetings.

Bev Hoffman referred to old copies of Tundra Drums articles that she brought to the meeting. This year marked the 25<sup>th</sup> year that the KRSMWG has been in existence. The article was about the formation of the group, and she encouraged everyone to read it to be reminded of what our true purpose was: "It was to have more say, equal say, to these management decisions." Bev agreed that the KRSMWG should move forward with the MSE process. She stated, "You guys need us, we need you, and we need our salmon." She said that we are on the right track, but we need to continue. Bev suggested a motion to this effect.

Casie Stockdale thanked Bev for bringing the Tundra Drums article. Referring to Bob Aloysius' words, she said that this MSE process is the opposite of putting a "band-aid" on issues. She suggested that a small group of co-chairs and agency staff learn together what the process would look like and how they would go about it, then report back to the KRSMWG.

Joe Spaeder handed out a narrated slideshow and 5 videos explaining the MSE process. He handed out 15 jump drives with the files.

LaMont wanted to get the MSE process underway while "we have our impetus," instead of waiting until post-season. The group also needs to consider who would serve as the third (non-stakeholder) party.

It was decided that LaMont will appoint a committee for AYKSSI with Casie, Joe Spaeder, and Co-chairs (see Action Item 10 above). Casie will approach the BSFA for their involvement as a stakeholder in this process, and for use of their facilities (Action Item 11).

#### **4. Dave Cannon gave a presentation regarding the possible effects of using different types of fishing gear in the subsistence fishery in the Kuskokwim River.**

Dave reported a decline in catches of large Chinook by fishermen at the September 2012 AYK SSI meeting. Dave provide examples from real fishermen of how the size of fish they typically catch has declined over the years on the Yukon.

Dave addressed concerns about quality of escapement, meaning whether sufficient numbers of female Chinook make it the spawning grounds to lay their eggs.

- He provided graphs of data from the Tuluksak and Kogrukluk weirs showing the number of females declining and their size decreasing in recent years. The reasoning behind implementing a 6-inch mesh restriction for commercial fishing on the Kuskokwim River was to reduce harvest of large Chinook. However, he pointed out that we still have unlimited mesh size for subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim.
- It took many years for the Yukon River to come to the conclusion to restrict subsistence fishing to 7.5-inch mesh. Since bigger fish tend to be females, Dave asked the group if they would consider proposing a mesh size restriction for subsistence fishing at the next BOF meeting. He reminded the group run timing was important to consider in Chinook management because the first fish in the river go the farthest upstream.

Dan Gillikin, USFWS, pointed out that different gear sizes catch different *ranges* of fish sizes. Large gear catches only a few fish sizes, and smaller gear (like 6-inch) catches a large range of sizes. "Typically in a sound fisheries practice you want your harvest to reflect what your run is. This smaller gear type probably does a much better job of doing that than using the 8-inch gear."

- Mark Leary agreed saying that his 7.5-inch net is much more efficient than larger nets because it catches "jacks," chum, and Coho; which means that it catches "way more fish overall."
- Ray Collins asked if smaller mesh would fill up with small Chinook males. Dan Gillikin replied that probably not, unless there were highly skewed sex ratios.

Bev asked if the implementation of 7.5-inch gear on the Kuskokwim would have to be made through the BOF process.

- Dave Cannon replied that Gene Sandone, who has researched implications of different gear sizes on the Yukon, told him that the 7.5-inch gear restriction had been successful in allowing the escapement of large females. John Linderman responded, "There is no way to conclude that." Having talked to Gene himself, John explained that, "All the information that we have now from two seasons is consistent with what we would expect to see."
- Mark Leary asked John Linderman how people took the gear change on the Yukon. John replied that initially many people were not happy because of the cost of replacing nets, but upriver communities were very pleased. Dave Cannon commented that many large nets from the Yukon were sold to fishermen on the Kuskokwim.

Kevin Schaberg reminded the group that 6-inch mesh is not good for conservation in low abundance years because it would catch too many Chinook. On the other hand, when sockeye and chum are in the river, catches of these fish help fill the nets, reducing the number of

Chinook harvested in that mesh sized net. Therefore, correct timing of mesh restrictions is crucial.

Bev Hoffman commented that the goal for the Yukon was to get larger females to the spawning grounds, which should be the same goal for the Kuskokwim. John Linderman replied that the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers should not be directly compared at this point.

- The Yukon has a large data set over a long time period, but it will take many years for the Kuskokwim to have a comparable amount of data. Age/size/sex classes are more equally harvested with 6-inch mesh, but the difference between the Yukon and the Kuskokwim is that the Yukon mesh study was for the continued harvest of Chinook, not other species. However, with 6-inch mesh Kuskokwim fishermen will predominantly catch chum and sockeye if they are in the river.
- With respect to non-Chinook species of salmon, 7-inch gear on the Yukon saw a significant increase in summer chum harvest and Chinook compared to 7.5-inch gear, which narrowed down the decision to propose 7.5-mesh for the BOF. At this point the Kuskokwim does not have a conservation concern for non-Chinook salmon, but John Linderman reminded the group that smaller mesh would put more pressure on those fish.

Gerald Simeon, Middle River Subsistence representative, commented that people in Aniak asked him to find out if they can drift in their king spots with 4-inch mesh nets during restrictions. Travis answered no, because during those times subsistence fishing for salmon is closed. The purpose of allowing 4-inch set nets during closures was to allow harvest opportunity of non-salmon species like whitefish.

James Charles commented that many people already expect 6-inch mesh restrictions this season. He said that last summer CVRF passed out some smaller nets (he didn't what size exactly). James said 6-inch or smaller will work for him because he has used his 6-inch net for a long time, even for commercial fishing in Quinhagak, so he doesn't mind using it in the river. Others in his community felt the same way.

John Andrew, YK Delta RAC alternate, pointed out that farther up the river the current is stronger and the river is shallower, so fishermen use different nets for different areas. Mark Leary agreed, saying that he drags bottom with larger nets but his 6-inch net won't reach it.

Travis Elison clarified that the current discussion revolved around a theory, which was that selected harvest of large fish has resulted in fewer fish coming back in subsequent years. He reiterated that, "We just don't know right now. Implementing smaller mesh gear is a conservative approach." In other words, it will not create more of a problem but it might not fix it.

- Research and evidence that supports this theory on the Kuskokwim, but there is a chance that it could be a natural phenomenon. Travis has talked to other fisheries scientists who have been looking at other areas of Alaska, and they are seeing similar reductions in the size of fish where smaller mesh gear is used. For example, the Copper River and the Nushagak, where most of the harvest occurs with 6-inch or smaller gear, are still seeing a reduction in commercial catches.
- John Linderman added that research has also been done on genetic factors that come into play in size selective harvests.

- Kevin Schaberge reiterated Travis's point that no one knows what will happen. He also agreed with Casie that at this March meeting and with limited info pre-season, it might be pre-mature to make such specific recommendations. Kevin's perception was that Motion 5 was supposed to be about talking points for the public.

Members continued to discuss the effect of implementing the 6-inch mesh restriction.

- Ray Collins thought that more Chinook subsistence needs could be met with the likely increase in "jacks" caught with 6-inch nets.
- Greg Roczicka believed that some people would be upset because they use 8-inch nets left over from before commercial fishing was restricted to 6-inch.
- Bob Aloysius commented that many people on the Yukon seemed happy with the 7.5-inch gear because they can get more fish in less time. With the price of gas, it makes more economic sense to have more efficient net and less drifts.

## **5. Dave Cannon's asked for ideas on how to improve outreach.**

- Bob Aloysius said that last year in Kwethluk first the Tribal Administrator was informed, who then notified the community. He suggested this method for all communities.
- Mark Leary suggested broadcast texting on cell phone. Since Dave Cannon was a GCI representative, Dan Gillikin asked him to find out if GCI can send mass text messages to users. Chris Shelden reminded him that many people get charged for texts; so receiving them should be voluntary.
- Recognizing that ADF&G computers cannot use Facebook, Dave Cannon reported that Napaimute may look into using social media as a tool "because once something is on there, it spreads like wildfire."
- Travis said that people can sign up for news releases to be automatically sent to them. The website link is on all the news releases or it is easy to use Google to find the page where you can select your specific area. Dave Cannon said he is working on an article where he can include these links.
- La Donn Robbins, KNA, commented that Aniak and McGrath have online "Community Boards." She suggested that other communities use this avenue for an effective way to post information.
- John Linderman added that the department is working on a system that notifies subscribers by text of news releases.
- ONC, Bethel Native Corp., and YKHC are having big meetings soon, which could be a good place to spread information.
- Bev Hoffman said having an open forum available to the public would be useful to have pre-season.
- Senator Murkowski will have a subsistence listening session in April, which could be a good opportunity for outreach.
- John Linderman suggested adding all of these suggestions to the talking points.

## **6. KRSWMG elections for Chairs, Primary Members, and Alternates.**

Bev Hoffman will remain co-chair if she is assured that any new co-chairs will be truly committed to the position. Having 3 co-chairs in Bethel would be good to share the workload because it is very difficult to chair meetings over teleconference.

LaMont Albertson will only be able to chair this March meeting in 2013. He will remain a member, but as far as running meetings LaMont wants to serve as “back-up co-chair.”

Greg Roczicka announced that he would be stepping down from co-chair but remain a member. Greg felt that he had too many obligations to be co-chair. LaMont thanked Greg for all of his hard work chairing meetings.

Greg explained that having multiple chairs helps ADF&G always have a KRSWMG contact person. Discussion of potential co-chairs followed:

- LaMont suggested Fritz Charles as well as co-chairs from upriver and downriver.
- Casie suggested James Charles because he is often available and knows how to chair a meeting. As for the suggestion of herself, she was concerned that she speaks to quietly for members to hear her, and she also has significant travel obligations this summer.
- Bob Aloysius agreed that the chair needs to live in Bethel. He suggested Casie and Fritz.
- John Andrew suggested allowing ADF&G to be an alternate for co-chair because sometimes everyone else is busy, away at fish camp, or having phone reception issues.
- LaMont suggested Mark Leary, who was concerned about not having enough experience to be co-chair.

Ray Collins commented that many times it is difficult to hear the meeting in Bethel, because the telephone speaker is too far from who is taking.

**7. Discussion of talking points.** Although this was not an official topic, and was returned to several times, the discussion of talking points was an integral component to the meeting.

Travis Elison provided input but cited that drafting talking points this early in the year could be confusing. Inseason information could change everything. He provided the following input:

- Preseason indicators suggest that restrictions are very possible, but inseason information would be needed to be sure.
- 6-inch mesh restriction very likely to happen. Especially toward the end of June, once chum and sockeye show up.
- Rolling closures will likely not last as long as in 2012, but this could change if the run does not materialize. The current plan would be to include at least one fishing opening per week.
- Don't say similar than last year, because hopefully restrictions will be less severe.

**The Chair summarized these points: *Good chance for restrictions, perhaps rolling closures, and expect similar to last year (but less severe).*** Chris Shelden asked for clarification about the likelihood of 6-inch mesh restriction. Travis Elison replied that mesh restrictions would probably not occur prior to June 20 to first week of July.

*The talking point discussion was then suspended for People to be Heard presentations, and revisited later in the meeting in the form of Motions. The discussion resumed later including the following comments:*

Travis Elison explained that the 2013 escapement goals were presented to the Board of Fish and given in Zachary Liller's (ADF&G) presentation yesterday at the Interagency Meeting.

- **65,000 to 120,000 Chinook salmon is the 2013 drainage-wide recommended escapement goal for the Kuskokwim River**
- There will be three new recommended tributary escapement goals for Kwethluk, Kogrukuk, and George Rivers.
- The 2013 escapement goals will affect management. Last year we still needed many restrictions in order to achieve escapement levels, this year may be different.
- This year ADFG has a better way of identifying periods of fishing opportunity. Even with run size similar to last year, we may be able to have one open period per week during rolling closures in order to harvest a surplus.

Bob Aloysius made a motion to accept the 2013 escapement goal for Chinook salmon (see motion 2 below).

Don Rivard clarified that last year we agreed on a *set* escapement goal of 127,000 Chinook salmon. This year the department wants to shoot for a *midpoint of an escapement range*, which is more than 65,000 Chinook. He explained that if you agree on what to shoot for, that sets up everything else. For instance, if you agree on 65,000 Chinook it will seem that there are plenty of fish.

Ray Collins liked the idea of having a number for a target somewhere in the midrange.

Travis Elison asked what amount of uncertainty the KRSMWG was willing to accept in the management of escapement goals. The midpoint was discussed during the drafting of the management plan, but the concept of managing for the midpoint was not used. Instead, as presented by Kevin Schaberg at the Interagency Meeting, the Bethel Test Fish Tool will be used and uncertainty will be offset to err on the side of conservation. Travis suggested a motion of acceptance of the escapement goals, then another motion to accept the Bethel Test Fish tool as one assessment tool.

**The Chair then inquired about tributary restrictions in the 2013 Management Plan.**

Travis Elison explained the draft edition of the 2013 management plan did not specifically address tributaries, only that ADF&G could enact restrictions in the form of EO's when deemed necessary.

*Tabled for discussion: The possibility of a motion for the KRSMWG to support 2013 closures to subsistence salmon fishing on Kuskokwim River tributaries similar to those implemented in 2012; with the addition of a buffer area from the upstream side of the island at the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim Rivers to below the west end of the Aniak village runway, and the addition of closure of the Owhat, Holukuk, and Kolmokof Rivers including a buffer area to one mile below their confluences with the Kuskokwim River.*

COMMENTS REGARDING TRIBUTARY RESTRICTIONS:

Bev Hoffman referred to the 2012 interagency and spring KRSMWG meeting where tributary restrictions were clearly defined pre-season. She suggested that a motion be made that said if necessary, restrictions similar to 2012 tributary restriction be applied.

LaMont requested a clear sense of what to report back to people regarding the Aniak River.

Dan Gillikin stated that USFWS would like to see tributary closures to be similar to last year for conservation purposes. He said that even though there will no longer be an escapement objective for the Tuluksak, there is still concern for Chinook trends in the Tuluksak as well as the Kwethluk Rivers. Dan suggested that the KRSMWG supported closures at this point pre-season, also because it would allow people time to plan.

- o Bev agreed with what Dan said and supported making a motion.

John Chythlook, ADF&G Kuskokwim Area Sport Fisheries manager, announced that the 2013 season would start with sport fishing closed for Chinook salmon.

Much discussion followed regarding rod and reel subsistence fishing for Chinook:

- o Gerald Simeon commented that no one subsistence fishes for Chinook with rod and reel in Aniak; they use a net.
- o Dan Gillikin replied that in the lower river tributaries, especially around Bethel, there is much more rod and reel fishing and it poses a threat.
- o Greg Roczicka disagreed with Dan, saying that the major subsistence fishery for Chinook around Bethel is with nets, and reel is just for silvers.
- o Ray Collins commented that rod and reel is crucial to the headwaters because it is the only way to catch Chinook.
- o Bob Aloysius said the most effective way to catch Chinook without a net is to use a stick with eggs on it. You don't need a rod and reel. This is the customary traditional practice.
- o Travis Elison commented that gillnets are legal in tributaries. His observation on the Kisaralik River was that many people use gillnets for Chinook later in the season.
- o Bev Hoffman suggested using the same wording for tributary restrictions as 2012 because it seemed to work.

Discussion about buffer zones:

- o Gerald Simeon very much wants "to stop the brown boxes leaving from Aniak." He suggested adding an additional buffer for the Aniak River by making the boundary on the west end of the runway. Travis explained that the buffer would need to include the mainstem in between the boundary lines for the Aniak.
- o John Chythlook clarified that Sport Fishing for Chinook will already be closed on the Aniak. Dan Gillikin added that people can still fish for rainbow trout and other species, which can be mistaken for fishing for Chinook.
- o The Owhat River is where people go when the Aniak is restricted, so many expressed concerns about fishing effort being concentrated there.
- o As for other tributaries, Kevin said that simply closing these tributaries may be better; otherwise subsistence fishing on the mainstem will be difficult because of so many boundaries, and very hard to enforce.
- o Chris Sheldon commented that other villages are expected to cope with buffers and that people can go above the buffer to fish. LaMont replied that with the price of gas, we can't expect people to move far on the mainstem, unless there are markers there, which could be difficult. Ray pointed out that if people fish above the boundaries, they are taking stock out of the fish for upriver people and escapement.
- o Kevin Schaberg added we need to remember that the point of restrictions was for Chinook conservation. Kwethluk and Tuluksak have had their traditional practices altered in order for conservation. This is the tradeoff for the sake of escapement, so why are we trying to make concessions for Chinook fishing in Aniak.

*See item 5 above for additional talking points.*



## OLD BUSINESS:

**1. Bev Hoffman reported that she sent recruitment letters for the currently vacant Upriver Elder seat.** – Had been sent to a number of upriver villages.

### **2. Discussion of the Iyana Gusty Award.**

Bev Hoffman said that she prefers not to have an award when something happens to a member, but instead recognize them publically. For instance, the KRSMWG could give something to their family. She reminded the group that they have put off deciding an award for Iyana for three years now.

- Bob Aloysius suggested making something for the wall with citations about Iyana. KRSMWG members and people from the community could sign it.
- Bev also suggested asking the Alaskan legislature to recognize proclamations for individuals that the KRSMWG suggests. Mark Leary replied that the state had already done so for Iyana, but Bev would like to see recognition coming from the Working Group specifically. She would like the same thing done for Calvin Simeon.
- Gerald Simeon said that when Calvin Simeon had been on his deathbed, he knew the Working Group would want to do something after he was gone. Gerald said that Calvin would have preferred for something to be done while he was still living.

### **3. Letter of WG support for HB 49.**

LaMont Albertson stated that he had investigated whether it would be appropriate to send a letter from the Working Group to support House Bill 49 (a reintroduction of HB 332 from 2012 to establish a research endowment for Chinook salmon), and found that it would. LaMont volunteered to write the letter on behalf of the KRSMWG.

### **4. Letter of WG support for continued involvement of USFWS in WG activities.**

LaMont Albertson also volunteered write a letter on behalf of the KRSMWG thanking USFWS for their participation in KRSMWG endeavors in 2012.

- He and Bev commented that the agency not only participates, it is a stakeholder. He mentioned support from Dan Gillikin, Robert Sundown, Steve Miller, and Gene Peltola, Jr., specifically.
- Bob Aloysius said that USFWS doesn't only participate, they direct.
- LaMont mentioned that USFWS also pays some of the KRSMWG bills.
- Members agreed that the letter should be written.

**5. Review of KRSMWG By-laws** was tabled for the next meeting pending discussion by a committee of the chairs.

**6. Review of KRSMWG roll call and Alternate members** was postponed pending Working Group members contacting individuals not showing good attendance in recent years.

## MOTIONS:

**MOTION 1:** Approval of the Agenda as Amended.

### COMMENTS FOR MOTION 1:

Items were moved within the New Business section of the Agenda, and the rules were suspended to facilitate a more freeform discussion. Several items within New Business were combined due to the interrelatedness of the topics. As a result of the decision to go with freeform discussion, the meeting structure became difficult to manage and more difficult to record in a coherent fashion.

**MOTION 2:** The KRSMWG accepts the ADF&G 2013 escapement goals for Chinook salmon of 65,000-120,000 Chinook salmon. Motion passed unanimously (9 yeas, 0 nays).

**MOTION 3:** The KRSMWG recommends that ADF&G manage Chinook salmon within the confines of the 2013 Management Plan. Motion passed unanimously (9 yeas, 0 nays).

### COMMENTS FOR MOTION 2 and 3:

Kevin Schaberg reminded everyone that by accepting the uncertainty of the Bethel Test Fish Tool, they accept using a BTF indicator that lies towards the midpoint of the Escapement goal range. In other words, it increases the likelihood of escapements falling within the escapement goal range.

John Andrew said he would be more comfortable if it went up to 80-85,000 Chinook because of his concern for the Kwethluk River.

**MOTION 4:** The KRSMWG agrees that subsistence salmon fishing on the mainstem Kuskokwim River in 2013 will begin the season open, until inseason assessment indicates possible restriction. Motion passed (8 yeas, 1 nay).

### COMMENTS FOR MOTION 4:

Gerald Simeon stated that he voted no because the first fish in the Kuskokwim are bound for the tributaries and he wants to give them a chance to get there. He was concerned that all the fish will be caught if the season starts open.

**MOTION 5:** In the event that closures are implemented in the mainstem Kuskokwim River, the KRSMWG supports having at least one subsistence salmon fishing period per week allowed, as stated in the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management plan. Motion passed unanimously (9 yeas, 0 nays).

**MOTION 6:** The KRSMWG recommends the restriction of subsistence salmon fishing to 6-inch or less mesh gillnets starting at the beginning of the 2013 fishing season, in an effort to increase the number of large female king salmon on the spawning grounds. Motion passed unanimously (9 yeas, 0 nays).

### COMMENTS FOR MOTION 6:

Ray Collins said the reason why he made the motion was to implement smaller gear at the beginning of the year so that large females could make it to the spawning grounds.

- John Linderman reminded him that 6-inch gear would catch more Chinook if it were implemented prior to the arrival of chum and sockeye. The 2013 Management Plan from the interagency meeting states that 6-inch gear would be used only in conjunction with sockeye and chum in the river in mid June. John explained that 6-inch gear will catch a much higher number of fish, so there will be an increase of large females caught as well. He explained, "It's a number issue."
- Don Rivard supported 6-inch mesh only if other species are the water.
- Kevin Schaberg agreed, explaining that 2012 was an exceptionally late Chinook run so implementing a 6-inch mesh restriction late in the run was an appropriate action. Typical run timing for Chinook begins earlier than other species.

Bob Aloysius said that he did not like the interference with the wording of the motion, and reference to previous presentations. He said that the KRSMWG serves as a guide to the agencies and a venue to gather and distribute information.

- LaMont Albertson answered that the group was just trying to come to agreement on how to incorporate many different things into one motion.
- John Linderman explained that he was not arguing with a 6-inch mesh recommendation, he just wanted to educate the group on the possible adverse effects of specific wording. Casie Stockdale understood John's point, because if a motion is made and the department enacts something different (even if it is better) then the public will think that ADF&G is not listening to the Working Group, which has been an issue before.
- Bev Hoffman stated that everyone at the table, including agency staff, was at an equal level. This is a time to brainstorm tools for inseason management. She agreed with the motion as stated.

Referring back to Ray's original reason for making the motion, as well as concerns from upriver communities, John Linderman commented that the exploitation rate with 6-inch gear at the beginning of the season would be higher than larger gear because 6-inch will catch all the smaller jacks. So it may allow bigger fish up, but overall there will be fewer fish getting upriver. He reminded everyone that this discussion was a perfect example of balancing risks, referring back to Mike Jones presentation.

Greg Roczicka was concerned because many Bethel residents were already planning to fish harder at the beginning of June in anticipation of closures. The major fish camps in the Bethel area may all be fishing early.

*Much discussion about the exact wording of Motion 6 can be found under New Business item 4.*

**MOTION 7:** The KRSMWG recognizes that sacrifices made by subsistence fishermen in 2012 narrowly resulted in escapements that ensured future returns of King salmon. The KRSMWG also recognizes that without these sacrifices future runs of King salmon would have been in jeopardy. Motion passed unanimously (9 yeas, 0 nays).

#### [COMMENTS FOR MOTION 7:](#)

Bev reminded everyone that we saved a lot of fish in 2012. Greg agreed that we "made escapement by the skin of our teeth." We need to bring this message to our communities.

**MOTION 8:** The KRSMWG recognizes and supports the intent of the Elders' Fishery in order to allow elders the ability to harvest some king salmon when limited opportunity exists and to help pass on cultural knowledge. Motion passed unanimously (9 yeas, 0 nays).

COMMENTS FOR MOTION 8:

John Linderman referred to the Management Plan phrase "when King salmon in excess is limited" to 20,000 of harvestable surplus: if a very small amount of fish available is the first criteria of the elder fishery. Elder fisheries would NOT be all the time; they would be announced as Emergency Orders. Instead of totally closing the fishery, fishing would be restricted to a smaller group of people.

During the Interagency Meeting, ADF&G explained that during the Elder's Fishery only those of *second degree of kindred* were allowed to assist an elder if necessary. The definition of *second degree of kindred* was further clarified:

- John Linderman restated that those of *second degree of kindred* are only allowed to assist an elder; the elder will technically be the one fishing.
- Greg explained that the regulation does not allow cousins, nephews/nieces, or in-laws to fish.
- Mark Leary was concerned that assisting can be seen in different ways. He asked if the elder can sit in the boat while grandkids put the net in and out of the water. Ken Actin replied yes: As long as the elder is on the boat, and they are over 60 and the kids meet requirements of kinship, it's legal.
- Bev worried that the regulation needed work because some elders can't even get into the boat. For moose hunting, the elder doesn't have to go (proxy hunt). John Linderman explained that the Elders' Fishery excludes a proxy.
- Ray wanted to make sure that *second degree of kindred* included grandchildren because many parents work away from home. Greg replied yes, and that one intention of the regulation was to encourage the transfer of traditional fishing knowledge to grandkids.
- Charlie Brown asked what if the whole family is in the boat. To save gas his family fishes while they drift down to fish camp. Travis explained that it doesn't limit the number of family, but the person fishing has to be an elder or *second degree of kindred to the elder*.
- Ken Actin allowed that there will be a lot of issues to work out as far as tracking names. Anyone can be in the boat, but they can't touch fishing gear if not second to kin.

**MOTION 9:** The KRSMWG will support 2013 closures to subsistence salmon fishing on Kuskokwim River tributaries similar to those implemented in 2012. Motion passed (7 yeas, 2 nays).

COMMENTS FOR MOTION 9:

Motion 9 stemmed from New Business Item 5.

**MOTION 10:** For the KRSMWG to have five Co-chairs: Casie Stockdale, Fritz Charles, Mark Leary, Beverly Hoffman, and LaMont Albertson (as backup). Motion passed unanimously (10 yeas, 0 nays).

COMMENTS FOR MOTION 10:

Motion 10 was made after discussion of New Business Item 6.

**MOTION 11:** KRSMWG members will contact those members who have never attended a meeting, or attended three or fewer meetings in 2012, to determine if they wish to have a hearing for retention. Motion passed unanimously (10 yeas, 0 nays).

**MOTION 12:** To elect Barbara Carlson from Sleetmute as alternate for the Upriver Subsistence seat. Motion passed unanimously (10 yeas, 0 nays).

**MOTION 13:** Mark Leary was elected primary member for the Upriver Subsistence seat, replacing Evelyn Thomas. Evelyn will serve as alternate. Motion passed unanimously (10 yeas, 0 nays).

**MOTION 14:** A committee of Co-chairs and Bob Aloysius will work with KRSMWG coordinators and volunteers to review the KRSMWG by-laws and make recommended changes. Recommendations will be reviewed at the next KRSMWG meeting. Motion passed unanimously (10 yeas, 0 nays).

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

Bob Aloysius made a heartfelt request for state and federal agencies to monitor (and enforce) harvest activity at Whitefish Lake. He said that people coming from outside the area are camping and fishing with 50-fathom nets are raiding the lake again. Last year "people in Aniak and Kalskag were helpless" to prevent this use of illegal gear.

- o Ken Actin replied that the Wildlife Troopers "will definitely be looking into it this year."
- o Someone else mentioned that these people block the creek by putting their net all the way across.

Ray Collins said that he appreciated being able to come to interagency meetings over the years, and hopes to continue to participate. He thinks that the combination of the interagency meeting with the spring KRSMWG meeting was beneficial, and will become even more important with new members joining the group.

- o Before the meeting was adjourned, Ray emphasized: "I am really thankful that we've got the Kuskokwim River, that it is intact, and I think we ought to realize that this is the

last major river in North America that has its whole watershed intact, and its whole watershed under our control. We have a chance to get it right here, and I hope we can. Like I said, there is a lot of change and new development coming, and if we manage that river right we can pass it on to future generations." Ray clarified that by big changes he meant roads that would provide much greater access than now. He reiterated, "I just hope we get it right."

James Charles thanked everyone for inviting him to the spring meeting again and talked about the importance of it: "We never traveled out of Bethel before a few years ago when they started inviting us to the interagency meeting, and now we have Working Group meetings here too. Since we are the voice of the people at home, all up and down the river, we pass the word to the Department of Fish and Game and to the Fish and Wildlife Service at our meetings, what our people at home want and sometimes what they don't like. That's the way we are from the beginning: we are the voice of our people at home to agencies. We pass the word back to our village the same way." James also said that he appreciates everyone working hard. He does his best, as well.

Charlie Brown explained why he missed some meetings last year. He said he is usually away from the village in June and July, and sometimes his boat is "high and dry" the morning of the meeting so he can't call in. He thought his alternate called in, but found out that that had not been the case. Charlie also reported that folks were surprised last year "when the rolling closure didn't work like it was supposed to," referring to when many people were confused when the closures were extended. Charlie said that the closure wasn't the problem, the unexpected extension was. Regardless, he had done his best to respond to his people and to explain such situations.

Henry Lupie apologized to his alternate Fritz Charles for not attending every meeting in 2012. He also wanted to comment that, as Charlie mentioned, "last year was difficult for us on the Kuskokwim." He acknowledged that the Department "was making an effort" and was optimistic that people would accept the 2013 management plan. Henry thought that openings at least once a week will give some opportunity to fish for food, and that "the Elders' Fishery will be good for our people."

Bev Hoffman thanked everyone in the room for providing good information. She was "really looking forward to a better working relationship this summer, better communication." Bev appreciated the hard work by the whole group, and "hoped that we can communicate to the rest of the stake holders what happened here."

Greg Roczicka said, "I've had a good run" as co-chair and to remember that he was "not stepping away, just stepping sideways." He said that when he started as co-chair he didn't have any experience either, and that he felt a little guilt for stepping down considering the good group of chair people now available. He reminisced that the early 2,000's were at tough time, as well, because that was the first time restrictions were ever put on the subsistence fishery. Greg said he had much confidence in the new co-chairs, and his stepping down will give others an opportunity to gain experience: "It's a new generation."

John Andrew thanked all the past chairs and welcomed the new chairs to the challenge of working with us. John also thanked the staff for bringing everyone there.

Gerald Simeon said it was good to see Alice Bailey and thanked LaMont for standing up for the Aniak River. He thanked Doug Molyneaux for translating the meetings for him and Mark Leary for being his chauffeur in Anchorage.

Mark Leary thanked Chris Shelden for putting the meeting together. He said, "What we have accomplished, all of us, is really a good thing. If we have to go into another season like last season, at least the people will get something."

LaMont Albertson spoke about the importance of the research available to discuss, which had not existed a decade ago. Specifically, he thanked the work of ADF&G and USFWS on the Kwethluk River, sheefish, and mercury levels among other things. He also thanked Dave Cannon, Doug Molyneaux, Casie Stockdale, and other professionals who contribute to the Kuskokwim. LaMont said that if funding ever were to decline, LaMont hoped that the research continues because it is subsistence users' best defense to the tremendous changes that the Kuskokwim River will be faced with pressures such as mining.

Casie Stockdale thanked everyone who put on the meeting and who came to Anchorage for it. She said she had learned a lot during the meetings and also from the private conversations at breaks. She had gotten to talk about some of the indicators used in salmon run forecasting, such as wind and snowpack. She asked for more of this knowledge and how it may apply to the current season at the next meeting. Casie also thanked the group for electing her as co-chair. She said, "And I am always listening. I need to hear the background from all of you who have been involved for so long." She also thanked Greg for all his hard work as Co-chair.

Fritz Charles thanked everyone for the meeting, all the food, and hospitality. Referring to the motions making talking points, he was concerned the repercussions of decisions made too early "could hurt us down the road." He urged members to be careful of what kind of motions they make.

Travis Elison thanked all the members for their participation at the Anchorage meetings, saying, "It's a big commitment and pretty intense at times to be involved in this group." Travis assured members that agency staff had been listening to the comments and suggestions made in the past few days, and would take them into account while developing pre-season management strategies. He hoped that the meeting helped people understand actions made by agencies last year, and looked forward to doing "a better job this year."

The Chair also thanked Dave Cannon and Doug Molyneaux for all their contributions.

**WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:**

<b>MEMBER SEAT:</b>	<b>NAME:</b>
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>vacant</i>
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
COMMERCIAL FISHER	Charlie Brown
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Greg Roczicka
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSTENCE	Gerald Simeon
UPPER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>absent</i>
PROCESSOR	<i>absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE	Henry Lupie
SPORT FISHER	Bev Hoffman
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
Y-K DELTA RAC	Bob Aloysius
ADF&G	Travis Elison
CHAIR	LaMont Albertson

<b>Other Participants:</b>	
<p><u>ADF&amp;G Comm. Fish</u> : John Linderman, Jan Conitz, Kevin Schaberg, Chris Shelden, Brittany Blain, Aaron Tiernan, Maureen Horne-Brine, Colton Lipka, Zach Liller, Amy Brodersen,  <u>Sport Fish</u> : John Chythlook  <u>Subsistence Division</u>: Hiroko Ikuta</p>	
<p><u>USFWS</u>: Dan Gillikin, Ken Harper, Steve Miller  <u>OSM</u>: Don Rivard, Pippa Kenner, Ken Actin</p>	
<p>LaDonn Robbins (KNA)            Doug Molyneaux            Roberta Chavez (ONC)            Kevin Bartley            Joe Spaeder (AYK SSI)</p>	<p>John Andrew (YK Delta RAC Representative alternate)            Fritz Charles (Member at Large alternate)            Casie Stockdale (Lower River Subsistence alternate)            Barbara Carlson (elected Upper River Subsistence Alternate)            Kate Thalhauser (Georgetown Environmental Coordinator)            Gerri Sumpter (Sen. Murkowski's office)            Mike Jones (Quantitative Fisheries Center, Michigan State University )</p>

**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsarmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), 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** or **Working Group, WG**), Sustainable Escapement Goal (**SEG**), Biological Escapement Goal (**BEG**), Management Objective (**MO**), Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence (**ANS**), Emergency Order (**EO**), Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative (**AYK SSI**), Management Strategy Evaluation (**MSE**) Goal (**SEG**), Biological Escapement Goal (**BEG**), Management Objective (**MO**), Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence (**ANS**), Emergency Order (**EO**).