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**Kenai/Soldotna Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2013**

Members Present: Mike Crawford, Steve Meyer, Paul Shadura, John Joseph, Dick Dykema, Bill Tappan, Laurie Speakman, Mike Hamrick, Michelle Maher, Dyer Van Devere, Chris Brandt, Tom Corr,

Members Absent Excused: Bob Ermold, Andrew Carmichael, Pegge Erkeneff, Rik Bucy, Christina Shadura, Monte Roberts

Public Present: 1 member of the public, Brian Blossom

Professional individuals present: Andy Fandrei, Executive Director, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA); Paul McConnell F&WP

4 members of the public

Meeting called to order by Chairman Crawford at 6:35 PM.

Chairman Crawford called for announcements, none forthcoming

Agenda: BOF Proposals

Chris Brant motioned #215 to the floor, Dyer VanDevere seconded.

Andy Fandrei spoke in opposition to this proposal, which seeks to limit the ability of CIAA to recoup costs of rearing salmon by harvesting sockeye in Resurrection Bay.

Andy explained that the practice was completely legal and that Resurrection Bay has been targeted for escapement issues in other areas. He explained that CIAA would diversify into other areas as there were opportunities.

Paul Shadura further explained that the folks who were making this proposal were in fact, against the very organization that is supplying them with harvestable numbers. Paul also explained that at one time, the sockeye fishery coming out of Bear Lake was poisoned in favor of keeping Coho salmon for the Bay. Time and circumstance has changed and now the sockeye fishery is once again available for harvest but it also must be supported, as are many other fisheries, by the efforts of CIAA.

Question called, unanimous opposition to #215.

Proposal #216 was brought forward after tabling at the last meeting.

This proposal was discussed and Chris Brant brought up that the authority to do what it is asking already exists. Chris brought the regulation and distributed copies to everyone that makes it clear that it does in fact exist and the proposal would only hinder decisions that must be made in emergency issues.

Question called, 8 oppose, 1 support, 1 abstain to #216.

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**Kenai/Soldotna Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2013**

Those opposing this proposal feel it is unnecessary and if anything, will clutter the decision making process in emergency management situations. The proposal is poorly written and at best, confuses what is already in place and very simple. Applying a set of stringent requirements to fisheries statewide serves no purpose when there are so many diversified situations. Situations that arise in regard to escapement goals are often times unpredictable and analysis at the time is the only effective way to deal with them. This proposal would only tie the hands of the Commissioner and serves no purpose.

The lone supporting vote believes that more uniformity should be present. The lone abstaining vote has not had enough time to study the proposal.

Paul Shadura motioned proposal #217 forward, Dyer VanDevere second.

Seeking to raise the escapement goal for Chinook salmon in every Chinook fishery statewide at the rate of 2% per year immediately comes across as ridiculous and unattainable. There is simply no way that this could be predicted and met with all of the unknowns in the fishery and if put into place would result in restricting the fishery when there would be no need to do so.

Unanimous oppose #217

Paul Shadura motioned proposal #218 forward, Dyr VanDevere second.

Proposal seeks to establish "sustainable escapement threshold (SET)" for stocks listed as a management yield or management concern.

This proposal was discussed at length and it lacks the clarification that it seems it should. Paul Shadura commented that the proposal may have some merit but it should be defined in a way that leaves less to interpretation. **Paul suggested the committee take no action, which was supported unanimously on #218.**

Chris Brandt motioned proposal # 219 forward, Dyer VanDevere second.

Seeks to provide "dictionary definitions for words used in fisher management.

Discussion concluded that the terms used are easily understood and there are already ample definitions in place. **Opposed in a 11 oppose, 1 abstain vote on #219.** Sole abstaining vote had no particular reason to abstain.

Proposal # 248 motioned forward by Chris Brandt, Dyer VanDevere second.

Seeks to amend to clarify closed waters associated with salmon streams.

It seems there are issues with the Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC). According to ADF&G the AWC is being used incorrectly in defining waters and boundaries for closed waters for commercial harvest that states the 500 yard river mouth restriction.

RL 26

**Kenai/Soldotna Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2013**

Paul McConnell, AWT Enforcement commented that a GPS coordinate line needs to be established for the streams identified as anadromous. River mouths change from year to year in many streams and markers may be moved or weather destroys them. The GPS lat and long line are the only really clear way to define and enforce these boundaries.

The proposal has merit but as written seems to lack the clarity that it needs to be an affective regulation. **Unanimous opposition to #248.**

Proposal #243 (discussion only) motioned forward, Paul Shadura second.

Proposal seeks to add the Pacific herring to the list of forage fish. As Paul Shadura pointed out, the current management strategy for commercial harvest of Pacific herring is extremely good as it is. Adding these fish to the list of forage fish could spell the elimination of commercial fishing by the tact that could be taken by the federal government in regards to marine mammals. ADF&G has a very good handle on this fishery and it would be at cross purpose to invite federal intervention.

The committee feels there is already an excess amount of federal intervention in managing Alaska resident access to fish and wildlife resources. It is easy to see once these fish are designated a forage fish how the entire complexion of the fishery could become radically changed. Marine mammal issues have been grossly misinterpreted and the State of Alaska should not allow another opportunity for this to occur.

Proposal #247 motioned forward by Dyer VanDevere, Bill Tappan second.

This proposal seeks to minimize access to the fishery harvest by commercial set net fishing to maximize the harvest by Lodge going sport anglers.

This proposal drew a fair amount of discussion with the outcome that of the current proposal doing nothing more than taking away from a long standing fishery to give to a developing fishery. According to statistics, sport anglers harvest some 2,000 salmon in this area while releasing some 18,000 as catch and release fish. That figure suggests there are more than ample opportunities for sport anglers to play with the salmon and certainly does not suggest a need to restrict the 14 set net commercial harvest in the area.

The committee determined there are many options that could very simply accommodate this fishery without undue restriction to the commercial harvest. For example; how about the two groups learn to get along. How about close the sport fishery for the two days the commercial fishery is open. Perhaps look at the number of sport fishing lodges that have sprung up in the area (where there were none) and set some sport fish limits that are realistic to the kinds of pressure these areas are receiving. Alaskan residents, both commercial and sport fish alike, are continually being minimized by sport fish guide business and the non-resident clientele they bring to Alaska. Everyone understands the economic value of this but it continues to erode at the resident lifestyle that Alaskans are here for in the first place.

**Kenai/Soldotna Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2013**

Given all of the possibilities to effectively deal with this situation the **committee voted unanimously to take no action on #247** in hopes a more reasonable solution to the problem could be designed.

Proposal #220 motioned forward by Paul Shadura, Dyer VanDevere second.

Seeks to add the ability for groundfish area registration to be completed via telephone, facsimile, or email.

Proposal simply brings this process into line with everything else in the world and is **unanimously supported #220** by the Kenai/Soldotna AC.

Proposal #221 motioned forward by Paul Shadura, Michelle Maher second.

This regulation seeks to clarify an incorrect reference to a federal regulation that is unnecessary.

Committee supports by unanimous consent #221. The proposal itself speaks to why it needs to be supported.

Proposal #223 motioned forward by Paul Shadura, Dyer VanDevere second.

Seeks to add the verbage "during the current registration year."

Paul Shadura explained the issue of misunderstanding and inability to interpret the regulation as written. This proposal clarifies and simplifies the issue.

Committee supports in unanimous consent #223.

Proposal #224 motioned forward by Chris Brandt, Dyer VanDevere second.

Proposal seeks to allow the addition of notification of emergency orders to the ADF&G website and via the use of telephone message hotlines, email or facsimile.

The committee unanimously supports #224. The advent of all of the many different means of instantaneous communications should absolutely be allowed and promoted.

The committee did not amend the proposal but does suggest that "texting, Twitter and Facebook" also be listed as means of communicating emergency orders. The more the better, especially when it is essentially free.

Proposal #225 brought back to the table:

Proposal seeks to have a statewide regulation regarding "permit stacking."

**Kenai/Soldotna Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2013**

As Chris Brandt, Paul Shadura and Dyer VanDevere explained, "permit stacking" is an incorrect phrase. It is "duel permit holding" and there are a variety of reasons for the allowance of this process. The fisheries and the dynamics of all of the statewide commercial fisheries are very different and require individual attention. This is a limited issue and there is no reason to pigeon hole all permits into the same basket. As Paul Shadura explained, Limited Entry was enacted in 1973, there are no new permits being added and there are legitimate and varying reasons for duel permit holding.

Committee unanimously opposes #225.

Proposals #244, 245, and #246, were briefly discussed and all agreed to take no action.

Proposal #226 motioned forward by Paul Shadura Dyer VanDevere second.

Seeks to update regulations to accurately reflect changes to the statewide Sport Shark Fishery Management Plan.

This proposal primarily speaks to the change in harvest of spiny dogfish sharks that no longer require recording of catch and increases the bag limit to five per day with no annual limit.

Unanimous support #226.

Proposal #227 motioned forward by Bill Tappan, Dyer VanDevere second.

Proposal seeks to allow ADF&G the authority to restrict proxy fishing by emergency order.

Discussion by committee found all in favor of ADF&G having the ability to restrict proxy fishing during times of emergency restrictions. **Unanimous support #227.**

Proposal #228 motioned forward by Paul Shadura, Dyer VanDevere second.

Seeks to prohibit the practice of "high grading," or keeping fish alive and attempting to catch a larger fish to take its place. Changes the regulation to include "not immediately released" becomes part of the angler's bag limit.

This proposal was **unanimously supported #228** by the committee although the enforcement of such a regulation seems a distant and forlorn hope at best.

Proposal #229 and #230 brought forward for those who missed the last meeting. **# 229 was supported in an 11-1 vote**, with trepidation regarding the ability to enforce the change. The lone opposing vote believes there are already too many un-enforceable regulations and there is no need to add more.

**Kenai/Soldotna Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2013**

This proposal seeks to minimize the practice of non-residents purchasing a less than entire year license, in which catches are recorded and then returning and purchasing another temporary license and starting over with a clean slate.

This proposal was agreed upon by the committee as seeking a worthy goal however, it is largely unenforceable without a tremendous and time consuming effort by AWP personnel who are already taxed for time.

The lone opposing vote believes there are already too many unenforceable laws on the books and there is no reason to add another one.

Proposal #231 motioned forward by Paul Shadura, Dyer VanDevere second.

Proposal seeks to define what is "compensation in regards to sport fish guide services rendered.

There are individuals who are conducting "guide services" without benefit of license and are skirting the legalities by means of compensation. No known record of an individual being prosecuted for this behavior exists and most agree it needs to be stopped.

#231 supported in 11 support, 1 oppose vote.

Lone opposing vote has a client who was relentlessly harassed on this issue.

Proposal 232

Dyer motioned Tappan gave 2nd

The AC would like this proposal to be amended to include the use of sport caught pink salmon to be used as bait. The use of pink salmon is already allowed in the prince William sound area. We felt that there is not a conservation concern and any pinks used for bait would count toward the daily bag limit. **We were unanimous in favor of this proposal as amended for #232.**

Proposal 233

Dyer motioned Maher 2nd.

While we certainly felt that disabled anglers should have every opportunity to participate, the regulation is in effect to prevent the spreading of invasive organisms. We felt that protecting the resource was the priority here.

Unanimous oppose for #233.

Proposal 234

Dyer motioned Maher 2nd

While we felt the use of steel shot for waterfowl hunting was prudent. The mandatory ban for fishing weights we felt was excessive. The proposer states that there are no studies of this being a problem in Alaska. This would put an unnecessary expense to the angler and could start us down a unnecessary path of restrictions.

Kenai/Soldotna Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2013

Unanimous oppose #234.

Proposal 235

Dyer motioned Maher 2nd.

We agreed with the department in their objections on #235. We were in agreement that good catch numbers are important in all fisheries to have proper management of the resource.

The committee was in support of Chairman Crawford to represent the committee at the upcoming BOF meeting in Anchorage. There was vote in opposition and one abstention.

The committee were **9 members in opposition - 2 for HB 110 -- current legislation that would require the use of barbless hooks in fisheries** where a stock of concern may be present even when fishing for a species of non-concern. The committee would like to see anglers act in a responsible manner in these cases. Also of concern would be enforcement of this regulation to what degree enforcement would go to check for barbless hook compliance. Experienced anglers would still be able to catch fish but beginning anglers may face difficulties with barbless hook regulations.