

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

August 26, 2014

Meeting called to order at 1:30pm on Tuesday August 26, 2014 adjourned at 3:40pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours and 10 minutes. Six full voting members were present and the meeting was conducted in executive session.

AGENDA ITEMS:

People to be heard

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

Old Business Discussion Topics:

1. Update on the dipnet fishery proposal.
2. Continued discussion on escapement goals.

New Business Discussion Topics:

- Discussion on a timeline for the development of the Chinook salmon management strategy for the 2015 season.

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

1. Distribute the draft proposal for a dipnet fishery on the Kuskokwim River. (ADF&G, 8/26/14).
2. Determine a date for the Tier II permit system informational presentation by the ADF&G Subsistence Division. (Working Group Co-Chairs, ADF&G)

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS: N/A

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

1. Jen Peeks (ADF&G) thanked the Working Group for their time and efforts during the 2014 fishing season in promoting and preserving the Kuskokwim River salmon fishery. She also thanked ADF&G for their support and dedication to the management of the Kuskokwim River fisheries.
2. Dan Gillikin (KNA) said that KNA completed their internship program for the 2014 summer season and presented to OSM in Anchorage, receiving positive feedback. Mr. Gillikin thanked the people and agencies who supported the internship program. He reported that he received good input from people regarding the escapement goal work session scheduled for September 27-28, 2014 and he was working on drafting an agenda for review.
3. Bill Bechtol (AVCP) responded to the peer review discussion from the August 20th Working Group meeting. He referred to the policy within the *Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries* and the *Statewide Salmon Escapement Goals*.

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CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Subsistence Reports:

- **Lowest River Reports:** Charlie Brown (Commercial Fishing) said that all the people were done with subsistence fishing in his area.
- **ONC In-season Subsistence Report:** N/A
- **Lower River Subsistence:** Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate) said that most of the people who were still fishing were either canning or freezing the fish. Greg Roczicka (Lower River Subsistence alternate) said there were a few people out harvesting fish for smoking and jarring, but the majority were finished with their subsistence harvest.
- **KNA Inseason Subsistence:** N/A
- **Middle River Subsistence:** Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) said that some people were still out fishing. She commented that those who had an unusually high need for fish due to dog teams or fishing for multiple families would be fishing until freeze-up. Ms. Feyereisen said that most people were satisfied and had met their needs with the coho salmon. She also reported that many people were fishing in McGrath who had not fished in several years.
- **Middle and Upper River Creel Survey:** Dave Runfola (ADF&G) acknowledged the support of many people who helped with the subsistence creel surveys. He specifically recognized the contribution of a man in Kalskag who passed away recently, and his family, for their efforts in providing subsistence information. Mr. Runfola reported that people in the middle river continued to fish. He said that 3 households in the Sleetmute and Red Devil area, who had reported being done fishing earlier in the 2014 season, had started fishing again for silver salmon during the week of August 18th.
- **Upriver Subsistence:** Mark Leary (Upriver Subsistence) reported that in the middle river people had been able to “put up” a lot of silver salmon with the good weather. He said that one person had processed 95 silver salmon. Mr. Leary commented on the ability for people to adapt to the late fishing harvest. Mr. Leary said there had been a beluga whale near the Oskawalik River.
- **Headwaters Subsistence:** Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) said that during the week of August 18th a McGrath resident caught 50 fish overnight, a mixture of chum salmon, silver salmon and Sheefish. The following night this same person caught another 50 fish, mostly silver salmon.

2. Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:

- **Bethel Test Fish:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reported that the water temperature was average, water clarity was above average but within the historical range, and the water level was reflecting just below average but within the historical range. Mr. Lipka reviewed the daily BTF CPUE's for coho salmon. He reported that 2014 was the 4th highest year on record for coho salmon at the BTF (*For more information on the BTF, please see the August 26 Informational Packet.*)
- **Radio Tagging Project:** N/A
- **Weirs:** Brittany Blain (ADF&G) reported on the USFWS and ADF&G weir projects for coho salmon. She commented that the Kogrukluks weir continued to be out of operation due to high water and had missed 15-20% of the coho salmon run (*For more information on weirs, please see the August 26 Informational Packet.*)
- **Aerial Survey:** N/A

- **Commercial Catch Report:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported on the commercial harvest for Subdistrict W 1-B. He said a total of 107,421 coho salmon had been caught during the 2014 season. He commented that CVRF had purchased ~2 million lbs. of salmon from Districts 1, 4 and 5 during the 2014 season.

4. Processor Report: N/A

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- 5. Sport Fishing Report:** LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) reported that the Aniak fishing guides and those subsisting with rod and reel were happy with the coho salmon run.
- 6. Intercept Fishery Report:** N/A
- 7. Weather Report:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reported that the weather forecast called for overcast skies, a chance of rain and an east to southeast wind at ~10 mph.
- 8. Recommendations:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported that additional commercial opportunities were dependent on the success of the harvest from the August 26th opening and processor interest.
- 9. Motion for Discussion and Action:** N/A

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Update on the dipnet fishery proposal.** Jim Simon (ADF&G) reported that he had drafted a proposal and would be sending it out to the Working Group members.
- 2. Continued discussion of the escapement goals.** Dan Gillikin (KNA) agreed to facilitate the September 27-28, 2014 meeting. He requested that people provide him with input on objectives they would like to accomplish for the meeting. He commented that it would be helpful if the group was able to come to a conclusion on the next course of action in relation to escapement goals.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Discussion of developing a timeline for the Chinook salmon fishery 2015 season strategy:** Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) discussed the importance of having a tentative 2015 season management strategy for public view by February 2015 to allow time for communities to prepare. Some Working Group members suggested strategies for the 2015 season, including concerns related to the use of 4-inch mesh gear. Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate) commented on the need to increase education and outreach to communities and schools leading up to the 2015 fishing season.

Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) concurred with the Working Group that looking ahead to the 2015 season was important. He said that the department's run reconstruction and forecast would need to be completed prior to releasing statements regarding the management strategy for the 2015 season. He commented that any special actions would also need to be considered within the management strategy. The department agreed with the Working Group on the importance of disseminating information as soon as possible in order for people to prepare and plan accordingly. John Linderman (ADF&G) said that although some information could be disseminated early regarding the 2015 management strategy, there was a possibility of new "tools" and regulations that would not be determined until spring 2015.

Brian McCaffrey (USFWS) pointed out that the hardships encountered during the 2014 fishing season would likely occur again at some point in the future and that people could already begin to prepare for that.

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS: N/A

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COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP

Charlie Brown (Commercial Fishing) said that he appreciated the commercial opening opportunities that allowed fishers to earn money for gas.

Greg Roczicka (Lower River Subsistence alternate) announced that on September 8-9, 2014 the Federal Subsistence Board would be meeting in Bethel, McGrath and Aniak. He said they would hold informal meetings for discussion.

Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) commented on the tentative schedule for the Federal Subsistence Board visit on September 9th in Aniak.

Mark Leary (Upper River Subsistence) said he was concerned that people may associate the Tier II permit proposal with the Working Group.

Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) said he would be meeting with the Federal Subsistence Board on September 8th in McGrath.

LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing/ Co-Chair) thanked the Working Group members and management for the efforts made during the 2014 fishing season

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

| MEMBER SEAT: | NAME: |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| DOWNRIVER ELDER | <i>Absent</i> |
| UPRIVER ELDER | <i>Vacant</i> |
| LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE | Greg Roczicka |
| MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE | Lisa Feyereisen |
| UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE | Mark Leary |
| HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE | <i>Absent</i> |
| MEMBER AT LARGE | <i>Absent</i> |
| WESTERN INTERIOR RAC | Ray Collins |
| YK DELTA RAC | <i>Absent</i> |
| COMMERCIAL FISHING | Charlie Brown |
| SPORT FISHING | LaMont Albertson |
| PROCESSOR | <i>Absent</i> |
| ADF&G | Aaron Poetter |
| CHAIR | LaMont Albertson |

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Aaron Poetter, Brittany Blain, John Linderman, Colton Lipka, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook

Subsistence Division: Hiroko Ikuta, Jim Simon, Dave Runfola, Loraine Naaktgeboren, Jeff Parks

USFWS: Brian McCaffery, Steve Miller, Ken Harper

OSM: Don Rivard, George Pappas, Pippa Kenner

Dan Gillikin (KNA)

Bill Bechtol (AVCP)

Greg Hoffman Jr. (Commercial Fishing alternate)

Mary Sattler (Lower River Subsistence alternate)

KYUK Radio

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut 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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