

**Stony Holitna Fish & Game Advisory Committee / SHAC**  
**Minutes of Dec. 6, 2012 Teleconference**  
**with Comments to the Board of Fisheries for 2013/**  
**Jan. A-Y-K Meeting and March Statewide Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Call to Order -**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Doug Carney at 1:05 P.M.

**Roll Call & Quorum – There are a total of 8 members from 4 villages**

(At the start of the meeting chair asked Lorraine to phone David Bobby of Stony River, but he had other commitments.)

**Present were 5 members & quorum was established–**

- Barb Carlson & John Zeller - Red Devil
- Lorraine Egnaty & Doug Carney – Sleetmute
- Faron Bobby – Lime Village

Absent were - Rick Breckheimer, Charlie Bobby, & David Bobby

**Others Attending -**

ADF&G Area Fisheries biologist Kevin Scheburg

**Other Business / Members' Concerns**

Chairman, Doug Carney said that any members or others present could voice any matters they wanted to discuss, in addition to those on the agenda, and they would be brought up under "Other Business" later in the meeting.

- Any agenda additions to Other Business for this meeting? – None voiced.
- Anything for future meetings? – None voiced.
- BOF & BOG Proposals for 2014 will have to be put in by this summer, so we will need to have a regular meeting before then, if SHAC members have any to consider.

**Approval of Agenda** – There were no additions suggested, and so it was approved.

**Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made, seconded, and approved to defer the reading of minutes from the Dec.19,2011 SHAC meeting.

**The Chair said that SHAC would be going over, discussing, and making comments in support or opposition -**

- On proposals for January, 2013 Fisheries meeting
- On proposals for Spring, 2013 Statewide meeting

– Most proposals deal with Chinook Salmon – There is no need to report poor harvest, when we all know that stocks are down statewide.

So let's spend this time there discussing, giving, or withholding support for these proposals.

The Chair gave the Wildlife Safeguard number and said the committee would not be spending time discussing violations.

#### **High Points of 2012 BOG Meetings/ Chair**

- Jan, 2012 Statewide/Anchorage
- March, 2012 Region 3/Interior /Fairbanks
- Black & Brown bear were added to the Intensive Management pred control in 19A – modified by ADF&G –(took out snaring and using Dept. personnel only) - designated a 500 sq.mile area to use helicopters and firearms. TKC approved it, the legislature has funded it, and now - ADF&G & TKC are working on language for a liability waiver agreement.
- John Zeller said that wolf predator control participants should be told that the islands in mid-river on the Kuskokwim are not TKC land, and could be hunted. This must be checked out for accuracy.
- Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation management Plan added to 19A &B
- Several **anti-predator** control proposals were shot down.
- There was discussion about having the bear predator control program extended to include the area around Lime Village in future years. Everyone seemed to think it was a good idea. There are plenty of bears, and seldom any moose or caribou seen near Lime Village.

#### **Fisheries Area Research Biologist– Kevin Sheburg**

Kevin gave an overview of this past fishing season on the Kuskokwim with a special emphasis on King salmon. The tributaries from Aniak on downriver did not meet escapement goals this past summer, even with the extensive closures. These tributaries have not met escapement in 3-4 of the past years. The Kogruguluk (Holitna) has been meeting escapement goals, although in 2012 the data was lacking from the weir due to the long periods of high water/flooding when the weir was not functioning.

Kevin also gave ADF&G's arguments for the proposals that had been submitted by ADF&G, as well as answering our questions concerning definitions, data and current regulations that helped in our discussion of other proposals .

#### **Read / Discuss / Vote on support of – Barb Carlson led the proposal discussion.**

Comments on proposals for January, 2013 Fisheries meeting

Comments on proposals for Spring, 2013 Statewide meeting

Barb confirmed that all members had a proposal book to use for the meeting  
Each SHAC member who had fished on the Kuskokwim last summer gave a short report of what they had observed during the season in their village.

#### **Faron / Lime Village -**

- said there were worms around egg sacks in Reds & Kings/ Kevin said they should freeze & send some to ADF&G
- Fishing was slower and later this year, almost all were reds
- There was a good silver run, but later than usual this year in Lime.

Barb / Sleetmute & RedDevil -

- A late run with some Kings in early July, but small fish & not a good run. Spawning females are not getting this far upriver.
- Reds and Chums were average an run
- Silvers had good runs
- Caught an extreme number of pinks, usually 3 or 4 a year, this year a couple hundred - never has seen this many pinks.

John – Red Devil

- Everything was 2 weeks late, but I had good catches of all species.
- I caught Kings & Reds in good numbers.
- I used 4 inch mesh – possibly why lost Kings were small.
- . Caught unusual numbers of both pinks and suckers.

Kevin – (Biologist)

- King size has come down the last few years, but not that much – a couple of inches.

Most of the meeting was spent explaining and discussing proposals for both the January 2013 BOF meeting concerning the Kuskokwim proposals and the March 2013 BOF meeting concerning statewide proposals. Comments are Below

**Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.**

**Comments**

**Proposal 104 - Oppose Unanimously**

- SHAC doesn't want to see the escapement goals lowered.
- We question the validity of the change in harvest estimation method in 2008 being applied retroactively to previous years.
- There is concern that a change in the ANS will benefit Bethel and the larger villages at a cost to the much smaller villages further up the river.
- What data will the new ANS be based on? With the continuing decline in many of the salmon species since 1990, the lower subsistence harvest data may fewer salmon than were needed for subsistence. Some years, these lower harvest levels also reflected poorer fishing years and closures during prime fishing times.

**Proposal 105 - Oppose Unanimously**

(SHAC supports Part (a) through (d)(5) but strongly opposes the remainder of this proposal.)

- King salmon are not meeting escapement goals on many of the tributaries of the Kuskokwim and at such a time it seems unwise to allow a commercial chum Fishery. A commercial Chum opening would further deplete the Kings, rather than help in regeneration of stocks.

- The commercial chum fishery, at present, is of little value on the Kuskokwim. There is a lack of buyers and processors available. There is a drastically reduced participation in the openings that have occurred in recent years by permit holders. The price being paid for chums does not make it economically viable to pay for gas, and run a commercial fishing operation.
- The statistical correlation between record king salmon escapement producing poor returns in recent years is just that - a correlation. It is not cause and effect. For ADF&G to adjust the escapement number downward on specific rivers based on this correlation is unwarranted. Statistically high escapement may coincide with poorer returns, but these statistics may be caused by another factor(s) that has not been identified. Correlation is not the same as cause and effect.

#### **Proposal 106 - Support Unanimously**

- We are hoping this proposal will succeed in the aim of managing for abundance.
- SHAC thinks it is a good decision for the Dept to include a minimum number of females at monitored tributaries which is of ultimate importance to produce good returns in succeeding years. Large numbers of jack kings make the overall count look good, but do nothing to improve returns in following years.
- The upriver subsistence fishermen have suffered a drastically reduced take in overall poundage of kings. The return has been both fewer and smaller fish in recent years. The larger villages downriver fish with 300' nets while upriver traditionally use nothing over 100'. This strong downriver fishing pressure cleans the river out of the large, early kings. We have so few people fishing with much less gear that our impact on the king run is minuscule when compared with Subdistrict W1-B.

#### **Proposal 107 - Oppose Unanimously**

- SHAC likes the overall tone and goals of this proposal but think it is unenforceable, and unmanageable as written.

#### **Proposal 108 - Support Unanimously**

- This proposal puts no restrictions on subsistence harvest, and gathers more information about how many subsistence salmon are sold and transported out of the area. More information will aid in management decisions, and help prevent abuse of the limited sale of subsistence salmon.

#### **Proposal - 109 Oppose Unanimously**

- ADF&G biologist Kevin Scheburg informed SHAC at this meeting, that presently there is no dollar amount for sale allowance of Kuskokwim area subsistence fish. SHAC members thought there was, because we've all seen sales of subsistence caught salmon products go on. In a time when we are having to deal with closures, surely the selling of this precious resource should not be allowed, even on a limited basis.
- The selling of subsistence fish is taking the food out of the mouths of people living and fishing here.
- Selling subsistence fish denigrates the value of sharing our catch with others that

cannot fish because of age or are otherwise incapable.

**Proposal 110 Support Unanimously**

- Removes any hope or temptation to allow gear larger than 6” mesh to be used in District 1 commercial fishery.
- We need the larger king females to be making it up to the spawning grounds to improve our returns - **8” mesh targets these specific fish.**

**Proposal 219 – Support Unanimously**

- When discussing anything, it is paramount that word and term definitions have the same meanings to all parties involved.
- Using the same terms, but with different definitions for a certain purpose in a certain area is absurd! Different terms should be used.

**Proposal 224 - Support Unanimously**

- As stated above – anything that improves and clarifies communication between any participating parties, is a positive thing.