

# **AC Comments Index**

Chignik AC1

Chignik Advisory Committee Minutes  
December 27, 2010

Teleconference meeting was brought to order at 11:20 am on December 27, 2010 by Chairman Johnny Lind.

AC members present by village:  
Andy Shangin, Perryville;  
Jerry Yagie, Ivanoff Bay;  
Johnny Lind, Chignik Lake;  
Ernie Carlson (Alternate), Chignik Bay; and,  
John Jones (Alternate), Chignik Lagoon.

With Board support staff Andrew DeValpine advising, the members agree by unanimous consent to seat:

Al Anderson and  
Don Bumpus

as Chignik Lagoon representatives and agreed that quorum is established.

Guests included:

Perryville: Boris Kosbruk, Austin Shangin  
Chignik Lagoon: Clem Grunert, Delissa, Aaron Anderson  
Andy DeValpine, ADF&G Board Support Staff  
Bruce Barrett, Chignik Regional Aquaculture Association Staff  
Chuck McCallum, Lake and Peninsula Borough Fishery Advisor  
Mark Stichert; Nick Sagalkin; Todd Anderson; and, Jeff Wadle: All ADF&G Staff

The agenda is approved and by unanimous consent, it is agreed to cover the salmon Proposals 95 - 101 first followed by the groundfish Proposals 83 – 94.

**Salmon Proposals**

Proposal 95 - No Action based on similarity to Proposal 96

Proposal 96 – Unanimous Support

Comments: The purpose of this proposal is to have traditional subsistence fishing patterns formally recognized by the State in regulation. This proposal would not expand Chignik subsistence fishing or practices beyond what currently occurs. It would encourage accurate subsistence harvest reporting. We want to head off potential problems - We don't want to see someone get pinched for a traditional practice like having a salmon lunch in a traditional but technically illegal place.

#### Proposal 97 – Unanimous Support

Three years of limited Western District openings in June have not caused any biological, management, or allocation issues. The Western District is close to Chignik Lagoon so it is reasonable to have the continued opportunity to fish there. This helps distribute the fleet by providing more alternative fishing areas for early-run Chignik sockeye salmon.

#### Proposal 98 – Failed 1 in favor, 1 abstention, 5 against

Comments: Advisory Committee members unanimously agreed that they would like to see Purse Seine length, including lead length, equal across all salmon harvest areas in the Westward Region – Kodiak, Chignik, and Area M. More AC members thought that the best was to reduce seine length in neighboring areas to equal Chignik length rather than increase Chignik Seine Length. It was noted that the proposal did not also ask that the seine length for the Chignik Bay District seine to be increased from the current 125 fathom limit. Longer seines outside of Chignik Bay District would favor the large Chignik boats because they can handle large gear and thus may cause allocation issues between large and small boat fishermen within the Chignik fishery. It could encourage over-capitalization. We might be creating a new interception fishery at Navy Island. In general more sockeye will probably be harvested in outside waters before they get into the Chignik Lagoon which may favor more non-resident, non-local permit holders as they tend to have the larger boats and more smaller boats tend to fish in the Chignik Bay District. There is no need for the longer seines since there is no forgone harvest opportunity and/or escapement surpluses. Nearly 1/3 of the Chignik salmon permits are inactive and this would make it more difficult for the fishery to return to full utilization of permits which used to be the norm for Chignik.

The minority that supported longer seines pointed out that neighboring areas have longer seines (when leads are considered) and Chignik should not be at a competitive disadvantage. They also noted that it is unfair that large boat operators are forced to fish less efficiently just because small boat operators choose not to upgrade. The minority also made a motion to amend the proposal for a smaller increase for outside seines to 250 fathoms and include an increase of the Chignik Bay District seines up to 150 fathoms and that amendment also failed.

#### Proposal 99 – Unanimous opposition

Comments: The AC noted that the Department is opposed. Some members noted that the department has done a good job of managing kings and that they have all the tools they need for good management. This proposal would impose an unnecessary burden on both sport and commercial fishermen. Some members noted, however, that it was harder to get subsistence kings than in the past. There was a concern that increasing sport fishing may be the cause but that this proposal was not the best way to address the problem.

#### Proposal 100 passed four in favor and three against.

Comments: Some AC members believed that sport fishing effort has dramatically increased in recent years and would likely become a problem that must be faced eventually. It was noted that it was harder to catch subsistence kings than in the past and pointed to the increase in sport effort as the cause. In general AC members were

interested in changing regulations to ensure subsistence fishing even if sport fishing were negatively impacted.

The discussion included how requiring no bait and no barbed hooks might help reduce hooking mortality. The sport fish biologist noted that studies show that good handling can reduce hooking mortality from 12% to 1.5% and the state assumes an average of 7%.

On proposal 100 the Chignik Regional Aquaculture Association recommended that the Advisory Committee oppose this proposal and offered the following statements as possible comments that AC members might want to consider adopting as their own:

- ADF&G has a long history of successfully managing the Chignik Chinook salmon run and this proposal is not warranted.
- Whenever there has been an in-season Chinook escapement concern ADF&G has acted timely responsibly to ensure that the escapement goal was reached. As evident of this in all of the last ten years the Chinook escapement has been met or exceeded.
- The proposal would encourage further escapement surpluses well beyond the upper biological escapement goal.
- The proposal would reduce Chignik sport fishing opportunity and probably financially damage the few sport fishing business operating in Chignik along with some of the support services providers (stores, aircraft charter operators).

The minority opinion of the Advisory Committee was that the proposal was unnecessary, and the department had all the tools needed to manage the kings for escapement and adequate, even if more difficult, subsistence harvest. Another suggested that increased commercial fishing time during the time period when kings are moving through the lagoon might also be a cause. It was also noted that in the past, when subsistence fishing was easier, that over escapements of kings were sometimes occurring so that the fish were being under utilized and easy to catch. They also noted that the Chignik River king escapement goal has always been met and quite often exceeded.

Proposal 101 passed with 4 in favor and three against

The AC felt that the comments made on proposal 100 applied also to proposal 101.

### **Groundfish proposals**

Proposal 83 – Unanimous approval

Comments: All this does is mirror the Area M 58 foot limit proposal early this year. Recent changes in federal water management raise concerns about possible influx of large vessels into state waters and this proposal is designed to limit that impact. In the Board finding on the State water cod fishery (97-169-FB) noted the Board of Fisheries stated that “the board also found it necessary to limit the size of participating vessels in some areas to further reduce catch rates, provide for extended seasons, and provide economic benefits to the regions in which the fishing is conducted.” The proposal helps to make sure that there will be fish in the water when the state water fishery starts.

Proposal 84 – Unanimous approval

The cod fishery is turning into a derby fishery. This will help slow the fishery down and slow the influx of super 8 vessels. Chignik is the last fishery to close so when they are coming this way from the Bering Sea they might stop here. It was pointed out that many bering sea super 8's do not harvest within three miles so would not be precluded from fishing Chignik when they got there but if this proposal had been in effect in 2005 about 25% of the harvest would have been excluded. It was also pointed out that the Board's findings for the State water cod fishery (97-169-FB) stressed that the board chose to make Chignik an exclusive area "to provide benefits to local economies that are based largely on small boat fishing" and that the intent of this proposal is in line with that.

Proposal 85 – Unanimously Passed with amendments

The amended proposed new regulation would read

### **5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan**

(c)(1) for [MECHANICAL JIGGING MACHINES AND HAND TROLL GEAR], **vessels 42 feet in overall length or less** when 10 percent of the guideline harvest level is taken by [MECHANICAL JIGGING MACHINES AND HAND TROLL GEAR] **vessels 42 feet in overall length or less** or December 31, whichever occurs first;

(c)(2) for [POTS], **vessels greater than 42 feet in overall length** when 90 percent of the guideline harvest level is taken by [POT GEAR] **vessels greater than 42 feet in overall length** or December 31, whichever occurs first;

(c)(3) if 10 percent of the guideline harvest level is not taken by [MECHANICAL JIGGING MACHINES AND HAND TROLL GEAR] **vessels 42 feet in overall length or less** before August 15, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the fishing season and immediately reopen a fishing season during which all [LEGAL GEAR] vessels **58 feet in length or less** may be used, and shall close, by emergency order, the season on December 31 or when the guideline harvest level is reached, whichever occurs first;

(j) If the allocation for [MECHANICAL JIGGING MACHINES AND HAND TROLL GEAR] **vessels 42 feet in overall length or less** specified in (c)(1) of this section is harvested in any calendar year, the allocation will be increased beginning the next calendar year an additional five percent of the guideline harvest level, and the [POT GEAR] allocation **for vessels greater than 42 feet in overall length** be reduced by five percent accordingly. If the increased allocation for [MECHANICAL JIGGING MACHINES AND HAND TROLL GEAR] **vessels 42 feet in overall length or less** is harvested in any calendar year thereafter, the allocation will again be increased an additional five percent beginning the next calendar year, until the allocation for [MECHANICAL JIGGING MACHINES AND HAND TROLL GEAR] **vessels 42 feet in overall length or less** reaches 25 percent of the guideline harvest level.

The overall intent of the Chignik AC was to try to preserve opportunities for the smaller vessels while acknowledging that until such time as a local processor would process cod in Chignik that local jig opportunities would not be practical. Smaller vessels, 42 feet and under, would be allowed to fish either pot or jig and have access to the allocation that was previously jig only. While some AC members expressed doubts about whether this was the best way to protect entry level opportunities and fishing opportunities for the smaller vessels of the Chignik Area communities, after further discussion all AC members chose to support this approach.

Proposal 86 – unanimously opposed based on action on Proposal 85

Proposal 87 – unanimously opposed based on action on Proposal 85

Proposal 88 – Failed 2 in favor, 1 abstained, 4 opposed

Comments: The earlier the opening date the fish harvested are more desirable by the processors and the consumer market. The earlier the opening date the fewer non local boats are in the fishery and the later the opening date the more the local fishermen are vulnerable to big outside boats coming in and out competing the local resident cod fleet. Fish and game noted that the earlier the opening the more likely the cod are to be in state waters and the later the opening date the more likely the cod will be outside three miles.

The minority stressed that the earlier the opening date the more difficult and dangerous is the weather and the later it is the safer it is. Everyone acknowledged that weather is a big issue but, in contrast to the majority, the minority thought that weather and safety should determine that the later date is best to allow for local small boat fishing opportunities in Chignik.

Proposal 90 – Amended Proposal passes with six in favor and one opposed

The Amendment changed the required registration date from January 15 to January 31 and passed six in favor and one opposed.

The majority felt that the extra two weeks was important to decrease the chance that a local resident would accidentally forget to register in time while making it a bit harder for large boats to make an ‘on the fly’ decision to fish Chignik on their way back from the bering sea.

Proposal 91 – Unanimously opposed

The AC notes that the department reports that the Department of Law says that this is not within the authority of the Board. If this proposal was enacted it would close out new entrants.

Proposal 92 – Unanimous approval

This just gives the same pot storage flexibility that other areas have. It is a good thing for safety. As it is now two boats can be a stones throw from each other on either side of the three mile line and what is legal in federal water is illegal in state water.

Proposal 93 – Unanimous approval

Proposal 94 – Unanimous approval

At 4:30 pm the meeting was recessed until January 7, 10 am Alaska Time to take up the Board of Game proposals and the remainder of the agenda.