

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

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

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

**August 20, 2014**

Meeting called to order at 1:30pm on Tuesday August 20, 2014 adjourned at 3:50pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours and 20 minutes. Six full voting members were present plus the ADF&G representative. The meeting was conducted as an executive session.

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

### **People to be heard**

**Continuing Business:** Run assessment and management actions

### **Old Business Discussion Topics:**

1. Update on the request to open a dipnet fishery all season long.
2. Further discussion of the current escapement goals.
3. Grant Fairbanks' letter and Agenda Change Request for the BOF.

**New Business Discussion Topics:** N/A

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

1. Request for a timeline of the escapement goal review process and the upcoming Board of Fish meetings. *(ADF&G).*
2. Request for ADF&G to distribute an electronic version of the peer reviews for the current escapement goals. *(ADF&G).*
3. Working Group work session scheduled for September 27-28, 2014 starting at 9:30am to be facilitated by Dan Gillikin (KNA).
4. Request for ADF&G Subsistence Division to assist in drafting a proposal for a subsistence dipnet fishery on the Kuskokwim River. *(Jim Simon, ADF&G Subsistence Division).*
5. Distribute the agenda for the upcoming meeting in Akiachak. *(Mike Williams, Jen Peeks).*
6. Informational presentation by the ADF&G Subsistence Division on the Tier II permit system in mid-September. *(ADF&G Subsistence Division staff, Call of the Chair).*

**WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:** N/A

**PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:** None

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## CONTINUING BUSINESS:

### 1. Subsistence Reports:

- **Lowest River Reports:** N/A
- **ONC In-season Subsistence Report:** N/A
- **Lower River Subsistence:**

Bev Hoffman (Co-Chair/Sport Fishing) reported that people were jarring the silver salmon and utilizing the BTF fish to help supplement their catches. She said she had delivered fish to elders living across Brown Slough.

Greg Hoffman Jr. (Commercial Fishing alternate) said that his family was no longer subsistence fishing and he was focused on commercial fishing.

Mike Williams (Lower River Subsistence) said that the people in his area were doing very well with the silver salmon and were jarring and making saluunaq. He commented that people were happy with the silver salmon return.

- **KNA Inseason Subsistence:** Dan Gillikin (KNA) said that Megan Leary was no longer working for KNA and the inseason subsistence harvest surveys were completed for the 2014 season. He commented that the village of Chuathbaluk had retro-fitted their fishwheel with a live box, which was being checked frequently. Mr. Gillikin said that this had increased village member participation.
  - **Middle River Subsistence:**

Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) said that people were rod and reel fishing for dinner food. She said the fishwheel had caught 30 fish during the previous night, the majority were silver salmon. She commented that everyone felt satisfied with their harvest. Ms. Feyereisen reported that some people were able to smoke fish strips and took extra care to reduce spoilage due to the weather.

LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) said the sport fishers were catching a lot of silver salmon with rod and reel. He said the Aniak Silver Salmon Derby had completed.
  - **Middle and Upper River Creel Survey:** Dave Runfola (ADF&G) said that the Creel Survey project had completed. He commented that he appreciated the help provided by ADF&G commercial fisheries division, KNA and the participating communities. He reported that during the week of August 11th some individuals were fishing in the upper river, but many of the people surveyed had not completed their subsistence fishing at that time. He commented that some people were concerned about the amount of fish they would be able to put away at this point in the season. Mr. Runfola mentioned that in Crooked Creek many of the young men had jobs and were unable to fish. He said that other individuals in the upper river were unable to fish due to socio-economic issues. A few people were still unaware of the fishing regulations and they requested improved communication with management. Mr. Runfola said that he had been trying to stay in contact with fishers, but was getting limited responses.
  - **Upriver Subsistence:** Barb Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate) reported that people were drifting, using setnets, and rod and reeling for fish. She said it appeared the end of the run was near. She commented that some families were smoking fish and others jarred smoked fish. She said the quality of the silver salmon was very good.
  - **Headwaters Subsistence:** Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) said they were catching some silver salmon with nets. He said the Crowley fuel barge had fished below McGrath and distributed those fish in the village. He said that the community was thankful for Crowley's efforts.
- Ken Harper (USFWS) reported that people in McGrath were catching some coho salmon. He said one person had their net out for 2 days catching 50 fish one day and 48 the next day. Most of these fish were coho salmon. Another person had reported to Mr. Harper that they had caught several dozen coho salmon and had pulled their net ~3 days prior to the Working Group meeting.

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## 2. Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:

- **Bethel Test Fish:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reported that the water temperature was slightly above the historical average, water clarity was above average and within the range, and the water level was reflecting slightly below average. Mr. Lipka reviewed the cumulative BTF CPUE's for coho salmon. He said that August 18<sup>th</sup> was a one-tide day. He commented that the coho salmon cumulative was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest CPUE on historical records for that date and time. The BTF operation would complete on August 24, 2014 for the season (*For more information on the BTF, please see the August 20 Informational Packet.*)
  - **Radio Tagging Project:** N/A
  - **Weirs:** Jan Conitz (ADF&G) reported on the USFWS and ADF&G weir projects for coho salmon. She said the Kogrukuk River weir had been non-operational since Saturday August 17<sup>th</sup> due to high water. She commented that the coho salmon escapements were strong at this point in the 2014 season. (*For more information on weirs including Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon, please see the August 20 Informational Packet.*)
  - **Aerial Survey:** N/A
3. **Commercial Catch Report:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reviewed the commercial harvest for the opening on August 18, 2014 for Subdistrict W 1-B. He said the cumulative harvest for coho salmon for all 2014 commercial openings was 88,432. He commented that a commercial harvest opening was scheduled in Subdistrict W1-B for August 21, 2014 (*For more information on the 2014 commercial harvest in Subdistrict W1-B, please see the August 20 Informational Packet.*)
4. **Processor Report:** No report.
5. **Sport Fishing Report:** John Chythlook (ADF&G) reported that coho salmon sport fishing was going well.  
Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing alternate) said rafters were concerned about not seeing many chum salmon. She said the high water was negatively affecting the Dolly Varden and Rainbow trout fishing, but sport fishers reported seeing a lot of coho salmon.
6. **Intercept Fishery Report:** N/A
7. **Weather Report:** N/A
8. **Recommendations:** There was no recommendation.
9. **Motion for Discussion and Action:** N/A

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## OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Further discussion of the current escapement goals.** Jan Conitz (ADF&G) informed the Working Group of the process for the upcoming escapement goal review. She said that the ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries and Sport Fish conduct a review every 3 years concurrent with the BOF meetings and were just beginning the current review period. She said that after a preliminary review the department would schedule a meeting and invite stakeholders to provide input. She noted that the department had strict guidelines for developing escapement goals that did not include allocative issues such as subsistence harvest. Several people pointed out that allocative concerns and in-river fishery goals were handled through the BOF, not through escapement goals.  
Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) commented on the abundance of king salmon in the headwaters during the 2014 season, which he thought was due to the early subsistence closures in the lower river. He commented on the importance of looking at subsistence fishing when making management decisions for meeting escapement goals.  
Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) suggested that ADF&G develop other weir project escapement goals.  
Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate) recommended that the department not use a drainage-wide escapement goal in the future and that more effort be made to look at individual tributaries.  
LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) said he was concerned that the middle and upper river communities had not been able to meet their subsistence harvest goals during the previous years.
- 2. Update on the request to open a dipnet fishery all season long.** LaMont Albertson reported on his meeting with John Linderman (ADF&G).  
Jim Simon (ADF&G, Division of Subsistence) provided historical information regarding dipnet gear utilized on the Pilgrim River. He said that the BOF was able to add gear types to subsistence use in order for it to be available to users and help protect other species. He said that there was ethno-historical information of dipnet use on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers but would not necessarily be the deciding factor in the BOF decision. Mr. Simon said that it was the policy of the Division of Subsistence to provide technical assistance to members of the public in developing regulatory change proposals but that they do not submit proposals on their own. Mr. Simon said the Subsistence Division would be willing to assist the Working Group in drafting a proposal.
- 3. Grant Fairbanks' letter and Agenda Change Request for the BOF.** Jim Simon (ADF&G) said that the Subsistence Division was reviewing historical information from the Norton Sound Tier II fishery and creating a Tier II "101" PowerPoint presentation that would help explain the Tier II system. This presentation would be presented to the Working Group in mid-September.

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS: N/A

## COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP

- Mike Williams (Lower River Subsistence alternate) thanked the Working Group participants for the discussions on subsistence and the salmon resource throughout the 2014 season. He announced that the Yupiit Nation was meeting in Akiachak on Friday August 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday August 23<sup>rd</sup>. He said they would be discussing fishery issues at 10:00am on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. He commented that they would like to invite the Federal and State managers to provide updates regarding the salmon fishery on the Kuskokwim River and would like to focus discussions on the impacts on the users throughout the 2014 season.
- Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) said that there was a mother grizzly bear with 2 cubs at the Salmon River weir.
- Barb Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate) thanked Jim Simon (ADF&G) for explaining and assisting in the dipnet fishery proposal request.

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- Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) said that the subsistence closures had made a difference in the headwaters' escapements and he appreciated the sacrifices in the lower river. He also thanked the department for delaying the commercial silver salmon openings.
- LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) said that he would like access to copies of the peer reviews from the last escapement goal review and a written timeline of upcoming meeting dates.
- Bev Hoffman (Chair/ Sport Fishing) encouraged tribal organizations and residents along the river to continue to participate in the Working Group forum throughout the entire fishing season.

## WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

<b>MEMBER SEAT:</b>	<b>NAME:</b>
DOWNRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Vacant</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams (late)
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Lisa Feyereisen
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE	<i>Absent</i>
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	<i>Absent</i>
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Greg Hoffman, Jr.
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	Henry Mitchel (late)
ADF&G	Aaron Tiernan
CHAIR	Bev Hoffman

## **Other Participants:**

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Aaron Tiernan, Jan Conitz, Chris Shelden, Colton Lipka, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook, Tom Taube

Subsistence Division: Hiroko Ikuta, Jim Simon, Dave Runfola

USFWS: Brian McCaffery, Steve Miller, Ken Harper, Cecil Rich

OSM:

Dan Gillikin (KNA)

Tim Andrews (AVCP)

Kevin Bartley (AVCP)

Bill Bechtol (AVCP)

Doug Molyneaux (Unaffiliated)

Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate)

KYUK Radio (recording)

Lisa Demer (Alaska Dispatch)

Gerri Sumpter (Sen. Murkowski's office)

## 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)

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