

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

June 17, 2015

Meeting called to order at 10:00am on Wednesday June 17, 2015 and adjourned at 12:40pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours and 40 minutes. Ten full voting members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

People to be Heard:

Old Business Discussion Topics:

New Business Discussion Topics:

- BOF Bethel visit on June 24th
- King salmon subsistence harvest table
- Federal extraterritorial jurisdiction above Aniak- *Tabled*

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *These items were not called "action items" at the time of meeting; however work was assigned or volunteered.*

- Email the state's definition of *Second Degree of Kindred* to Working Group participants. (6/18/15, ADF&G)

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. Extend the meeting to 12:20pm to cover agenda items. *Passed (Unanimous)*
3. Extend the meeting 15 minutes to cover agenda items. *Passed (9 yeas, 1 nay)*
4. Adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous)*

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **ADF&G Management Actions under consideration:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported that ADF&G established an Elder fishery in the state waters above Aniak, limited to four hours on June 20th. Harvest reporting would be voluntary. Elders would need to be present while the net was in operation.
2. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:**
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reported that the water temperature was near average, water clarity was near average, and the water level was trending down but within the historical range. Mr. Lipka reviewed the daily CPUEs for Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon at the BTF. *(For more information on the BTF, please see the June 17th Informational Packet).*
 - **Aniak Test Fish:** Colton Lipka reviewed the daily CPUEs for the ATF. He commented that data from the ATF and the BTF were not comparable. *(For more information on the ATF, please see the June 17th Informational Packet)*
 - **Weirs:** Brittany Blain (ADF&G) reported that the Salmon River (Pitka Fork) weir had not passed any Chinook salmon. The Tatlawiksuk weir was operational as of June 14th. The George River weir was operational on June 15th and had passed three male Chinook salmon. ADF&G expected the Salmon River (Aniak) weir to be operational by June 20th and the Kogrukluks weir operational by June 26th. Ken Harper (USFWS) reported that salmon started passing through the Kwethluk River weir ~June 10th. He commented that the Tuluksak River weir was installed and fish tight as of June 16th.
 - **Radio Tagging Project:** Nick Smith (ADF&G) reported on the lower river Chinook salmon tagging project. He commented that the data would assess the drainage wide abundance and distribution of Chinook salmon along with swim speed and run timing. *(For more information on the tagging project, please see the June 17th Informational Packet).*
 - **Aerial Survey:** Ken Harper (USFWS) reported that USFWS flew from below Eek Island through the tributaries to Tuluksak on Monday June 15th and detected 41 tags.

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- Inseason Subsistence Harvest Assessment Project: Dave Runfola (ADF&G) reported that volunteer subsistence fishers in the lower river would be providing their fishing harvest and effort information once 6" driftnet opportunities occurred. He commented that a similar project would be occurring in the middle river. Mr. Runfola noted that the Subsistence Division would also be in contact with communities above Aniak.
- 3. Subsistence Reports:**
- **ONC In-season Subsistence Report**: Greg Roczicka (ONC) reported that on June 13th ONC counted 176 nets from the top of Church Slough to the Napaskiak/Oscarville sandbar. Fishers reported that sockeye salmon returns were slower and fewer than previous years. (*For full survey results, please see the June 17th Informational Packet*).
 - **USFWS Lower River Update**: Neil Lalonde (USFWS) informed the group that federal Special Action 7 closed the 4" mesh opportunity in the lower river due to an abundance of fishers targeting Chinook salmon from Tuluksak down to the mouth. Special Action 8 would allow an additional 72 hour 4" mesh opportunity from Tuluksak to Aniak. Mr. Lalonde commented that USFWS expected additional harvest opportunities once the chum and sockeye salmon abundance improved at the BTF. The Community Harvest Permit would remain in place until the quota was met or June 30th. He noted that 15 federal officers were on the river from Aniak to the mouth and had seized 51 nets. Greg Roczicka commented that the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (ITFC) recommended the 4" closure to USFWS. He noted that as of June 17th, the Community Harvest catch for Bethel was ~1,096 Chinook salmon.
- 4. Discussion of ADF&G Management consideration and discussion of possible alternatives:** Aaron Poetter reported that ADF&G was in full support of federal Special Action 7 to conserve Chinook salmon.
- 5. Motion for Discussion and Action:** N/A

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Myron Naneng (AVCP) commented on his concern regarding the use of BTF numbers to determine subsistence openers. He commented on other fisheries that may be impacting the salmon. Mr. Naneng informed the group that there were reports of law enforcement (LE) confiscating fish from fish racks.
- Oscar Samuelson from Kalskag recommended that king salmon fishing be completely closed for 3-4 years along the entire river to rebuild the stocks.
- Jonathon Samuelson from Georgetown suggested that Mr. Oscar Samuelson bring his recommendation to the ITFC Commissioner. Mr. Samuelson also provided the state's definition of *Second Degree of Kindred* from the ADF&G website.
- Orville Huntington with BOF thanked the Working Group and the managers for their efforts and sharing of information.
- Sam Cotton, Commissioner of ADF&G, commented that the department kept him informed on Kuskokwim River activities. He added that he was glad to be listening to the Working Group meeting and that he was available for questions or concerns.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. BOF Bethel visit on June 24th:** Greg Roczicka informed the Working Group of the upcoming BOF visit and their agenda. He reported that the BOF would be in Aniak on June 23rd and would be attending the Working Group meeting on the 24th.
- 2. King salmon subsistence harvest table:** Dave Cannon commented on the disparity in the subsistence salmon harvest along the river. Greg Roczicka noted that people in the lower river were also dealing with fewer salmon for subsistence needs.

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WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion 1: To approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*

Motion 2: Extend the meeting to 12:20pm to cover agenda items. *Passed (Unanimous)*

Motion 3: Extend the meeting 15 minutes to cover agenda items. *Passed (9 yeas, 1 nay)*

Motion 4: Adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous)*

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP

- Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing) commented on the efforts people had put forth to conserve Chinook salmon and the need to continue conservation.
- LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) noted that the Alaska State Troopers in Aniak had offered to help with enforcement of fishing violations. Mr. Albertson commented that there was a conflict between commercial and subsistence fisheries and that the ADF&G Subsistence Division should have more influence in Kuskokwim River management decisions. Mr. Cotton responded that the Subsistence Division did participate in management efforts.
- Mike Williams Sr. (Lower River Subsistence) commented that he appreciated the collaboration of USFWS, ADF&G and the ITFC to resolve fishery issues. Mr. Williams requested that LE officers clarify their enforcement policies and procedures.
- Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) suggested that since the headwater communities were unable to drift in that portion of the river, the state should consider fishing methods that would provide a fair harvest opportunity for those areas.
- James Charles (Downriver Elder) commented that he did not have a full smokehouse of fish. He noted his appreciation for the discussion items during the meeting. Mr. Charles commented that he wanted to save fish for the future and also wanted everyone along the river to have harvest opportunities.
- Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) commented that she appreciated both Mr. Samuelson's recommendation and the USFWS' fishing closure in the lower river.
- Mark Leary (Upriver Subsistence) thanked Representative Bob Herron for his help in getting the June 20th Elder fishery established.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	Bob Aloysius
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Greg Hoffman Jr.
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	Henry Mitchell
ADF&G	Aaron Poetter
CHAIR	Fritz Charles

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Zac Liller, Brittany Blain, Aaron Tiernan, Chris Shelden, Aaron Poetter, Colton Lipka, John Linderman, Dan Bergstrom, Jan Conitz, Nick Smith, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook, Terry Thompson

Subsistence Division: Lisa Olson, David Runfola, Andrew Brenner, Hiroko Ikuta, John Simon, Oden Miller

USFWS: Neil Lalonde, Lew Coggins, Ken Harper, Aaron Webber, Gerald Mushman, David Phillips

OSM: Kay Larson-Blair, Pippa Kenner, Don Rivard, Jennifer Hardin

Ben Matheson (KYUK)	Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate)
Orville Huntington (BOF)	Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate)
Paula Schiefer	John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate)
Dan Gillikin (NVN)	Greg Roczicka (Lower River Subsistence alternate)
Myron Naneng (AVCP)	Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate)
Jonathon Samuelson (Georgetown)	Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing alternate)
Oscar Samuelson (Kalskag)	

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsarmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), 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**), Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (ITFC), Law Enforcement (LE)

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