



November 17, 2023

Initial DRAFT Spend Plan for funds appropriated to address the 2021 Chignik salmon fishery disaster determination. NOAA Fisheries has allocated \$4,989,902 for this salmon fishery disaster. This spend plan informs the federal grant application submitted by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to NOAA Fisheries and is subject to change based on approval of the final grant.

Written comments are requested on all elements of the proposed spend plan and should be as specific as possible. Comments will be posted as received online and therefore, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) requests that no business proprietary information, copyrighted information, or personally identifiable information be included in written comments. Comments can be submitted by email to: dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov or by mail to:

ADF&G, Attn: Darion Jones
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Comments must be sent by November 27, 2023, for consideration in the next iteration of the spend plan. A second draft of the spend plan will be available for public comment before the spend plan is finalized.

Guiding principles for disaster fund distribution: Disbursement of funds is intended to 1) assist fishery participants harmed by the 2021 Chignik salmon fishery disaster and 2) improve fishery information used to assess and forecast future fishery performance and to develop management approaches that avoid and/or mitigate the impacts of future fishery disasters that cannot be prevented.

The proposed categories and allocations for this draft spend plan were informed by the 2018 and 2020 Chignik salmon disaster spend plan and comments received from initial public comments (Appendix 1).

Category	Allocation	Estimated funds ^a
Research	10%	\$494,000
Communities	3%	\$148,000
Harvesters	74%	\$3,660,000
Processors	13%	\$643,000
Program support	0.1%	\$5,000
Total	100%	\$4,950,000

^a Additional funds will be allocated to Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to administer the federal grant

Research – 10% (~\$494,000): ADF&G proposes to distribute research funds through an open and competitive bid process administered by PSMFC. Entities that are authorized to receive federal grant funds would be eligible to submit proposals for research projects based on the themes outlined below.

Funds available through this spend plan would be available for scientific research projects, including ongoing work funded through previous Chignik salmon fishery disasters, that provides information to help fishery scientists and managers assess the freshwater and marine conditions that influence the productivity of the Chignik salmon stock. The primary goals are to further our understanding of the cause of the Chignik salmon fishery failure, better understand the abundance and ecology of Chignik salmon, improve the ability of resource managers to identify future poor runs, and to help managers avoid and mitigate the impacts of future Chignik salmon fishery disasters that cannot be prevented.

Funds may also be available for socioeconomic research to evaluate the lasting effects of the Chignik salmon disaster on subsistence users in the region. Most of the residents of Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay rely greatly on earnings from the commercial salmon fisheries for their economic needs. This research is needed to help scientists and managers better understand the relationships between subsistence and commercial fishing and the factors that affect harvest effort and harvest success.

Based on previous comments received from stakeholders, resource managers, and the public, ADF&G recommends funding research projects that are focused on the following themes:

- 1) Better understand the harvest composition and stock specific migratory timing of sockeye salmon throughout the Chignik Management Area.
- 2) Better understanding of the environmental factors and freshwater and marine processes that drive downstream movement of early and late run salmon.
- 3) Investigate smolt and juvenile salmon movement, growth, and habitat use in freshwater and estuarine environments.
- 4) Improvements to salmon escapement enumeration with a focus on late-season assessment.
- 5) Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) analysis to examine the risks and tradeoffs of management approaches and determine impacts of management actions.

ADF&G is utilizing previous disaster funding for ongoing projects on research themes two and three. Further funding would allow for continuous, robust data sets from those projects, which would inform other recommended research themes and objectives. ADF&G is seeking public comment on these or other research suggestions.

Communities – 3% (~\$148,000): ADF&G proposes to allocate a portion of the disaster funds to municipalities and boroughs in the Chignik region that rely on revenue generated from salmon landings and other economic activities related to the salmon fishery. These local government entities were negatively impacted by the fishery disaster because fishery revenues comprise a significant portion of local operating budgets and are used to support education, public works, ports and harbors, and other services.

ADF&G proposes direct payment to affected municipalities and boroughs with a demonstrated loss of salmon landings due to the fishery disaster. ADF&G identified the City of Chignik and the Lake and Peninsula Borough as eligible entities to receive the community disaster funds. Because all Chignik salmon landings are made in, no additional eligibility criteria are proposed. ADF&G proposes an even split of community funds between the City of Chignik and Lake and Peninsula Borough.

Harvesters – 74% (~\$3,660,000): ADF&G proposes to divide the harvester allocation into two pools, one for vessel permit holders (80%) and one for vessel crew members (20%). While most seine operations employ an average of three crew members, each earning a ~10% share, the 80/20 split between permit holders and crew members considers the higher initial costs, higher level of investment, and risk that are generally borne by the vessel operator.

Permit holders (80% of harvester pool ~\$2.9 million)

Proposed eligibility criteria for Chignik permit holders:

1. The S01L permit holder must have made a Chignik salmon landing in 2021.
2. The permit holder must demonstrate a loss in 2021 gross revenue as compared to the permit holder’s average gross revenue for 2016, 2017 and 2019.

Funds are proposed to be paid to the person listed as the 2021 ‘Permit holder’ and temporary emergency transfer permit holders (transferees) in the CFEC database. Permit holders who certified they were unable to participate in 2021 to qualify for an emergency transfer or permit holders who permanently transferred a permit away in 2021 will not receive payments.

ADF&G proposes that each permit holder meeting the eligibility criteria will receive a base payment of \$30,000. If more than one eligible permit holder made landings on the same vessel in 2021, the total payment would be calculated at the vessel level and divided between eligible permit holders pro rata to the value of their 2021 salmon landings. Thirty permit holders are estimated to be eligible for base payments based on the proposed criteria.

In addition to a base payment, each eligible permit holder will receive a tier payment based on the permit holder’s 2021 salmon revenue loss compared to earlier years. The proposed tiers presented below represent different levels of revenue loss across permit holders and are based on estimates of average gross revenue for all salmon species in 2016, 2017, and 2019 compared to 2021 gross revenue for all salmon species as estimated by CFEC. After accounting for base payments, twenty-five percent of the remaining funds will be allocated to each tier and each eligible permit holder, or vessel if more than one permit holder landed salmon on the same vessel, in the same tier will receive an equal payment.

Tier level	CFEC gross revenue loss ^a	Tier allocation	Est. number of eligible permit holders
1	≥ \$180,000	25%	4
2	\$179,999 – \$145,000	25%	5
3	\$144,999 – \$100,000	25%	8
4	≤ \$99,999	25%	13

^a Loss is calculated by comparing 2021 CFEC gross revenue vs. the average CFEC gross revenue in 2016, 2017, and 2019.

Vessel Crew (20% of harvester pool ~\$732,000) Vessel crew meeting all criteria are proposed to receive an **equal payment** from the crew member pool. Direct payments to minors are not authorized by the terms of the Federal grant but may be authorized to guardians in the same household on behalf of an eligible minor.

Proposed eligibility criteria for vessel crew:

1. Crew member must have held a 2021 commercial crew license or a 2021 CFEC permit for any fishery. This information will be verified using the ADF&G Licensing database and the CFEC permit database.
2. Crew member must provide information to show they worked as crew for a qualified permit holder, based on a 2021 crew contract or an affidavit from the permit holder or vessel owner.
3. Crew member must not be eligible for fishery disaster funds as a Chignik permit holder.

Processors – 13% (\$643,000) Chignik salmon processing companies meeting the criteria are proposed to be eligible for payment based on the estimated exvessel value loss using COAR buying data. COAR buying data are used to determine eligibility and payment for processors because those data are linked to the salmon harvesting location.

Proposed processor eligibility criteria:

1. Processing company must have processed Chignik salmon in 2021.
2. Processing company must have a demonstrated loss in exvessel value for Chignik salmon in 2021 as compared to the 2016, 2017, and 2019 average.

Disaster payments to processing companies are **pro rata** to the company's demonstrated loss.

Program Support – 0.1% - (\$5,000): ADF&G is proposing to allocate funds for staff working on fishery disaster spend plan development and implementation in coordination with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Attachment 1. Initial stakeholder comments.



**CHIGNIK INTERTRIBAL COALITION
427 AIRPORT ROAD
CHIGNIK LAGOON, ALASKA 99565**

June 30, 2023

ADF&G

Attn: Karla Bush

PO Box 115526

Juneau, AK 99811-5526

RE: *DRAFT Spend Plan for funds appropriated to address 2021 Chignik salmon fishery*

Dear Karla Bush,

This letter is written on behalf of the five Federally recognized Tribes represented by the Chignik Intertribal Coalition (CIC). Our tribes are members of the communities of Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, Ivanof Bay and Perryville. The Coalition has represented these tribes since 2018. Please find below the following suggestions on how the funds appropriated by Congress to address the 2021 Chignik Area salmon fishery disaster should be allocated.

2021 Chignik commercial (Permit Holders, Crew, and Processors):

Chignik Harvesters – 95% The harvester allocation will be divided into two pools, one for vessel permit holders (80%) and one for vessel crew members (20%). The split between permit holders and crew members is based on average crew size and crew shares and considers the higher initial costs borne by the vessel operators that are typically reimbursed through standard deductions to crew pay when the fishery is open.

Chignik Permit holders (80% of harvester pool) Proposed eligibility criteria for Chignik permit holders:

1. Permit holder must made landings in Chignik in 2021.
2. Permit holder did not make landings in another 2021 salmon seine fishery.

Funds should be paid to the person listed as the 2021 'Permit holder' and temporary emergency transfer permit holders (transferees) in the CFEC database. Permit holders who certified they were unable to participate in 2021 in order to qualify for an emergency transfer or permit holders who permanently transferred a permit away in 2021 should not receive payments.

Each permit holder who meets both eligibility criteria above will receive a minimum payment of \$30,000, except those eligible permit holders who made landings on the same vessel in 2021. If more than one eligible permit holder made landings on the same vessel in 2021, the total payment will be calculated at the vessel level and divided between eligible permit holders pro rata to the value of their 2021 salmon landings.

Additional tier payments for permit holders who made Chignik salmon landings in 2021 will be distributed using estimated gross revenue value for all salmon species to establish tiers because all salmon species were included in the fishery disaster for the Chignik area. Just like in the 2018 Disaster Distribution Plan, four tiers can be used and based on the estimated gross revenue for salmon landed in 2021 on each permit, or vessel if more than one permit holder landed salmon on the same vessel. Again, just like in the 2018 Plan, 25% of the remaining funds after accounting for the minimum payments of \$30,000 per eligible permit holder should be allocated to each tier and each eligible permit holder in the same tier would receive an equal payment.

Chignik Vessel Crew (20% of harvester pool) Vessel crew that meet all criteria are eligible to receive an equal payment from the crew member pool. Payments to crew members under 18 years of age will be paid to the crew member's parent/legal guardian and that parent/legal guardian is required to act as a custodian over those funds consistent with custodial requirements in Alaska's uniform transfers to minors act (AS 13.45 et seq). Eligibility criteria for vessel crew:

1. Crew members must have held a 2021 commercial crew license or 2021 CFEC permit for any fishery. This information will be verified using the ADF&G Licensing database and the CFEC permit database.
2. Crew members must provide information to show they served as fishing crew in 2021 for a qualified permit holder, based on an affidavit from the permit or vessel holder.
3. Crew members must not be eligible for fishery disaster funds under the Chignik permit holder category of this distribution plan.

Chignik Processors – 5% There has not been a shore-based processing plant in Chignik since 2008. Trident and Ocean Beauty simply tender the salmon they purchase in Chignik to Sand Point or Kodiak Island. The bottom line is that neither processor has the large fixed costs normally associated with operating a shore-based plant in Chignik. When Chignik has a poor, or non-existent season, both buyers just simply send their tenders elsewhere.

Research

The Chignik Intertribal Coalition would like to express our support for Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) analysis examining risks and tradeoffs of different management approaches or mixed stock fisheries to refine stock - specific management and understand impacts of various management actions. The Coalition supports this theme as a priority for research funding because we recognize that the cause of these fish disasters span more than one fishery area and/or salmon species.

In closing, we offer these recommendations on the proposed draft spend plan for the 2021 Chignik salmon disaster funds. We appreciate the opportunity to comment in this process and our Coalition membership appreciates your work.

Sincerely,

George Anderson
President, Chignik Intertribal Coalition
(907) 830-2623

Fishery Disaster Spend Plans Virtual Listening Sessions

When: June 14, 2023

Session One Agenda:

June 14th 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Alaska Daylight Time

- 3:00 pm: Chignik, Kuskokwim River, and Norton Sound salmon and Norton Sound red king crab

Meeting Notes:

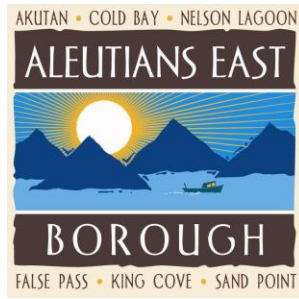
Call to order and introduction by Karla

- Guiding principles for disaster spend plans, email address also available to send in comments there. Opening the floor for comments.

Chignik comments

Chuck commented on research priorities and eligibility for Chignik – MSE and smolt studies should be a priority, qualifying years continue to be a challenge due to low participation (none in 2020). Alternative is to consider those that made landings in 2021 as primary recipients and not look solely at history. Noted that in the final 2020 version, some comments from Chignik were missed.

Ernie Carlson from Chignik – Would like us to consider smolt studies as a priority in Chignik Lake and Black Lake. If there was a Chignik fisherman who also fished somewhere else also, they should not be eligible for payment. Likes the tiered program based on performance.



June 30, 2023

Karla Bush
ADF&G Extended Jurisdiction Program Manager
dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov

RE: 2021 Chignik Salmon Fishery Disaster Funding Spend Plan

The Aleutians East Borough welcomes the opportunity to comment and help the Alaska Department of Fish & Game identify funding priorities and develop spend plans for federal fishery disaster allocations. Our municipality encompasses the cities of Akutan, Cold Bay, False Pass, King Cove and Sand Point, and the village of Nelson Lagoon. The Aleutians East Borough hopes the 2021 Chignik Salmon Disaster spend plan will give some consideration to set gillnet fishermen and other fishermen historically reliant on salmon fisheries in the Southeastern District Mainland Section (SEDM) of Area M, when the 2021 Chignik Salmon Disaster plan is developed.

As you may be aware, 80% of the sockeye salmon caught in the SEDM are considered in regulation to be Chignik-bound salmon, from June 1 through July 25, except for the North West Stepovak Section after July 1. In addition, the percentage of Chignik-bound sockeye salmon allocated to the SEDM fishery is 7.6% of the total number of sockeye salmon harvested in the CMA through July 25. The SEDM is only open to set gillnet gear and permitted fishermen from June 1 through July 10, and open to seine gear and permits from July 11th on.

The average sockeye salmon harvest in the SEDM for the 10 salmon seasons 2008 through 2017 was 186,197 number of salmon. For the setnet only fishery just through July 10, the average annual harvest for the same years was 60,221 number of salmon. For the years 2018-2021 the average number of salmon commercially harvested was 28,611, but for the setnet only fishery from June 1 through July 10, each year 2018 through 2021 the harvest was zero.

Set gillnet and other local fishermen who have traditionally fished in the SEDM should be included in the 2021 Chignik salmon disaster funds spend plan. We hope you'll give these fishermen due consideration in the spend plan and we look forward to continued engagement moving forward.

Sincerely,

Ernest Weiss
Natural Resources Director