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Activities of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, 2005 through 2006

Annual Report for Study 06-307
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management
Fisheries Information Services Division

by

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and

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August 2007

Alaska Department of Fish and Game **Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries**

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Weights and measures (metric)

centimeter	cm
deciliter	dL
gram	g
hectare	ha
kilogram	kg
kilometer	km
liter	L
meter	m
milliliter	mL
millimeter	mm

Weights and measures (English)

cubic feet per second	ft^3/s
foot	ft
gallon	gal
inch	in
mile	mi
nautical mile	nmi
ounce	oz
pound	lb
quart	qt
yard	yd

Time and temperature

day	d
degrees Celsius	°C
degrees Fahrenheit	°F
degrees kelvin	K
hour	h
minute	min
second	s

Physics and chemistry

all atomic symbols	
alternating current	AC
ampere	A
calorie	cal
direct current	DC
hertz	Hz
horsepower	hp
hydrogen ion activity (negative log of)	pH
parts per million	ppm
parts per thousand	ppt, ‰
volts	V
watts	W

General

Alaska Administrative Code	AAC
all commonly accepted abbreviations	e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.
all commonly accepted professional titles	e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.
at	@
compass directions:	
east	E
north	N
south	S
west	W
copyright	©
corporate suffixes:	
Company	Co.
Corporation	Corp.
Incorporated	Inc.
Limited	Ltd.
District of Columbia	D.C.
et alii (and others)	et al.
et cetera (and so forth)	etc.
exempli gratia (for example)	e.g.
Federal Information Code	FIC
id est (that is)	i.e.
latitude or longitude	lat. or long.
monetary symbols (U.S.)	$, ¢
months (tables and figures): first three letters	Jan,...,Dec
registered trademark	®
trademark	™
United States (adjective)	U.S.
United States of America (noun)	USA
U.S.C.	United States Code
U.S. state	use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)

Measures (fisheries)

fork length	FL
mideye-to-fork	MEF
mideye-to-tail-fork	METF
standard length	SL
total length	TL

Mathematics, statistics

all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations	
alternate hypothesis	H_A
base of natural logarithm	*e*
catch per unit effort	CPUE
coefficient of variation	CV
common test statistics	(F, t, χ^2, etc.)
confidence interval	CI
correlation coefficient (multiple)	R
correlation coefficient (simple)	r
covariance	cov
degree (angular)	°
degrees of freedom	df
expected value	*E*
greater than	>
greater than or equal to	≥
harvest per unit effort	HPUE
less than	<
less than or equal to	≤
logarithm (natural)	ln
logarithm (base 10)	log
logarithm (specify base)	$log_{2,}$ etc.
minute (angular)	'
not significant	NS
null hypothesis	H_O
percent	%
probability	P
probability of a type I error (rejection of the null hypothesis when true)	α
probability of a type II error (acceptance of the null hypothesis when false)	β
second (angular)	"
standard deviation	SD
standard error	SE
variance	
population	Var
sample	var

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by

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ABSTRACT

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) was formed in 1988 by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in response to requests from stakeholders in the Kuskokwim River drainage seeking a more active role in the management of salmon fishery resources. Since then, the Working Group has become increasingly active in the preseason, inseason, and postseason management of the Kuskokwim River drainage subsistence, commercial, and sport salmon fisheries. In 2001, the Working Group modified its charter in order to more effectively address the needs of the Federal Subsistence Management Program by including members of the Coordinating Fisheries Committee of the Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Regional Advisory Councils. The Working Group further modified its charter in 2005 to include representation from the far upriver communities that had not previously had a voice on the Working Group. The Working Group now serves as a public forum through which Federal and State fisheries managers meet with local users of the salmon resource to review run assessment information and reach a consensus on how to proceed with management of Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries. The Working Group met 14 times in 2005 and 10 times in 2006. In 2006 the Fisheries Information Services (FIS) Division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFW) Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) provided funding for inseason support of the Working Group under the Inseason Support for Cooperative Management of the Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fishery project (FIS 06-307). The first meetings of the year were in March of 2005 and May 2006 with intensive and frequent meetings during June, July, and August; and summary and review session in September of both years. Working Group meetings provide the forum for area fishers, user representatives, community representatives, Regional Advisory Council representatives, Fish and Game Advisory Committee members, and State and Federal managers to come together to discuss issues relevant to sustained yield fishery management and providing for the subsistence use priority.

Key words: Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, subsistence fishing, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, salmon fishery management, Bethel, Kuskokwim River, Chinook, chum, sockeye, coho, salmon

INTRODUCTION

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) was formed in 1988 by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) in response to requests from stakeholders in the Kuskokwim Area that sought a more active role in the management of salmon fishery resources (Francisco et al. 1989). The Working Group Process has become the forum through which inseason management decisions are made regarding Kuskokwim River subsistence, commercial, and sport salmon fisheries (Figure 1). Pre- and post-season participation in the management process by the Working Group provides the opportunity to participate in the regulatory processes that establish fishery management policies and regulations. In 2001, the Working Group modified their by-laws in order to more effectively address Federal Subsistence Management by including seats for member representatives from the Kuskokwim River Coordinating Fisheries Committee of the Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Regional Advisory Councils (RAC). The Working Group further modified their by-laws in 2005 to include representation from communities at the headwaters of the drainage which had not previously had a voice on the Working Group.

The Working Group typically meets first in March or April each calendar year; conducts intensive and frequent meetings during June, July, and August; and holds a wrap-up session in September or October. Working Group member representatives, through funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) have had the opportunity to testify at Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) and Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) meetings and to participate in Kuskokwim Area Interagency and other associated meetings. OSM funding was discontinued in 2005 and was reestablished in 2006 under project FIS 06-307. The current OSM project provides funding for 3 years of inseason support for Working Group operations in the form of travel funding, meeting supplies and arrangements, and

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) staff time to coordinate the Working Group process. ADF&G maintains primary management authority over fisheries resources within the State of Alaska. Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries are managed according to management plans and associated policies and regulations under state statute and as adopted through the BOF process. The current Kuskokwim River salmon management plan (5 AAC 07.365) provides guidelines for the rebuilding and management of the Kuskokwim River salmon fishery to promote sustained yield of salmon stocks large enough to meet escapement needs, provide a reasonable opportunity to harvest amounts necessary for subsistence, and to provide for other fisheries (Bergstrom and Whitmore 2004; Burkey et al. 2000). Under Alaska Statute (AS 16.05.258), subsistence uses maintain a priority over other uses of fishery resources, and Kuskokwim River subsistence fisheries are managed accordingly.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980 mandates that rural subsistence users who have a customary and traditional use of a fish and wildlife resource have a priority over non-subsistence users to harvest these resources on Federal public lands and waters. On October 1, 1999, in response to an ongoing conflict between Federal and State definitions of subsistence priority, the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture published regulations to expand Federal management of subsistence fisheries to Alaskan waters within and adjacent to Federal public lands. The Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture delegated their authority in Alaska to the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) to manage fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public land, including waters running through or next to these lands. Federal subsistence fishing regulations are adopted through the FSB process. The FSB may close fishing to other subsistence and non-subsistence uses in these waters to accommodate a priority for Federally qualified rural subsistence users if it is determined that there are subsistence or conservation concerns.

For the past two decades, ongoing efforts have been made to improve monitoring of Kuskokwim River salmon stocks. Annual monitoring programs include evaluation of salmon harvest information, test fish abundance indices and monitoring escapements using weir, sonar, aerial spawning ground surveys, and mark–recapture programs. Kuskokwim Area salmon monitoring and assessment programs are evaluated both inseason, to assist managers and the Working Group in making management decisions, and postseason, to assess the result of management actions and to inform regulatory decisions, management plans and strategies, and forecast future returns.

From July 2002 through October 2004, funding was available for support of the Working Group process through the USFWS OSM Working Group Support project FIS 01-116. Funding was again provided by USFWS OSM beginning in July 2006 and will continue through October 2008 through USFWS OSM Inseason Support for Cooperative Management of the Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fishery project FIS 06-307. Working Group support costs during 2005 were funded by ADF&G through general funds. Expenditures in 2005 included partial funding for a Fish and Wildlife Technician to support the meeting process, and to summarize and distribute information to and from Working Group members. Limited funding was available for Working Group travel in 2005. In 2006 Working Group expenditures included partial funding for a Fishery Biologist to coordinate the meeting process and to summarize and distribute information to and from Working Group members. Additional funding covered the cost for Working Group member travel and communications between agencies and Working Group members by teleconference, fax, and phone.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Working Group process are:

1. To provide local fishers and other users with an avenue for direct involvement in the management of the Kuskokwim River fishery.
2. To work towards the development of a comprehensive management plan, for all Kuskokwim River salmon stocks.
3. Provide a forum for all parties with interest in Kuskokwim River fisheries to work together to reach a consensus on management of the fisheries.
4. Utilize funding from FIS project 06-307 to strengthen the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group process (2006 objective).

The objective of project FIS 06-307 is to strengthen the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group process by providing funding to support the following activities:

1. Provide inseason run assessment information to all parties participating in cooperative management of the Kuskokwim River subsistence salmon fishery.
2. Provide a forum for USFWS, Regional Advisory Council members, ADF&G and other participants of the cooperative management process to discuss inseason run assessment information and fishery management decisions affecting subsistence fisheries.
3. Provide an opportunity for participants in the cooperative management process to forecast and plan (preseason) and to summarize (postseason) the fishing season.
4. Report the discussion and decisions made during the cooperative management process.

PROCESS

The Working Group process is governed by the By-Laws of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group as amended July 29, 2006 (Appendix A1). The By-Laws describe the purpose, rules of conduct, representation, and selection of officers for the Working Group process. The first Working Group meetings each year are typically held in March or April. Intensive and frequent meetings are held during June, July, and August; when the bulk of the salmon runs are occurring. A wrap-up session is held in September or October. Meetings are generally conducted by teleconference with efforts made to conduct 4 meetings per year where all members are able to attend in person. The Working Group is made up of 13 member organizations or constituencies (Appendix B1). These members represent: 2 elders (Upriver, Downriver), 4 subsistence fishers (Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, and Headwaters), one processor representative, one commercial fisher, one sport fisher, one Member-at-Large seat, two Federal Subsistence RAC members (Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior), and ADF&G. One or more alternates are assigned for each designated Working Group member in the event the representative is unable to attend a meeting.

Working Group meetings are conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order following a standard agenda that provides for a full and complete discussion of area and related salmon fisheries. Working Group motions are passed by consensus and ADF&G has no voting status on

motions concerning the scheduling of commercial fishery openings. Reports are heard and discussed regarding test fishery, weir, tower, sonar, subsistence and commercial catch. Based on these reports the Working Group makes recommendations to ADF&G concerning management of Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries. Final fishery management decisions are the responsibility of ADF&G. Additionally, the Working Group passes resolutions stating consensus positions, recommendations, and opinions from the Working Group to agencies, organizations, and the public. The Working Group also appoints representatives to attend meetings of the BOF, FSB, Fish and Game Advisory Committee meetings, RAC meetings, and other public meetings dealing with relevant salmon issues.

In support of Working Group meetings, ADF&G:

1. Informs Working Group members about scheduled meetings and meeting agendas through phone, mail, email, and FAX.
2. Assembles, copies, and distributes materials including meeting announcements, agendas, informational packets (Appendix C1), action statements, meeting summaries (Appendix D1), news releases, and newspaper articles.
3. Initiates Working Group meeting teleconferences.
4. Organizes and provides travel logistics for member travel.
5. Assists the Working Group in identifying potential members to fill vacancies.
6. Drafts an annual report of Working Group meetings and actions.
7. Distribute meeting informational packets and meeting summaries.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Management of the Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries benefits through the Working Group process because the forum provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the Kuskokwim Area to take an active role by making recommendations affecting policies, regulations, and management actions taken. The process ensures management agencies keep the public informed of fishery issues, distribute timely fishery run status information, and maintain an open dialogue with area fishers. In addition to interactions with Working Group members, the process encourages and supports participation by a number of tribal organizations and federal agencies including the Kuskokwim Native Association (KNA), the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), the McGrath Native Village Council (MNVC), the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Bering Sea Fisherman's Association (BSFA), Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF), the USFWS Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta National Wildlife Refuge, and the USFWS OSM. Participation in this process by such a broad spectrum of area users and user representatives has fostered the development of an informed public, which can have a positive influence on the management of the Kuskokwim River salmon fishery.

Management of Kuskokwim River salmon stocks was successfully conducted during the 2005 and 2006 seasons. All salmon escapement goals were achieved or exceeded and opportunity was provided for Kuskokwim Area residents to meet their subsistence needs. Additional harvestable surpluses were utilized by commercial and sport fisheries.

Inseason meetings were held to allow an opportunity for "Public Comment", discussions of issues among agency staff, Working Group members and other interested individuals, and review of salmon run status information. Inseason indicators of salmon run strength include the Bethel Test Fish (BTF) project (Bue and Martz 2006), inseason subsistence harvest reports (Martz and Dull 2006), tributary escapement monitoring projects (Costello et al. 2006a; b; McEwen 2005; Roettiger et al. 2005; Shelden et al. 2005; Stewart et al. 2006; Zabkar et al. 2005), and fishwheel catch rates from the Kalskag mark–recapture tagging project (Pawluk et al. 2006). Cooperative efforts were made to interview subsistence fishers from the lower portion of the drainage in 2005 and 2006 including the Bethel area to monitor the subsistence salmon fishery inseason as a tool to help gauge salmon run timing and abundance, and obtain general fishery insight. Salmon escapements were assessed by weir projects operated in the Kwethluk, Tuluksak, Salmon (Aniak drainage), George, Kogrukluk, Tatlawiksuk, and Takotna Rivers and by a sonar project on the Aniak River. In addition, tagging and radiotelemetry studies were conducted on the main stem of the Kuskokwim River near Kalskag.

2005 SEASON

In 2005, Working Group support was not directly funded under any state or federal project. Limited support was provided by ADF&G state general funds for teleconference and Working Group travel for one member to attend interagency meetings. In 2005 funding was not available to bring all Working Group members together for meetings, therefore, the season summary meeting of the Working Group was held by teleconference. The Working Group met 13 times in calendar year 2005 to support management of Kuskokwim River subsistence, commercial, and recreational salmon fisheries (Appendix E1). One meeting was held in each of the months of March, May, and September. Four meetings were held in June, 2 in July, and 5 in August. Prior to each meeting an agenda and information packet was assembled and distributed to Working Group members and other interested parties. An example of a Working Group pre-meeting packet can be found in Appendix C1. The following chronology provides highlights of accomplishments and significant events:

1) The first meeting of the year was held in March to discuss the 2005 Kuskokwim River Salmon Outlook and Management Strategy, review summaries of the Federal subsistence Board (FSB) meeting and Regional Advisory Council meetings from Working Group RAC representatives, review member status, select a member to attend the Kuskokwim River Salmon Interagency Meeting in March of that year, and to review the Working Group budget.

2) During the May 25 meeting the 2005 Kuskokwim River Salmon Season Outlook and Management Strategy was discussed and presentations were conducted for the Working Group describing 2004 postseason subsistence harvest survey results. The Working Group also moved to add a fourth seat on the Working Group to represent subsistence salmon users in the headwaters area of the Kuskokwim River drainage. The headwaters area consists of that portion of the Kuskokwim River from McGrath to the upper limit of the watershed. The Working Group also moved to draft a letter of support for the Kuskokwim River subsistence fishing schedule to be presented at the AVCP rural provider's conference on May 25 (Appendix F1). Sophie Gregory of Sleetmute was made an additional alternate to the Upper River Subsistence seat.

3) In 2005, funding for a Working Group Coordinator was not provided. Chris Shelden, ADF&G Fish and Wildlife Technician III, assumed the duties of Working Group coordinator, which included: providing meeting logistics, compiling pre-meeting informational packets and post meeting summaries, and contacting Working Group members prior to each meeting by phone, FAX, or email to ascertain whether the member would be available to attend in person or by teleconference. Salary for this position was provided for under state general funds.

4) Four meetings were held during the height of the Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon runs within the lower river. Meeting dates were June 15, June 22, June 26, and June 29.

   a) Salmon run assessment information used to judge run strength for the first two meetings was limited to summaries of the inseason subsistence monitoring program and the Bethel test fish project as few salmon had reached the Kalskag tagging fish wheels, and weir or sonar sites by that time.

   b) Available information suggested a strong Chinook salmon run, an average to above average chum salmon run, and an above average sockeye salmon run.

   c) On 15 June, in response to the Working Group recommendation, the subsistence fishing schedule was liberalized and 7 day per week subsistence fishing was implemented. As the season progressed, chum and Chinook salmon returns proved above average to record high in run strength, confirming that the suspension of the subsistence schedule had been warranted.

   d) On 22 June, Working Group members agreed to allow representatives from the two Kuskokwim Area commercial processors, Coastal Villages Seafoods (CVS) and Inlet Fish Processors (IFP), to assume the voting rights of the Processors seat on the Working Group during alternate meetings.

   e) Working Group subsistence fishing reports, together with summaries of subsistence fisher interviews (conducted by ONC technicians), and information from the Bethel test fish project were presented at the June 26 meeting. These reports verified a strong Chinook salmon return, and above average chum and sockeye salmon returns.

   f) By June 29, most subsistence fishers surveyed by ONC technicians reported being finished with the subsistence Chinook and sockeye harvests. Fishers reported that catches of all species were normal to very good with no one reporting poor fishing. Of 34 families surveyed 19 reported chum salmon fishing as very good, and 15 families reported chum salmon fishing as normal.

   g) The Bethel test fishery reported that cumulative Chinook and chum salmon catch indices through June 29 were the second highest recorded in the history of the project. The sockeye salmon cumulative catch index was the highest on record for that time.

   h) Daily weir and sonar escapement projects had only been operational for a few days and the information was not an adequate index of abundance at that early stage in the run.

   i) Through consensus of the Working Group, four subdistrict commercial openings were scheduled in 2005, two each in subdistricts W-1A and W-1B. Commercial fishing periods in both of the subdistricts went well, although fishing effort was very low.

Cumulative harvest of Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon was well below historical averages.

5) Two Working Group meetings were conducted during late July as coho salmon began entering the lower Kuskokwim River. The first coho salmon directed commercial opening was scheduled during the meeting on 29 July.

   a) On 20 July, the Working Group met to discuss opening the coho salmon directed commercial fishery in 2005. By that date, run indices did not indicate coho salmon abundance was adequate to establish commercial openings and ADF&G did not recommend opening the fishery at that time. Following updates from ADF&G on assessment projects, the Working Group turned to other matters at hand:

      i. The Working Group discussed the option of drafting an Agenda Change Request (ACR) to the BOF pertaining to lifting or curtailing the subsistence fishing schedule on the Kuskokwim River. Discussion included the unfavorable light in which many subsistence users regarded the subsistence salmon fishing schedule, weighed against the intent of the schedule to spread subsistence opportunity among all Kuskokwim River communities. The Working Group chose to proceed with caution and not support the removal of the subsistence schedule at that time.

      ii. Working Group members voted to finalize amendments to the Working Group By-laws to support the seat of Headwaters Subsistence representative.

   b) During the meeting held on 29 July, the Working Group and ADF&G reached a consensus to establish the first commercial fishing period for the coho salmon directed fishery on August 2, 2005 in Subdistrict W-1B for 6 hours in duration. Based on average run indices, the Working Group and ADF&G agreed to proceed cautiously with regards to commercial coho salmon fishing.

   c) BTF coho salmon catches appeared to indicate an average to above average coho run for the Bethel area. Early indications of coho salmon passage at the Kalskag fishwheels and weir projects also indicated an average to above average run.

   d) In 2005, the ONC inseason catch survey project focused on the early part of the season (June and July) when most of the lower river subsistence activity takes place. The survey program was completed by the week ending 25 June. Overall, the surveys indicated that subsistence fishers had met their needs in a timely manner in 2005. All the camps surveyed reported normal to very good fishing for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon. No one reported poor fishing in 2005.

6) The Working Group met four times between 3 and 16 August. Each time, run indices and commercial catch information were reviewed.

   a) The Working Group and ADF&G reached consensus on scheduling subdistrict commercial openings on August 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, and 15 during this time period. All coho salmon directed commercial openings in 2006 were scheduled for 6 hours. Initial run indices and commercial catch data were encouraging.

   b) By the 10 August meeting, commercial catch data became less encouraging and had not improved by 16 August. The Working Group and ADF&G agreed to manage more cautiously and only two more openings were scheduled in 2005 on 25 and 29 August.

c) During the August 24 meeting, the Working Group agreed to send a letter to the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding an application being considered for the development of oil and gas within the Holitna River drainage. The Working Group wished to point out the overwhelming importance of the Holitna River to subsistence hunting and fishing activities and the mounting evidence of that area's high level of production and contribution to overall Kuskokwim River salmon stocks and use by subsistence, sport, and commercial fisheries (Appendix G1).

d) The commercial fishery for coho salmon was discontinued on Thursday September 1 for the 2005 season following a full district opening.

7) The 2005 fall summary meeting was held on September 26, 2005. Little funding was available in 2005 for Working Group Member travel; therefore, the fall meeting was held as a teleconference (Appendix H1). The Working Group resolved to compose an additional statement recognizing the importance of the Holitna River basin to the health and vitality of the Kuskokwim River and the communities along it because of its substantial contribution to fisheries resources (Appendix I1).

2006 SEASON

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group met 10 times in calendar year 2006 regarding management of Kuskokwim River subsistence, commercial, and recreational salmon fisheries (Appendix E1). One meeting was held in May, 5 were held in June, 1 in July, 3 in August, and 1 in September. Prior to each meeting an agenda and information packet was assembled and distributed to Working Group members and other interested parties (Appendix C1). The following are highlights from these meetings:

1) A preseason meeting was conducted May 18 during which Working Group membership positions were filled, and presentations and discussions occurred regarding the 2006 Kuskokwim River Salmon Outlook and Management Strategy, escapement goals, and a summary of the spring 2006 Kuskokwim River Interagency meeting.

2) There were 6 Working Group meetings from June 2 to July 28.

3) The June 2 meeting focused on salmon run status. Reports from the ONC subsistence fishery monitoring project and BTF project indicated promising salmon runs, although it was too early in the run to make any definitive judgment. There was a consensus by ADF&G and the Working Group to maintain the subsistence fishing schedule.

4) During the June 15 meeting, a consensus was reached to liberalize the Kuskokwim River subsistence fishing schedule and open subsistence fishing 7 days per week.

   a) It was noted that indications from both the BTF index and the ONC inseason subsistence survey that Chinook salmon appeared to be late. This was attributed to a late break-up and cooler than average water temperatures during that period of time.

   b) During the period of time in which the subsistence fishing schedule was in effect, subsistence fishing was closed a total of 6 days downstream of Bogus Creek and 3 days between Bogus Creek and Chuathbaluk. Subsistence fishing was open 7 days per week without interruption upstream of Chuathbaluk.

5) Information presented at the June 20 Working Group meeting indicated that catches of Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon were improving in both the BTF and the subsistence

fishery. Water temperatures as recorded by the BTF had recently begun to rise. The processor representative expressed interest in initiating a commercial fishery as early as June 26. The Working Group chose to meet again on June 24 to reassess run indicators prior to making a decision about whether to open the commercial fishery.

6) During the June 24 meeting a consensus was achieved to schedule a 6 hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A on June 26 and an additional 6 hour opening in Subdistrict W-1B on June 27.

7) At the June 29 Working Group meeting the subsistence fisher representatives reported that most fishers had completed harvest of Chinook and chum salmon for the year.

   a) Cumulative catches of Chinook and sockeye salmon in the BTF remained behind those of other years with similar water levels, but were still above average. Cumulative catches of chum salmon were well above comparable years.

   b) Daily catches of Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon at the Kalskag fishwheels had increased substantially in recent days.

   c) Salmon passage at the weir projects appeared to be slow for that time of year when compared to historical data.

   d) Processors reported problems with airlift capacity to transport the commercial catch from commercial fishing periods the previous week. Processors informed that Working Group that airlift capacity problems were likely to continue in the foreseeable future. As a result, processors would discontinue operations for the 2006 chum and sockeye salmon directed fisheries. Fish buying operations would be suspended until the beginning of the coho salmon directed fishery in August.

8) The Working Group meeting on July 28 provided perspectives on the strength of Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon runs in 2006 and looked forward to the coho salmon directed commercial fishery.

   a) The BTF index for Chinook salmon was about average compared to years with similar water levels and escapement goals were achieved or exceeded. By July 28, BTF daily catches of Chinook had decreased to zero.

   b) Cumulative catches of chum and sockeye salmon in the BTF were the second highest on record for that date. Daily catches of sockeye salmon were steadily decreasing. Daily catches of chum salmon remained high for that time of year.

   c) Members reported that few subsistence fishers were making use of coho salmon at that time. Coho salmon had recently begun showing up in BTF catches and daily numbers were increasing.

   d) The Working Group chose to allow ADF&G the latitude to schedule commercial openings for coho salmon in District W-1 if run indices and ratios between chum and coho salmon within the BTF became favorable.

   e) Henry Lupie of Tuntutuliak was confirmed to the seat of Member at Large on the Working Group. Ron Simon, also of Tuntutuliak, was appointed alternate to the Member at Large seat.

9) On August 5, the Working Group reviewed run indices and data from commercial openings scheduled during the prior week.

   a) BTF catches of coho salmon were steadily increasing.

   b) Three 6 hour commercial openings had been conducted during the previous week in subdistricts W-1B (August 1), W-1A (August 3) and W-1B (August 4). Commercial catches were well below average for that time of year. Fishery participation was also well below historical highs for that time of year. Processors were happy with the volume and quality of coho salmon and interested in continuing with the fishery.

   c) The Working Group resolved to schedule a pair of 6 hour subdistrict openings to take place on Monday, August 7 and Tuesday, August 8 in subdistricts W-1A and W-1B respectively. The Working Group further decided to leave the scheduling of additional periods that week to the discretion of ADF&G managers if run strength warranted continued fishing.

10) Meetings held on August 12 and 19 were nearly identical in content and outcome.

   a) Catches of coho salmon in the BTF had recently improved.

   b) Length data from BTF, fishwheels, and weir projects and weight data from the commercial fishery all suggested that the size of coho salmon in 2006 was below average.

   c) Small relative catches of coho salmon in the BTF and commercial fisheries were inconsistent with good abundance demonstrated at weir projects and the Kalskag fishwheels.

   d) Commercial harvest and CPUE for coho salmon remained below average.

   e) Fishers reported better catches after switching to smaller mesh size gill nets.

   f) Processors continued to be pleased with the quality and volume of the fishery. Catches remained manageable with respect to airlift capacity.

   g) The Working Group resolved to allow ADF&G to continue to prosecute the fishery by scheduling further paired subdistrict openings for Monday and Tuesday of the following week with the possibility of further openings later in the week.

11) The final coho salmon commercial period of the 2006 season occurred on August 30.

2006 WORKING GROUP FALL MEETING

The Working Group held a postseason "Fall Meeting" in Bethel on September 28 and 29, 2006. There were presentations and discussion of highlights of the 2006 subsistence, commercial, and sport fishing seasons, as well as a summary of the Area M fishery. Highlights from this meeting follow:

1) The Working Group discussed the three regulatory proposals for the Kuskokwim Area scheduled to come before the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) in January of 2007. The proposals included (Appendix J1):

   a) **Proposal 155**: Amend 5 AAC 07.331 to allow salmon to be taken in District 1 with gillnets of up to eight or smaller mesh in the early part of the season (June 15 to July 1).

b) **Proposal 156**: Amend 5 AAC 07.365 to designate the length of fishing periods in Kuskokwim River commercial fishing District W-1 as follows:

   i) Fishing periods Subdistrict 1-B (below Bethel) will be 8 hours in length.
   ii) Fishing periods in Subdistrict 1-A subdistrict (above Bethel) will be 6 hours in length.

c) **Proposal 157**: under AS 16.05.251(a) (1) designate the Holitna River Basin from Gemuk Lake to the confluence of the Holitna and Kuskokwim Rivers as the Holitna Basin Fisheries Reserve.

2) The Working Group took positions on the above BOF proposals. The Working Group did not support Proposals 155 and 156. The Working Group supported Proposal 157 and resolved to draft a letter of support to be hand carried by a Working Group representative to the BOF.

3) The Working Group discussed the improved abundance of Kuskokwim River Chinook and chum salmon in recent years with reference to the "stock of concern" designations established for these species in 2001. The Working Group anticipated action by the BOF in January of 2007 regarding the stock of concern designations and improved abundance. The Working Group expected BOF action to affect the Kuskokwim River subsistence fishing schedule.

4) The Working Group also requested and received a presentation by a Department of Natural Resources representative on the status of mineral exploration and development within the Kuskokwim Area with specific reference to affects on fisheries resources. The presentation was followed by an animated question and answer session. The Working Group resolved to continue to research issues surrounding the affects of large scale industrial development on fisheries resources in the Kuskokwim Area in order to be an informed participatory body in the development process.

5) The Working Group discussed issues of funding, Working Group attendance at upcoming conferences and regulatory meetings, and Working Group representation from Kuskokwim River communities.

6) The majority of Working Group members participated in the "Fall Meeting" in person, including: Lamont Albertson, Bev Hoffman, James Charles, Greg Roczicka, Charlie Brown, Bob Aloysius, Henry Lupie, Iyana Gusty, Joe Hall, Vince Goddard, and Nick Petruska.

Travel and accommodations for the Working Group Fall Meeting were paid for by ADF&G through Working Group funding from OSM under FIS 06-307.

In 2006, Working Group Members participated in several additional meetings associated with policy, regulations, information and management of Kuskokwim River fisheries.

1. Ray Collins, Joe Hall, and Bob Aloysius participated in Spring Kuskokwim Interagency meeting in Anchorage.

2. LaMont Albertson, James Charles, Nick Petruska, Bob Aloysius, and Ray Collins participated in the Fall Kuskokwim Area Interagency meeting in Anchorage.

3. Several Working Group members are also members of federal Regional Advisory Committees. Working Group members with membership on these RACs include Bev

Hoffman, James Charles, Charlie Brown, Bob Aloysius, Mary Gregory, Ray Collins, and Carl Morgan.

Travel and accommodations for James Charles and Nick Petruska to attend the Fall Interagency Meeting were provided for by ADF&G with funding from OSM under FIS 06-307 and through state general funds.

OSM paid the travel costs for Yukon–Kuskokwim RAC and Western Interior RAC Working Group members Ray Collins and Bob Aloysius to attend the spring and Fall Interagency meetings using funds separate from FIS 06-307.

Plans were made for representatives to attend the January 2007 BOF meeting in Anchorage and the February 2007 Arctic–Yukon–Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative (AYKSSI) symposium in Anchorage using Working Group travel funds provided by ADF&G through funding from OSM under FIS 06-307 and through state general funds.

DISCUSSION

Residents of the Kuskokwim Area intend to be directly involved in management of the salmon fishery resource. This goal has been achieved through the inception of the Working Group process, which has been an annual event since its inception by the BOF in 1988. This process has been and remains successful in its attempt to bring together representatives from different groups of fishers, allowing them to express their views and take an active roll in fisheries policy and resource management.

Working Group representatives come from locations throughout the drainage and represent a broad range of interests. In general, Working Group members and fishers agree on the basic principles of conservation and use. There is agreement among all Working Group members that achieving escapement goals has the highest fisheries management priority followed by providing opportunity for subsistence fishers to meet their needs.

It has been recognized by all representatives that lower river fishers have access to a greater number of fish. The spawning populations of all Kuskokwim River salmon species must pass through the lower river on their way to inland spawning habitat. Run size is diminished as fish migrate up river and disperse from the mainstem Kuskokwim River to their respective spawning streams. Therefore, fishers located higher in drainage have fewer fish available for harvest.

Although often unpopular among subsistence fishers, there has been general agreement that the subsistence fishing schedule has been beneficial. The schedule is intended to allow salmon to pass through the lower river during subsistence fishery closures and spread lower river subsistence harvest out across the run to prevent overexploitation of specific stocks; while still providing opportunity for fishers to harvest salmon to meet their subsistence needs. However, analysis of Chinook salmon subsistence harvest trends has indicated that the schedule may have had a negligible effect on spreading out the harvest as intended.

The implementation of the subsistence fishing schedule seems to have had unforeseen impacts on traditional subsistence fishing practices. Although the actual harvest of salmon per household probably did not change significantly, through increased fishing effort on “open” days, fishers may have taken an equivalent or greater number of fish in a given week than they would have without the schedule in place. It is suspected that this increase or concentration of effort

prevented the desired effect of spreading harvest more uniformly across the run. Also, in an attempt to avoid the inconvenience of the subsistence schedule, fishers may have begun fishing earlier than had been normal, increasing pressure on earlier arriving fish. In either case, the subsistence fishing schedule may not have spread harvest out as intended and harvest timing may have been shifted toward the earlier portion of the run (T. Hamazaki, Commercial Fisheries Biometrician, ADF&G, Anchorage; personal communication).

Moreover, increasing abundance of Chinook and chum salmon in recent years may call the necessity of the subsistence fishing schedule into question. However, the subsistence fishing schedule could represent a useful management tool in the future during years of below average run abundance. The usefulness and efficiency of the schedule can be increased with an improved understanding of its effects on subsistence fishing behavior.

There has been some disagreement between fishers and ADF&G regarding interpretations of run status information and acceptance of policies and regulations. There has been controversy and disagreement among meeting participants as to whether established escapement goals are appropriate and if there is adequate opportunity provided to subsistence fishers relative to other uses. At least one Working Group member has expressed the opinion that Chinook salmon should be limited exclusively to the subsistence fishery. Not all fishers approve of the subsistence fishing schedule and they report that subsistence fishing closures break the rhythm of their subsistence harvest and disrupts fish camp activities. With the majority of subsistence fishers and the greatest access to fish in the lower river, middle and upper river fishers feel the subsistence fishing schedule should only be in effect in the lower river area.

Low commercial salmon prices during recent years have caused concern among some Working Group members. Some members believe the value of the commercial fishery is less than the value of an increase in nutrient input to the ecosystem by allowing an increased number of fish to reach the spawning streams. They further argue that the cost to commercial fishers to participate in the fishery is greater than the value of the catch. Commercial fishers disagree, saying that they need to participate in the commercial fishery to be able to afford a subsistence lifestyle and that it should be left to the individual fishers to determine if it is in their best interest to participate in the commercial fishery.

There has been significant improvement in the number and quality of fishery assessment projects implemented during the last few years. The Chinook salmon mark–recapture radiotelemetry project provides estimates of Chinook salmon upstream of the Aniak River. In 2006, this project was expanded to include the Aniak River through the implementation of a weir on the Salmon River (Aniak tributary) and additional mark–recapture activities. The Chinook salmon aerial survey program continues to be improved to assist in determining Chinook salmon distribution and abundance with escapement goals established from this information. In addition, improvements have been made in Chinook salmon genetic stock identification, which will eventually be useful to identify the stock of origin of harvested Chinook salmon. In 2005 and 2006, a radiotelemetry study of sockeye salmon has led to an improved understanding of the distribution and abundance of this species as it gains importance for both subsistence and commercial fishing in the Kuskokwim Area. In 2006, 8 weirs and one sonar project evaluated salmon escapements. The weirs assess escapement of all salmon species and the sonar project (Aniak River) estimates chum salmon escapement. These projects are well distributed geographically throughout the river drainage to allow evaluation of escapements spatially and temporally. The mainstem chum, sockeye, and coho salmon mark–recapture project at Kalskag

was completed in 2005 and has provided valuable information on salmon abundance and migration timing to specific tributary streams for each of the three species.

The ONC inseason subsistence harvest monitoring program in the lower river near Bethel provides qualitative run timing and relative abundance information allowing project findings to be incorporated into the management process. This information, in conjunction with the BTF project and commercial harvest catch rate information, provides an early season index of salmon abundance and run timing as fish pass through the lower river. The inseason subsistence monitoring process also provides an avenue for local user input in determining salmon run abundance and corresponding management strategies.

Mundy (1995) provided an independent evaluation of Kuskokwim River salmon research and monitoring titled "Recommendations for Strengthening the Cooperative Management Process of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group". He made 3 recommendations: 1) Develop detailed agreements and understandings on procedures to be followed during the season, and on the needs of the user groups, prior to each harvest season. Communicate the agreements and understandings by mailing to the villages and harvesters and other concerned parties; 2) Commission an annual postseason audit of how well the management program achieved the agreed upon objectives, including an analysis of how to improve attainment of the objectives in the next season; 3) Continue and accelerate the process of improving the quality of information and the rigor of the assumptions on which fishery management decisions are based. Improvements have been made toward strengthening the cooperative management process of the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group through incorporation of these recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS

Continued discussion through the Working Group Process between fishers from throughout the drainage and State and Federal agency representatives encourages dialogue between all parties. Fishers are informed of findings from salmon run assessment projects and given the tools to interpret the information. Agency personnel have a chance to hear fishers' points of view and gain by traditional knowledge and perspectives. All parties are able to share valuable information regarding the state and success of fishing activities at any given time or from an historical perspective. Through this process, agency and Working Group members reached consensus in fishery management actions taken during the 2005 and 2006 seasons.

Participation in the Working Group process requires a great deal of time from Working Group members and agency staff. Funding provided by FIS 06-307 was an essential part of enhancing the Working Group process. The funding provided by OSM allowed ADF&G staff to more effectively prepare for meetings through better and more frequent distribution of updated fishery status information in a standardized format. The funding also provided travel for Working Group members to participate in fishery meetings relevant to issues concerning Kuskokwim River fisheries, such as the postseason meeting in Bethel, Kuskokwim Area interagency meetings, participation in the Alaska BOF process, and attendance of the Arctic–Yukon–Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative symposium in 2006. Additional funds for ADF&G staff time in support of the Working Group process throughout the year was provided through state general funds. These additional funds provided a substantial match to the Working Group from OSM funding. The combined federal and state funds have further strengthened the Working Group process.

Participation by representatives in meetings located outside the drainage allowed for an exchange of information between Working Group representatives and fishery assessment project leaders and research planners and provided an opportunity for Working Group representatives to testify at regulatory meetings in support of Working Group positions. The relationship between Working Group members, project leaders, research planners, and policy makers needs to be fostered, as these interactions are critical to the Working Group process. This relationship ensures that stakeholders remain up-to-date on new information and maintain their direct involvement in the management of the fishery.

Agreements and understanding of the fishery management procedures are dictated by the policies and regulations that guide the management of the Kuskokwim River salmon fishery. To meet Dr. Mundy's recommendation of communicating this information with fishers, the information is distributed preseason as the annual outlook and management strategy. Information from the outlook and management strategy is included in articles submitted to local media and during some years, ads have been included in local newspapers to further inform fishers of fishery management strategies. During the 2006 season, agency staff and Working Group members participated in radio call in shows discussing management strategies, run assessment methodology, and project findings; answering questions and hearing concerns of area fishers.

Many of the recommendations made by Dr. Mundy have been acted upon to improve the quality of the information and the rigor of the assumptions that fishery management decisions are based upon. The test fish program has been further standardized (Bue and Martz 2006), a stock identification program has been initiated, a sockeye salmon assessment program has been implemented, escapement objectives have been established for coho salmon and an inseason subsistence monitoring program has been developed to assist in harvest management decision process. Additionally, many cooperative fishery assessment projects have been established between agencies and local organizations such as ONC, AVCP, KNA, CVRF, BSFA and the MNVC. These cooperative programs have gone a long way toward gaining local fisher acceptance for program support and project findings.

Although progress has been made toward strengthening the cooperative management process, efforts are ongoing and will require continued participation by area stakeholders. It will be essential to maintain the interaction of Working Group members with fishery managers, researchers, and policy makers. The task of strengthening the Working Group process and elevating it to its current status was made possible by funding provided by OSM for staff support, member travel, and communications through teleconference, FAX, and phone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group process should continue and be supported. Local residents want and need to be informed of area fishery status and issues and want to be involved in the management process. This intense interest comes from their dependence on fisheries resources for their sustenance, spiritual well being and in some cases income to afford participation in their subsistence life style. We recommend that the current process be maintained and the following actions be pursued:

1. The preseason meeting can be conducted by teleconference but every effort should be made to get Working Group members together in person post season to review management strategies and forecasts for the upcoming season and discuss relevant issues.
2. ADF&G staff and Working Group efforts should be maintained in informing area fishers of fishery status and management strategies through discussion, news releases, newspaper articles, and radio talk shows of fishery management.
3. The current method of distributing pre-meeting information packets to Working Group members and interested parties by FAX or email should be maintained. When possible, the summary of the most recent meeting should be distributed with the information packet for the next meeting.
4. Resources should be maintained to provide Working Group members with travel funds for participation in regulatory and policy meetings with the BOF. Their involvement in this process is essential in developing and reaching understanding and agreement on regulatory fisheries issues in the Kuskokwim Area.
5. Travel funds should be maintained for Working Group member participation in other fishery related meetings associated with the Kuskokwim Area to allow them to contribute and stay informed of management and research planning programs, and regulatory issues.
6. Efforts must continue to select and maintain informed alternates for each Working Group seat. Currently the upriver elder representative has no alternates. Even some seats that have ample representation are often unfilled at meetings. It is important to consider the possibility of scheduling conflicts for meetings and to gauge the interest and commitment of prospective members in order to ensure balanced representation from across the Kuskokwim River drainage for each meeting.
7. Currently, there is some concern about the geographic designations of the subsistence fishery seats (Lower River, Middle river, Upper River, Headwaters). To ensure that the concerns of Kuskokwim River communities are well represented, the Working Group should review these geographic designations and, if it sees fit, make changes to the structure of subsistence representation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group members, ADF&G area and Regional fishery staff, USFWS Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta Refuge staff and OSM staff, Regional Advisory Council members and those individuals and groups that have participated in this open and voluntary cooperative management process. Thanks to those that reviewed this document to the Working Group process: Richard Cannon, OSM, Fisheries Information Services, USFWS.

Improvements have been made toward strengthening the cooperative management process of the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group through funding provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management in support of project FIS 06-307. The funding provided by OSM in 2006 allowed dedicated staff to more effectively prepare for meetings by providing complete and frequent distribution of updated fishery status information in a standardized format. The funding also allowed travel for Working Group

members to participate in fishery meetings located outside the drainage. Success of he Working Group relies on funding for material preparation, communication and travel to maintain the interaction of Working Group members with fishery managers, fishery project leaders, research planners, and policy makers.

From 2002 to 2004, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, provided $130,900 ($52,200 annually) in funding support to ADF&G for the Working Group Support project (FIS 01-116) through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring program, under OSM Agreement Number 701812J442, ADF&G Cooperative Agreement Number 02-086.

Beginning in 2006 (through 2008), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, will provide $97,154 ($32,385 annually) in funding support to ADF&G for the Inseason Support for Cooperative Management of the Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fishery project (FIS 06-307) through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring program, under OSM Agreement Number 701812J620, ADF&G Cooperative Agreement Number 06-093.

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FIGURE

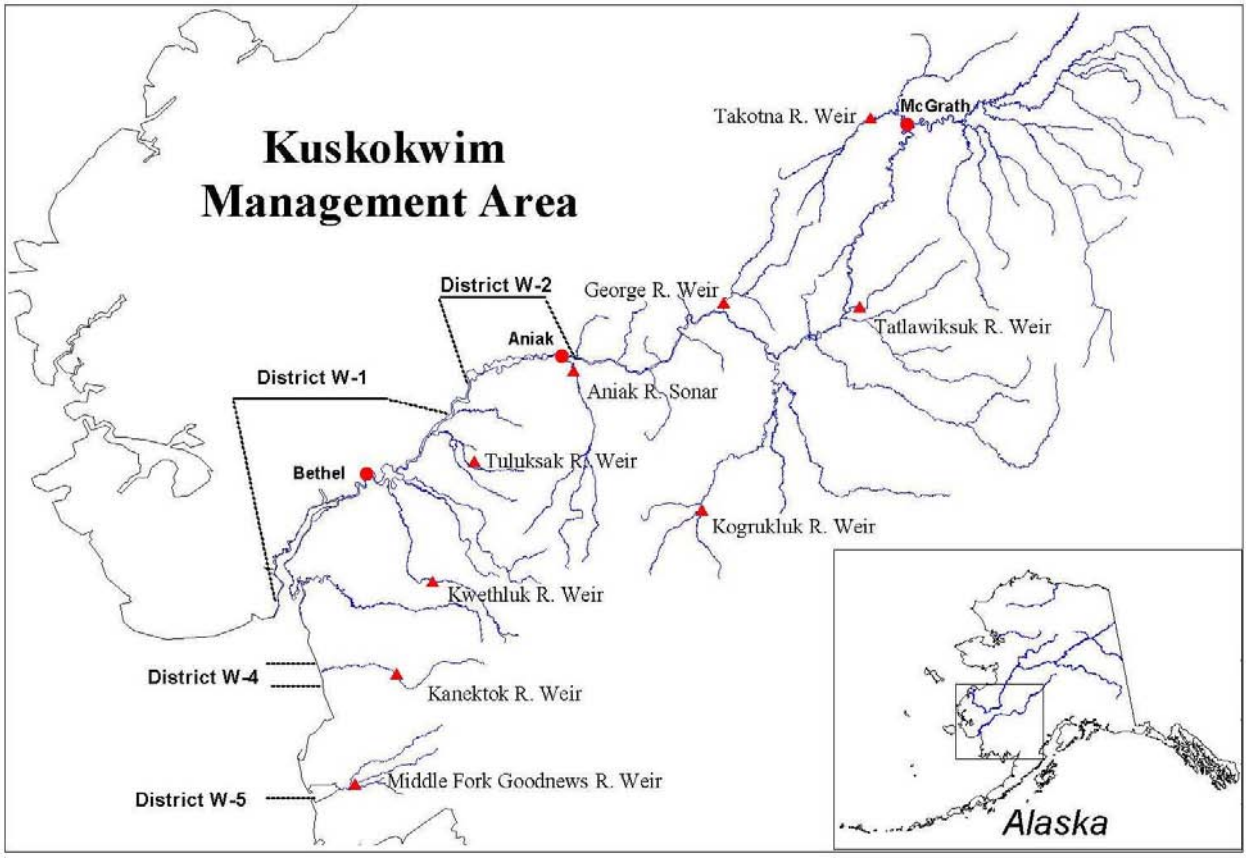

Figure 1.–Kuskokwim Management Area.

APPENDIX A

BY-LAWS OF THE

KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

PURPOSE

To provide local fishers and other users with an avenue for being directly involved in the management of their fishery. The goal is for all parties to work together to reach a consensus on management of the fishery. Final emergency order authority continues to rest with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

RULES OF CONDUCT

Meetings will be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order. The sequence of meetings is as follows:

I. Call to order (by chair)

II. Roll Call (by chair)

III. Invocation

IV. Approval of Minutes

V. Approval of Agenda

VI. People to be heard

VII. Continuing Business

A. Reports

1. False Pass Fishery
2. Processor Report
3. Traditional Native Fishery Knowledge
4. Subsistence Reports
5. Test Fisheries
6. Commercial Catch
7. Escapement Projects
   (sonar, towers, weirs)
8. Aerial Surveys

-continued-

9. Weather

B. Recommendation

C. Motion for Discussion and Action

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

X. Meeting Action Announcement

XI. Date, Time, and Place of next meeting

XII. Adjournment

(This sequence may be changed at the discretion of the Group)

Continuing Business reports may not exceed 3 minutes in length, excluding questions and answers.

Under the 'People to be heard' agenda item the public would be provided an opportunity to discuss only topics or items which are **not** already listed as specific agenda items. A member of the public may also ask the Group to place an issue on the agenda.

Unlike other institutions or committees, the Working Group operates on a consensus basis. A simple majority vote of the members is not sufficient to pass a motion. For the purposes of the Group all motions must pass by a consensus of the members present at the meeting. If 7 (seven) or less of the members are present, then consensus is defined as a situation wherein either all voting members vote "yea" or all voting members vote "yea" except for one "nay" vote. If 8 (eight) or more of the members are present, then consensus is defined as a situation wherein either all voting members vote "yea" or all voting members vote "yea" except for two "nay" votes. Note that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game does not have voting status on motions concerning the setting of commercial openings.

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ARTICLE I, OFFICE

The principal office of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) shall be located in the City of Bethel, Alaska 99559.

The current address of the principal office is, P.O. Box 1467, Bethel, Alaska 99559. The physical address is 570 4th Avenue.

ARTICLE II, MEMBERS

Section 1. Members: The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall have 13 member organizations or constituencies. These members represent: Elders (Upriver, Downriver) (2), Subsistence Fishermen (Lower River, Middle River, Upriver, and Headwaters) (4), Processors (1), Commercial Fishermen (1), Sport Fishers (1), Member at Large (1), Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Committees (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior) (2), and the Department of Fish & Game (1). Each member of the Working Group will designate a representative and an alternate in the event the representative is unable to attend a meeting. In the case where more than one person is nominated to represent a member organization or constituency, the Working Group will appoint one of the nominees to represent the member organization or constituency.

Section 2. Annual Meeting:

An annual meeting of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group may be held in Bethel during the month of March at the call of the Co-Chairs. The purpose of the meeting will be to conduct any unfinished administrative functions that the Working Group needs to complete for the following year.

Section 3. Special Meetings:

Special meetings of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group may be called by the Co-Chairs.

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Section 4. Notice of Meetings:

The Department of Fish & Game will be responsible for informing the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group members of the time, place and date of any meetings. Notification of meetings to the Working Group will be not less than 48 hours (when possible) or more than 30 days in advance.

Section 5. Quorum:

In order for a meeting of the Working Group to be held and for actions taken at a meeting to be legitimate, it is necessary for there to be a quorum at a meeting, that is at least 7 of the 13 member constituencies must be represented.

If a quorum of the full committee is not present, business may be conducted in executive session. The executive committee is composed of at least 5 representatives: one Co-Chair, any two representatives of the following member groups; Member at Large, Processors, Commercial Fisherman, and any two representatives of the following member groups; Lower, Middle, Upriver and Headwaters Subsistence, Federal RAC, Sport Fisher.

ARTICLE III. REPRESENTATIVES

Section 1. Working Group:

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall be comprised of 13 representatives from the areas described in Article II, Section 1.

Section 2. General Powers:

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall make recommendations to the Department of Fish & Game for the purposes of managing the salmon fisheries on the Kuskokwim River after subsistence and commercial catch, test fishery, weir, tower and sonar reports and other information are provided to the group.

Section 3. Voting Rights:

Each Working Group member shall be entitled to one vote. Alternates designated by the member in writing shall also be entitled to one vote in the absence of that member's representative. Members may abstain from voting on any motion.

-continued-

The Elder member shall designate any respected Elder to serve as their alternate.

Working Group members must hear all the Continuing Business reports to vote on a motion to set commercial openings

Section 4. Resignation:

Any member or representative may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to a Co-Chair of the Working Group. The resignation must give the Working Group at least 4 weeks notification so that a new member or representative may be appointed.

Section 5. Vacancies:

A vacancy on the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, forfeiture or otherwise, may be filled by the Working Group from nominations by member groups for the remainder of the term.

Section 6. Forfeit, participation or removal:

A. FORFEIT. The Working Group will give written notification, by certified mail, to any member organization, their representative and alternate whose seat has not been represented for 2 consecutive meetings that their membership in the Working Group will be forfeited if the seat is not represented by the following meeting. Whereas, a member's failure to be represented at a meeting is excused by the Working Group, as appropriate, such failure shall not be considered an absence within this section.

B. PARTICIPATION. No representative will be allowed to participate in a Working Group meeting who is deemed to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

C. REMOVAL. A representative may be removed from their seat on the Working Group for cause and must be provided the opportunity for a hearing before the Working Group. A representative may be removed for cause for any reason allowed, including but not limited to, conviction of a felony, gross misconduct, violation of their trust to the Working Group as a representative, or harassment of any kind to the other representatives of the Working Group.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS OF THE WORKING GROUP

Section 1. Officers:

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall elect Co-Chairs for the

-continued-

purpose of conducting meetings. The Co-Chairs will be elected annually at the first meeting occurring after March 1st. The Working Group shall elect or appoint other officers as deemed necessary. An officer of the Working Group may not hold more than one position. The Co-Chairs must be official representatives of the Working Group.

Section 2. Terms of Office:

Each representative of the Working Group shall be elected or appointed every 2 years. A representative shall hold their position until their successor has been duly elected or appointed and has been qualified

Section 3. Co-Chair:

A Co-Chair of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall preside at all meetings of the Working Group.

Section 4. Other Committees:

The Co-Chairs shall have the authority to appoint representatives to serve on committees as deemed necessary. Any representative appointed to a committee may be removed in the best interest of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group.

ARTICLE V. DEFINITIONS

1. **Member.** The member organizations or constituencies of the Working Group as listed in Article II, Section 1.

2. **Alternate.** An individual designated to act in the place of a member or representative unable to attend a meeting.

3. **Representative.** Person designated by a Working Group member organization or constituency to represent that member organization or constituency at Working Group meetings.

4. **District W-1.** The Lower Kuskokwim River consists of the Kuskokwim River from a line between Apokak Slough and Popokamiut, upstream to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located about eight miles above the Tuluksak River.

-continued-

5. **District W-2.** The middle Kuskokwim River consists of the Kuskokwim River from ADF&G regulatory markers located at the upstream entrance to the second slough on the west bank downstream from Kalskag to the regulatory markers at Chuathbaluk.

6. **Elder.** Any respected Elder that resides within the Kuskokwim Area.

7. **Headwaters Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage from McGrath upstream to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.

8. **Upriver Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage above Chuathbaluk.

9. **Middle River Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage from Lower Kalskag to Chuathbaluk within District W-2.

10. **Lower River Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage from Eek to Tuluksak within District W-1.

11. **Processor.** Representatives that own or operate commercial salmon buying and/or processing businesses within District W-1 and W-2.

12. **Member at Large.** Representatives that are Area residents selected by the Working Group for their knowledge of, appreciation for, and experience with Kuskokwim River fisheries.

13. **Federal Regional Advisory Council.** Representatives that are current members of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Advisory Councils and reside in the Kuskokwim Area.

14. **Commercial Fishermen.** Kuskokwim commercial fishing permit holder or crew member, supported by commercial fishing permit holders who fish primarily within Districts W-1 and W-2.

15. **Sport Fisher.** Representatives that actively participate in sports fishing within the Kuskokwim River drainage.

-continued-

16. **Alaska Department of Fish and Game.** Representatives that are presently employed with ADF&G in Bethel. This position is an associate member and has no voting powers but has the authority to veto recommendations for commercial fishing periods from the Working Group. Final emergency order authority continues to rest with the ADF&G.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENT TO BY-LAWS

These by-laws may be altered, amended or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted by consensus of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group representatives present at any regular or special meeting, if at least thirty (30) days written notice is given by certified mail, phone call, or intention to alter, amend or appeal or to adopt new by-laws at such meeting.

APPENDIX B

Appendix B1.–Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group Representation.

Effective September 29, 2004		
Organization	**Member**	**Alternate**
Down River Elder	Peter Joseph Sr.	Peter Miller
Upriver Elder	Iyana Gusty	
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	Greg Roczicka
Middle R. Subsistence	Nathan Underwood	Dwayne Hoffman
Upper R. Subsistence	Evelyn Thomas	
Processor	Vince Goddard	Kelly Welch
Member at Larger	James Charles	Fritz Charles
Y K Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	Mary Gregory
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	Steven White
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	Bev Hoffman

Effective September 26, 2005		
Organization	**Member**	**Alternate**
Down River Elder	Peter Joseph Sr.	Peter Miller
Upriver Elder	Iyana Gusty	
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	Greg Roczicka
Middle R. Subsistence	Wayne Morgan	Dwayne Hoffman
		Nathan Underwood
		Calvin Simeion
		Dave Cannon
Upper R. Subsistence	Evelyn Thomas	Pete Mellick
		Sophie Gregory
Headwaters Subsistence		
Processor	Vince Goddard	Kelly Welch
	Joe Hall	
Member at Larger	James Charles	Fritz Charles
Y K Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	Mary Gregory
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	Sam Alexi
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	Bev Hoffman

-continued-

Effective September 29, 2006		
Organization	**Member**	**Alternate**
Down River Elder	James Charles	Peter Miller
Upriver Elder	Iyana Gusty	
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	Greg Roczicka
Middle R. Subsistence	Wayne Morgan	Dwayne Hoffman
		Nathan Underwood
		Calvin Simeion
		Dave Cannon
Upper R. Subsistence	Evelyn Thomas	Pete Mellick
		Sophie Gregory
Headwaters Subsistence	Nick Petruska	Nick Alexia Sr.
Processor	Vince Goddard	Steve Sathers
	Joe Hall	Perry Hendricks
		Jim Sartelli
Member at Larger	Henry Lupie	Ron Simon
Y K Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	Mary Gregory
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	Sam Alexi
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	Carl Morgan
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	Bev Hoffman

22-Mar-05 Pete Mellick of Sleetmute named as alternate to the Upriver Subsistence seat. Carl Morgan of Aniak was named as alternate to the Middle River Subsistence seat.

25-May-05 Sam Alexi of Eek named as alternate to the Commercial Fisher seat. Working Group agrees to allow multiple alternates to improve working Group attendance. Sophie Gregory named as second alternate to the Upriver Subsistence seat.

15-Jun-05 Wayne Morgan of Aniak named to the Middle River Subsistence seat. Nathan Underwood, Dwayne Hoffman, Calvin Simeon, and Dave Cannon, all of Aniak, named as alternates to the Middle River Subsistence seat.

22-Jun-05 Working Group members agree to allow Kuskokwim River commercial processors CVS and IFP to share the Processors seat on the Working group.

26-Sep-05 Nick Petruska of Nikolai nominated to the newly created Headwaters Subsistence seat.

-continued-

18-May-06	Nick Petruska of Nikolai named to the newly created Headwaters Subsistence seat.
02-Jun-06	Nick Alexia Sr. of Nikolai named as alternate to the seat of Headwater Subsistence. Working Group agreed to allow Processors to hold Processor seat voting rights at alternate meetings as was done in 2005. Steve Sathers, Perry Hendricks and Jim Sartelli were named as alternates to the seat of Processor on the Working Group.
20-Jun-06	James Charles of Tuntutuliak named as to the Downriver Elder seat.
29-Jun-06	Henry Lupie of Tuntutuliak named as to the seat of Member at Large. Ron Simon of Tuntutuliak named as alternate to the seat of Member at Large.

APPENDIX C

Appendix C1.–Example of Working Group agenda and information packet, August 5, 2006.

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group
IN-SEASON AGENDA FORM

Teleconference Operator 1-800-235-0684

Date: August 5, 2006 Time: 10:00 a.m. Meeting Place: Bethel Fish and Game Office

CALL TO ORDER: **Greg Roczicka** 10:04 am
Chairperson Time

ROLL CALL:

Upriver Elder: Iyana Gusty
Downriver Elder: James Charles
Commercial Fisher:
Lower River Subsistence: Mike Williams
Middle River Subsistence:
Upper River Subsistence:
Headwaters Subsistence: Nick Petruska
Processor: Vince Goddard
Member at Large:
Sport Fisher: Lamont Albertson
Western Interior RAC:
Y-K Delta RAC: Bob Aloysius
ADF&G: John Linderman

INVOCATION: James Charles
APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Greg Roczicka
PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: _____
COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS: _____

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Subsistence Reports:
   a. Lower River:
   b. ONC Inseason Subsistence:
   c. Middle River:
   d. Upper River:
   e. Headwaters:
2. Overview of 2006 Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment projects:
   a. Bethel Test fish
   b. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other
   c. Weather
3. Processor Report:
4. Commercial Catch Report:
5. Sport Fish Report:
6. Area M Report:
7. Recommendation:
8. Motion for Discussion and Action:
9. Meeting Action Announcement:

OLD BUSINESS: Working Group vacancies: The positions of alternates to the Upriver Elder Downriver Elder on the Working Group are currently unfilled.

NEW BUSINESS: Date selection for the Working Group Fall Meeting.

TIME, DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:

_____
Time Date Place

ADJOURNMENT TIME _____

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Historical Summary, ONC Inseason Subsistence Catch Reports

Summary of Subsistence Salmon Information Collected by ONC Technicians[a]

	Week	Number of Families			Chinook salmon[b]			Chum salmon[b]			Sockeye salmon[b]		
Year	Ending	Inter-viewed	Fishing	Not Fishing	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
2001	Jun 09	16	16	0	6	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jun 16	39	ND	ND	18	15	6	1	19	15	13	24	1
	Jun 23	35	ND	ND	27	7	1	0	15	20	24	11	0
	Jun 30	40	25	15	8	7	8	5	12	8	19	6	0
	Jul 07	44	7	37	0	1	5	4	1	1	0	5	2
	Jul 14	44	6	38	0	0	4	4	2	0	0	0	4
2002	Jun 08	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 15	27	23	4	21	2	0	3	8	7	3	11	3
	Jun 22	33	25	8	17	5	3	12	9	3	2	10	10
	Jun 29	34	22	12	16	6	0	21	0	0	0	3	16
	Jul 06	34	5	29	0	2	3	3	2	0	0	0	5
	Jul 13	36	10	26	0	3	5	8	0	0	0	0	8
2003	Jun 07	18	9	9	7	2	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jun 14	33	24	9	22	2	0	0	2	0	0	3	0
	Jun 21	48	32	14	30	2	1	1	0	0	7	18	3
	Jun 28	50	34	16	30	4	0	3	9	13	27	7	0
	Jul 05	45	21	24	16	5	0	8	13	0	16	5	0
	Jul 12	46	14	32	0	12	2	13	1	0	0	12	2
2004	Jun 05	31	10	21	6	4	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jun 12	41	37	4	27	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jun 19	35	31	4	23	8	0	4	27	0	4	27	0
	Jun 26	43	31	12	19	12	0	24	7	0	5	22	4
	Jul 03	44	22	22	3	17	0	10	10	0	0	13	7
	Jul 10	44	13	31	0	10	0	8	2	0	0	4	6
2005	Jun 06	34	12	22	0	12	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jun 11	39	26	13	20	6	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jun 18	48	42	6	36	6	0	14	28	0	31	11	0
	Jun 25	48	34	14	25	5	0	19	15	0	28	6	0
	Jul 02	32	2	30	3	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0
	Jul 09	22	2	20	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
2006	Jun 03	22	0	22	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jun 10	32	19	13	6	13	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
	Jun 17	36	6	30	18	12	0	18	12	0	16	14	0
	Jun 25	48	43	5	34	9	0	39	4	0	8	24	11
	Jul 02	46	14	32	3	11	0	10	4	0	6	8	0
	Jul 09	38	8	30	0	8	0	2	6	0	3	5	0
	Jul 17	26	5	21	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0

[a] Only reports from the month of June and the first two weeks of July were used for comparison between years.

[b] Responses from the question: "Compared with this time in a "Normal" year, how were catch rates for salmon this week"?

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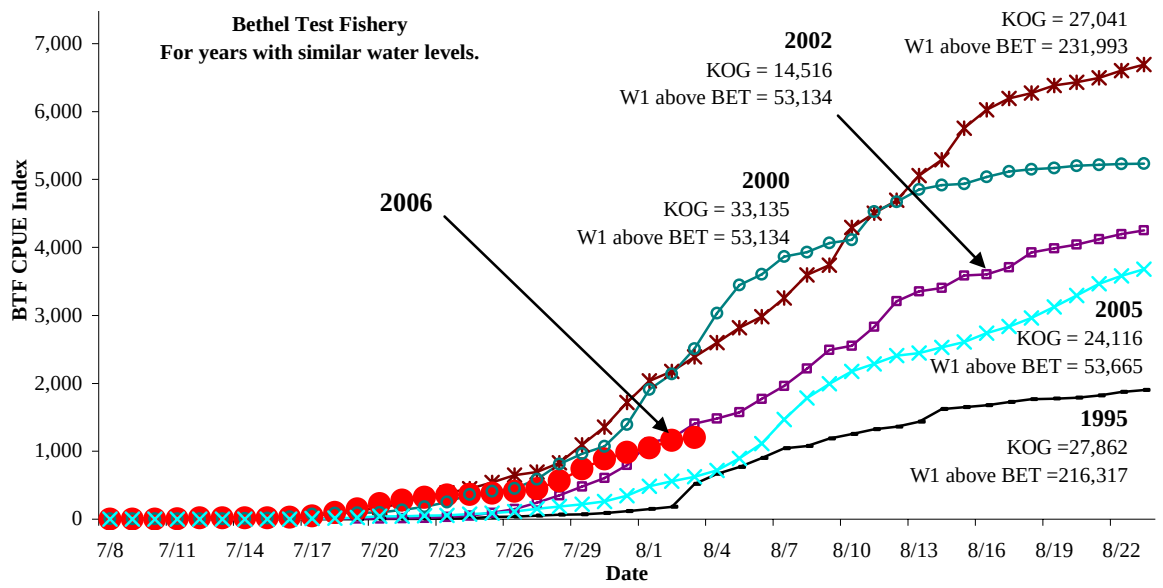
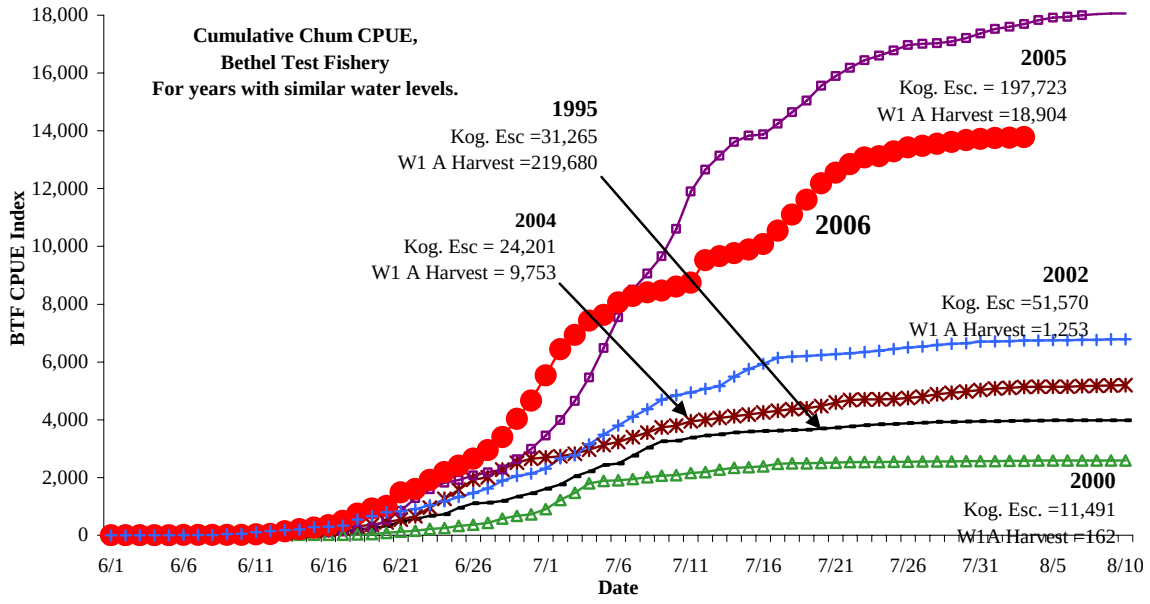
Bethel Test Fishery, Coho salmon



Bethel Test Fish Chum Salmon



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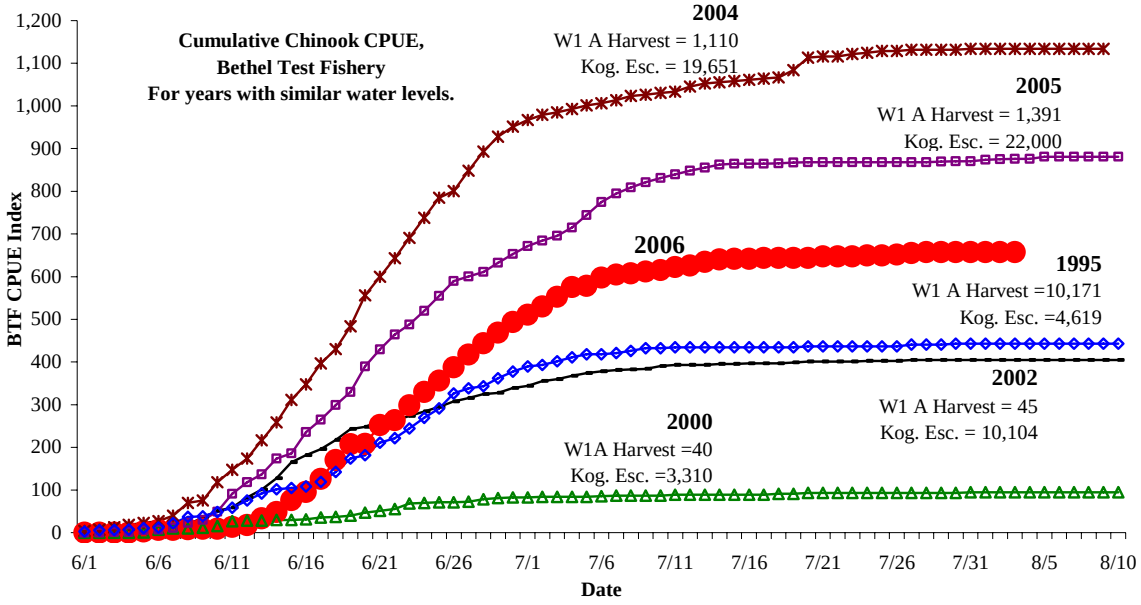
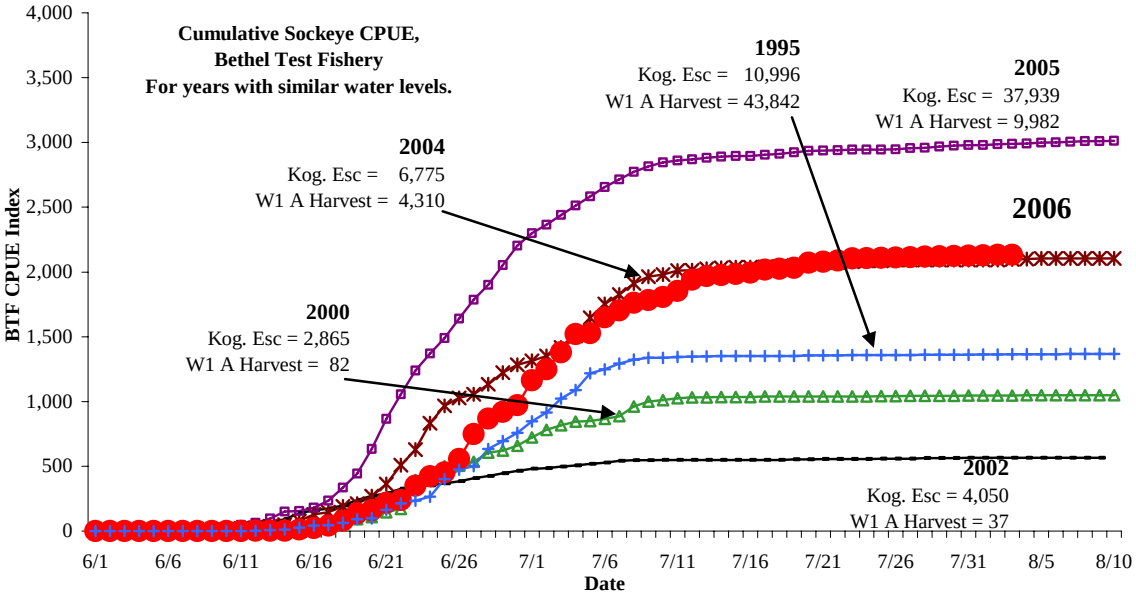
Bethel Test Fish Chinook Salmon



Bethel Test Fish Sockeye Salmon



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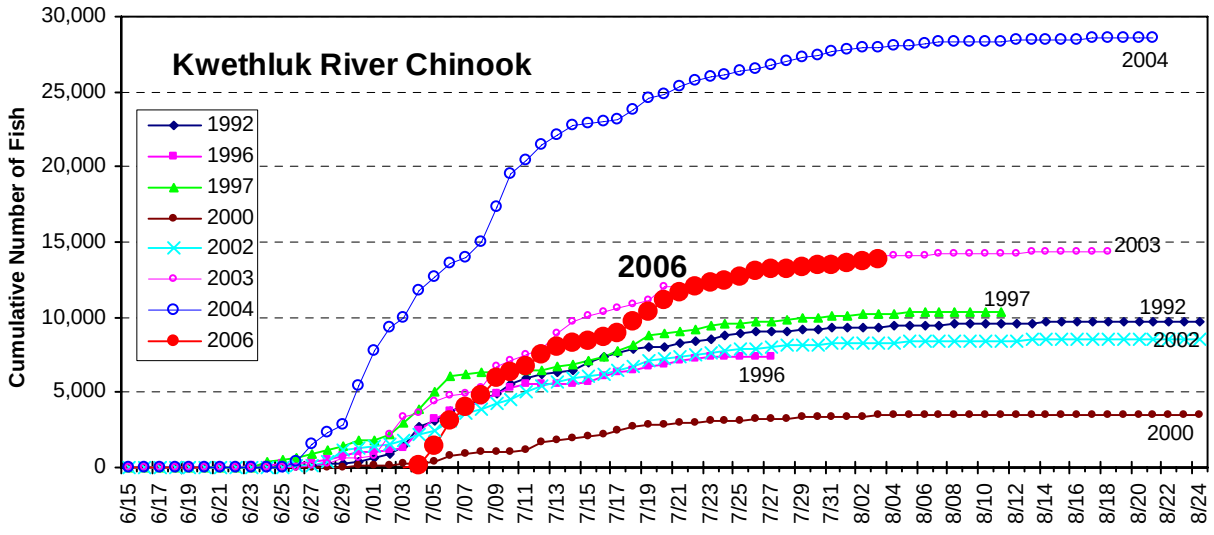
Escapement Monitoring

Kalskag fish wheel catches, as an index of relative salmon abundance.
(Only inclusive of fish wheel catches from the North Bank #1 and South Bank fish wheels)

Date	Chinook Salmon Cumulative		Sockeye Salmon Cumulative		Chum Salmon Cumulative		Coho Salmon Cumulative	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
29-Jul	613	917	2,868	4,189	17,127	21,114	224	1,007
30-Jul	616	921	2,913	4,209	17,456	21,422	249	1,120
31-Jul	619	926	2,972	4,223	17,771	21,818	324	1,247
1-Aug	623	931	3,044	4,237	18,158	22,163	406	1,374
2-Aug	625	939	3,090	4,258	18,396	22,486	473	1,597
3-Aug	630		3,163		18,784		556	
4-Aug	636		3,230		19,273		679	
5-Aug	642		3,301		19,778		828	
6-Aug	646		3,349		20,104		957	

Chinook Salmon Weirs



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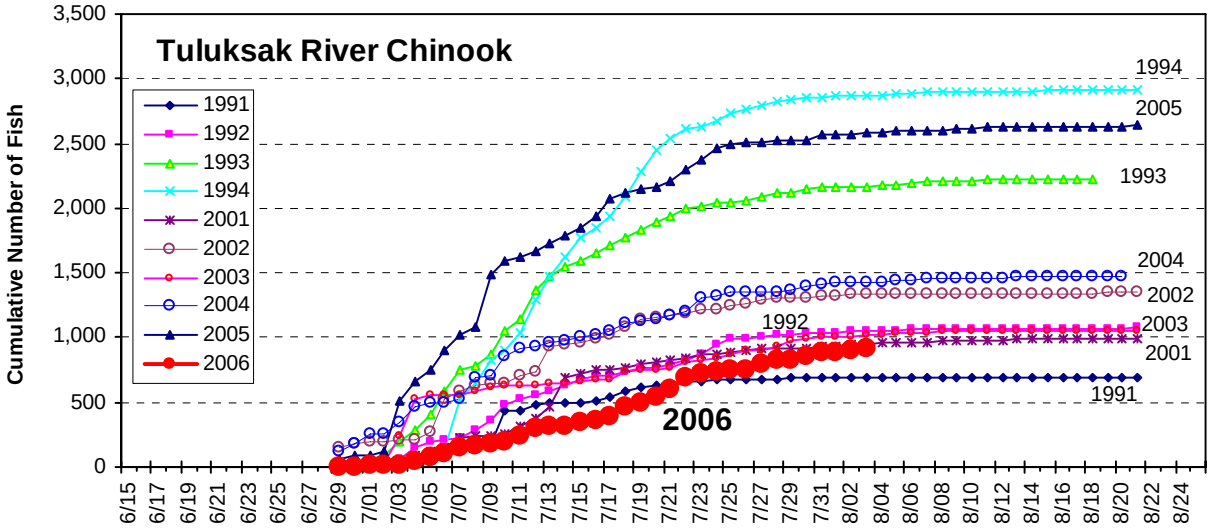
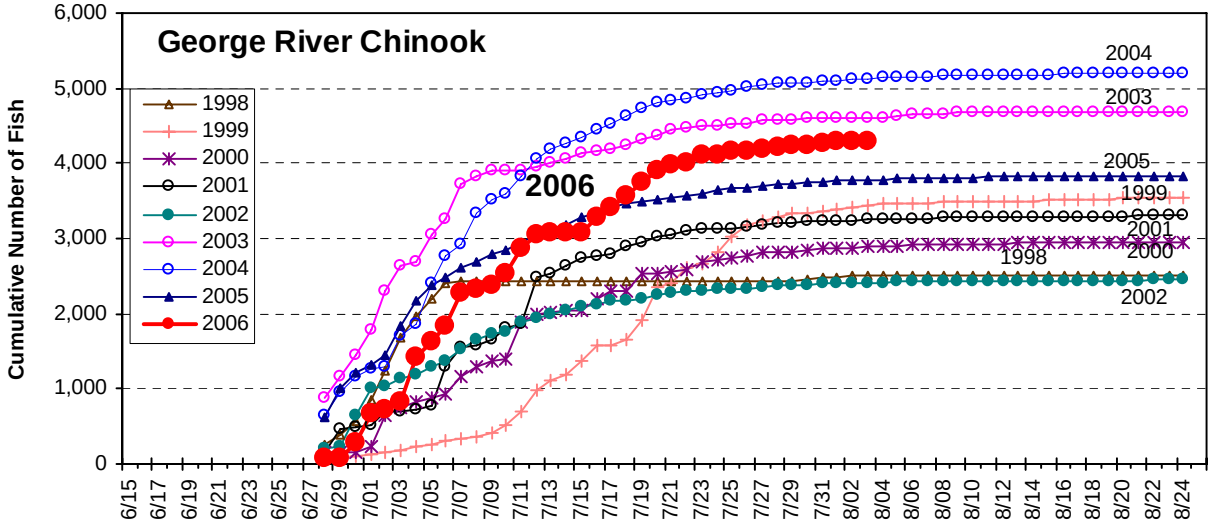

Tuluksak River Chinook
Cumulative Number of Fish
1991
1992
1993
1994
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
1994
2005
1993
2004
2002
1992
2003
2001
1991
2006


George River Chinook
Cumulative Number of Fish
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2004
2003
2006
2005
1999
2001
2000
1998
2002

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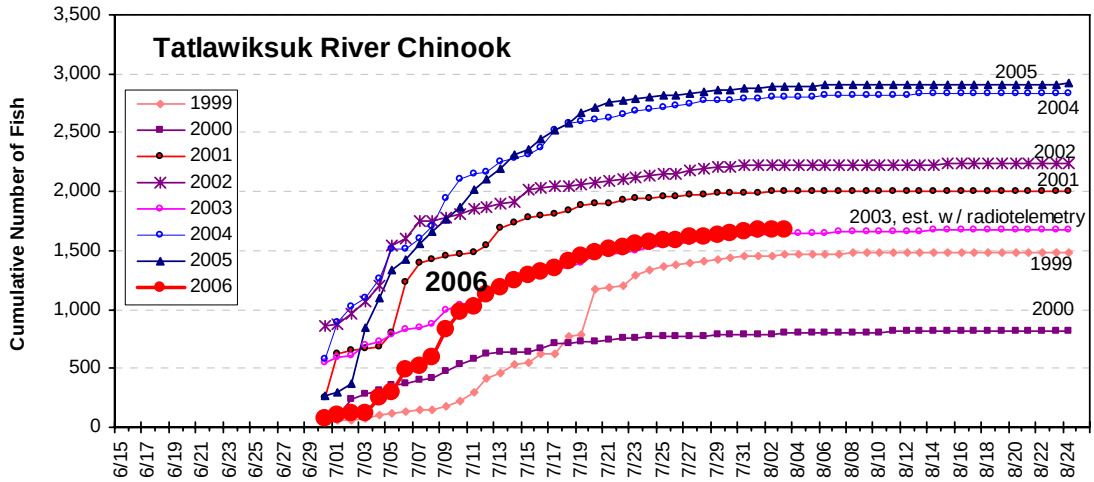
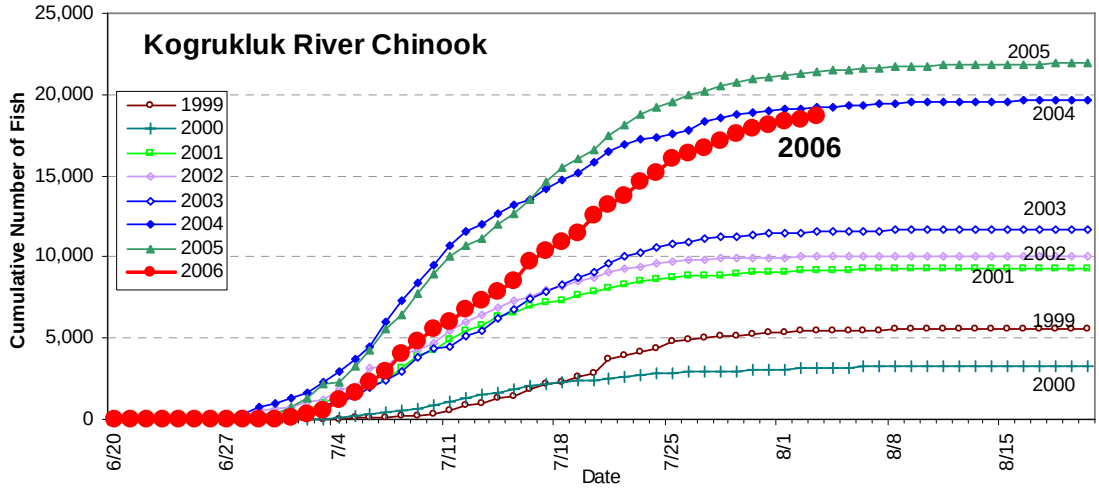
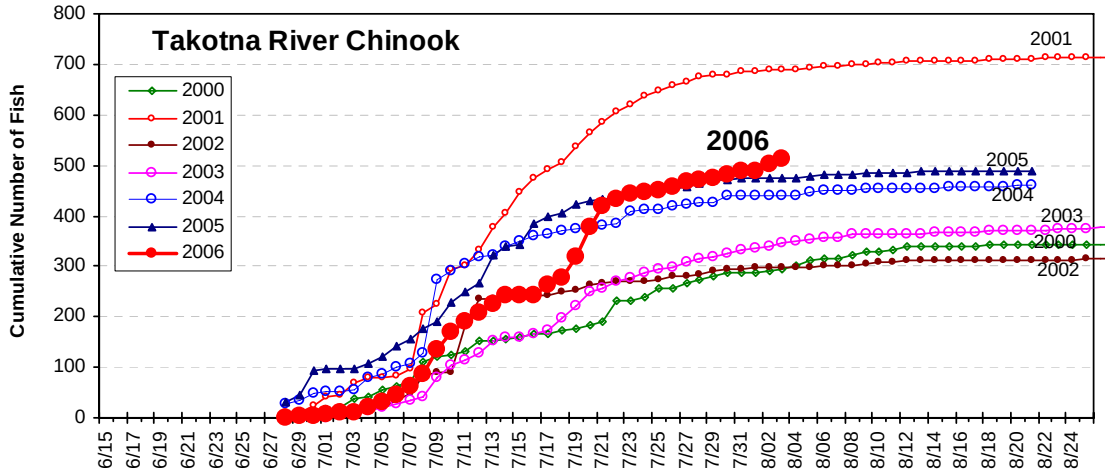

Tatlawiksuk River Chinook
Cumulative Number of Fish
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2005
2004
2002
2001
2003, est. w / radiotelemetry
1999
2000
2006


Kogrukluk River Chinook
Cumulative Number of Fish
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2005
2004
2006
2003
2002
2001
1999
2000
Date


Takotna River Chinook
Cumulative Number of Fish
2000
2001
2002
2003
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2005
2006
2001
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2005
2004
2003
2000
2002

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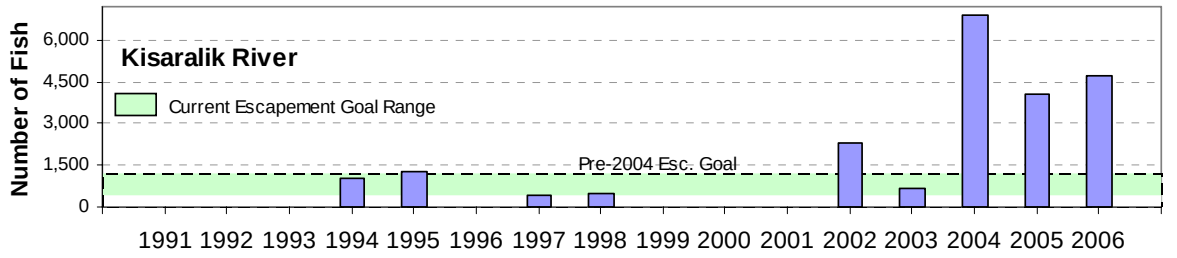
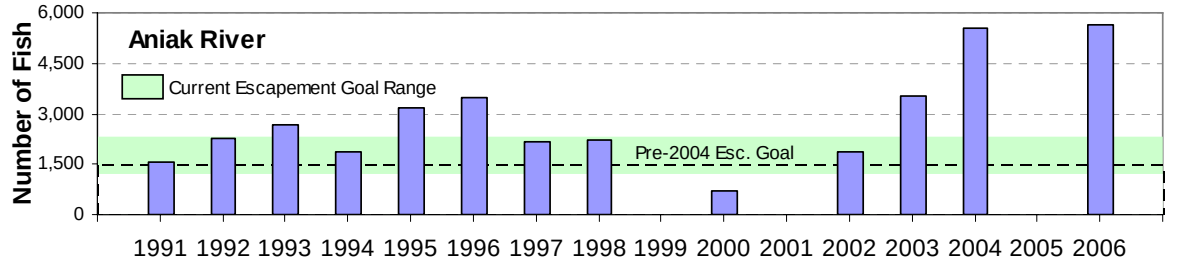
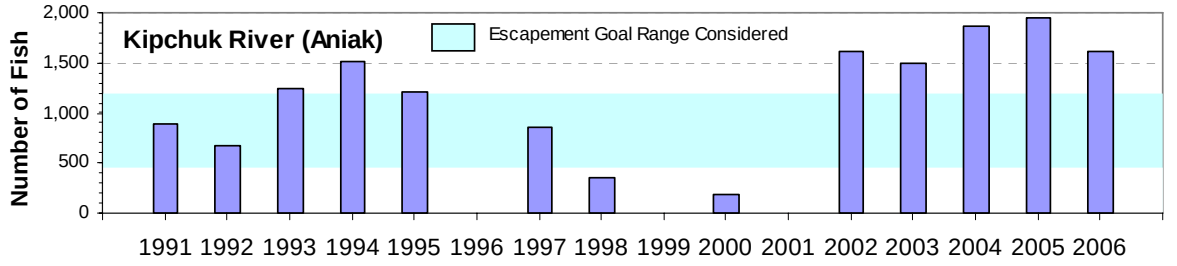
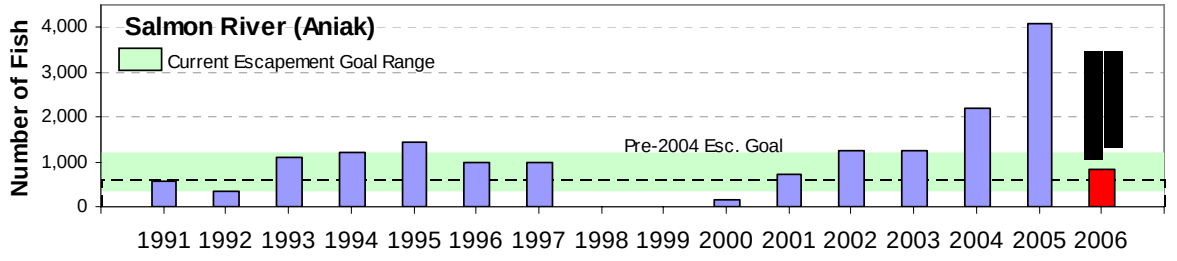
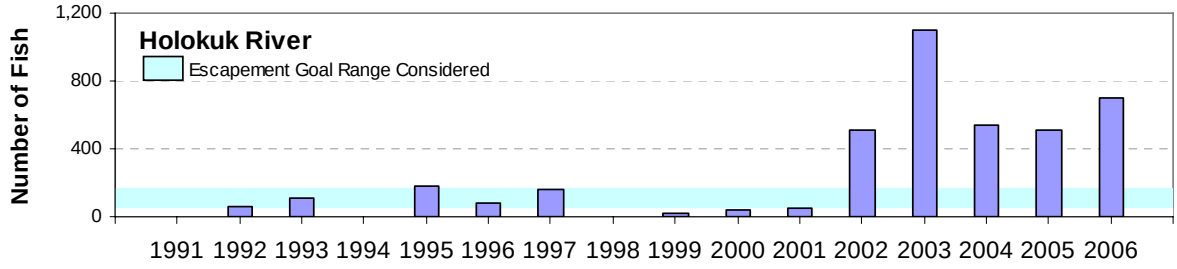
Chinook Salmon Aerial Surveys











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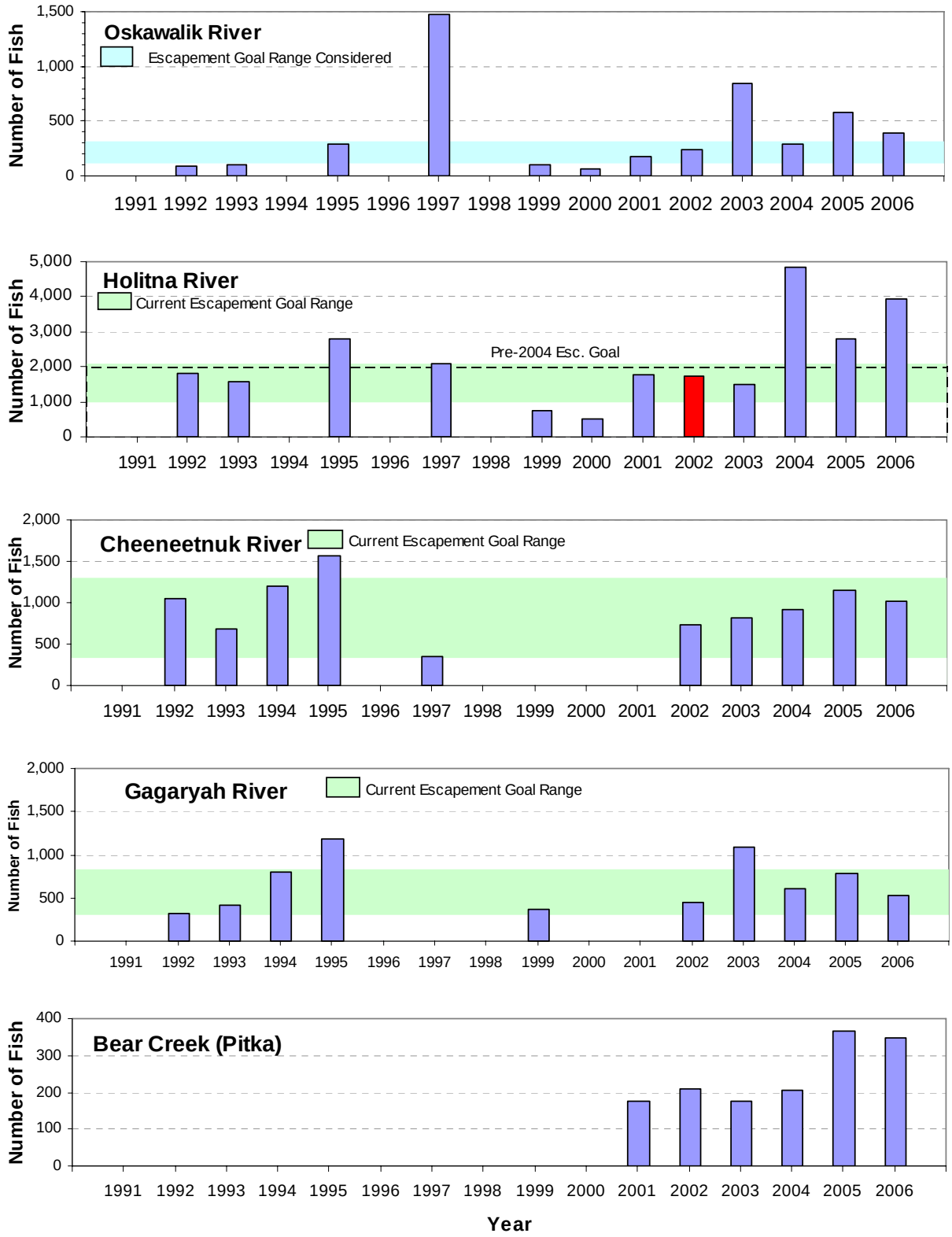
Oskawalik River
Escapement Goal Range Considered
Number of Fish
1,500
1,000
500
0
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006
Holitna River
Current Escapement Goal Range
Pre-2004 Esc. Goal
Number of Fish
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006
Cheeneetnuk River
Current Escapement Goal Range
Number of Fish
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006
Gagaryah River
Current Escapement Goal Range
Number of Fish
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006
Bear Creek (Pitka)
Number of Fish
400
300
200
100
0
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006
Year

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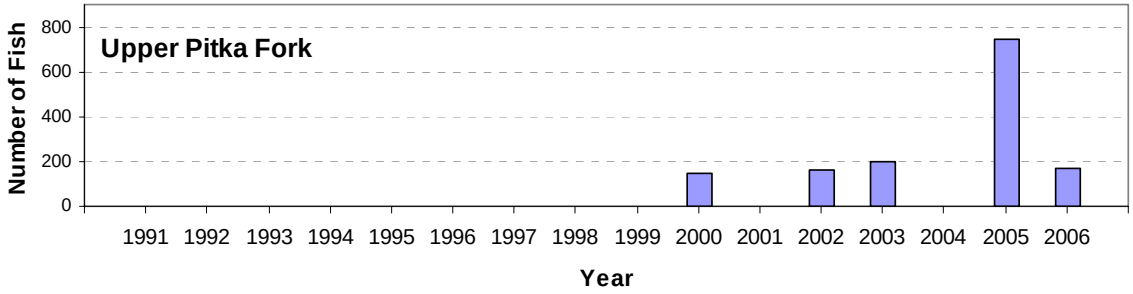

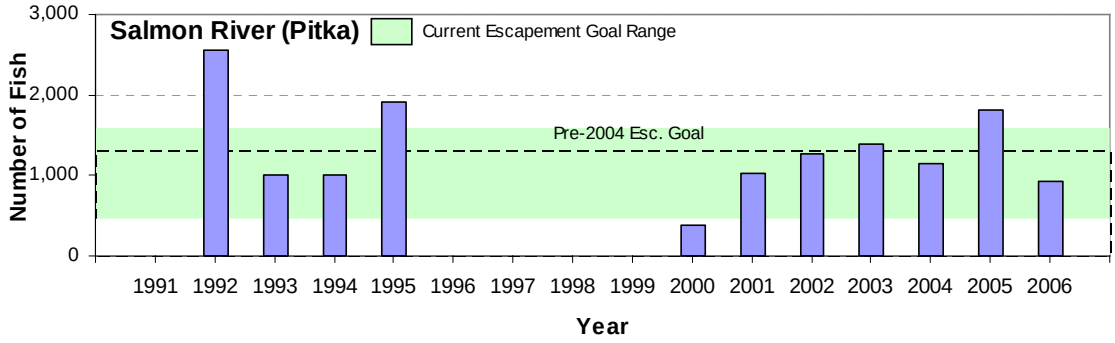

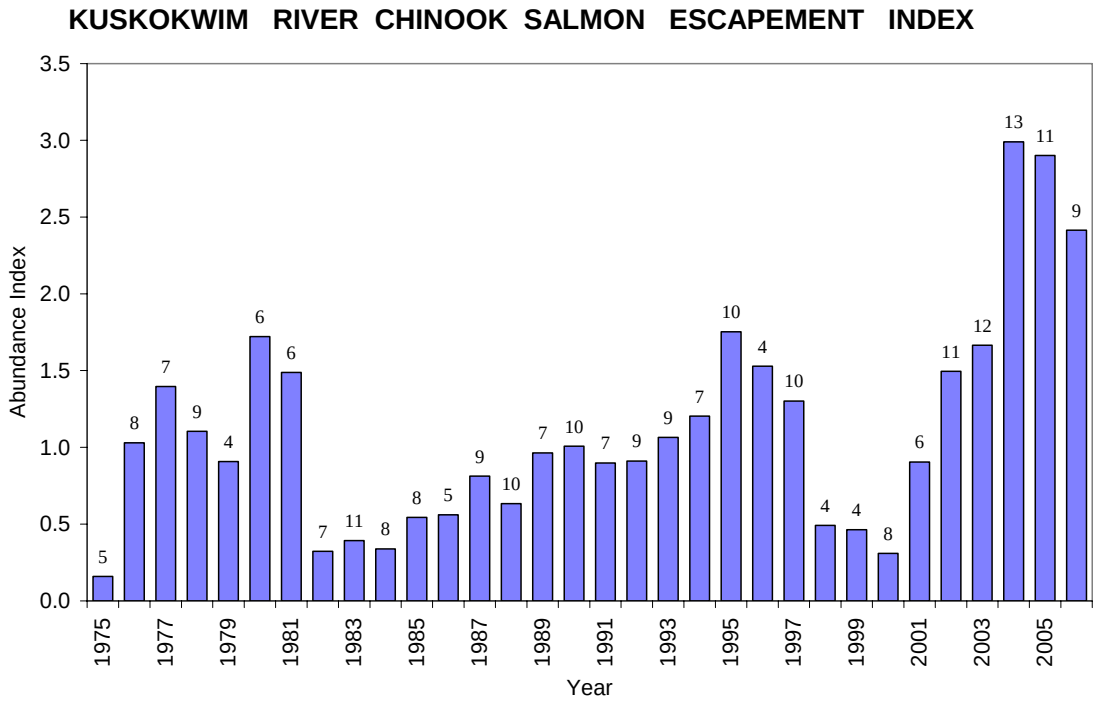

Figure 6. The Kuskokwim Chinook salmon escapement index is a composit of relative abundance for 13 possible index streams. The index scale represents the escapement relative to the proportion of the escapement goal or median historical escapement to show relative trends in historical Chinook salmon escapement in the Kuskowkim River drainage. The nubmre on the top of each bar represents the number of index streams successfully survey in that year

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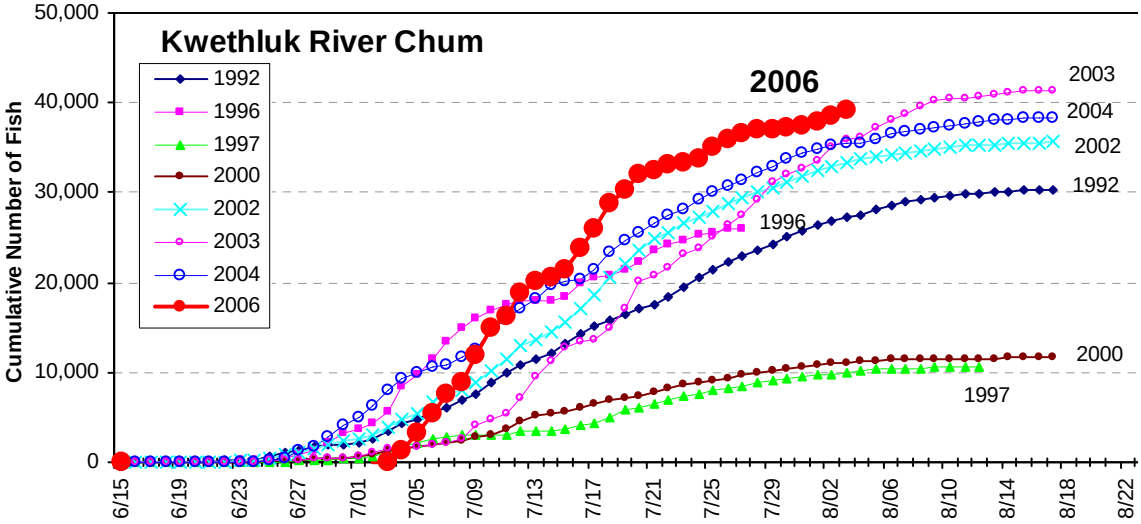
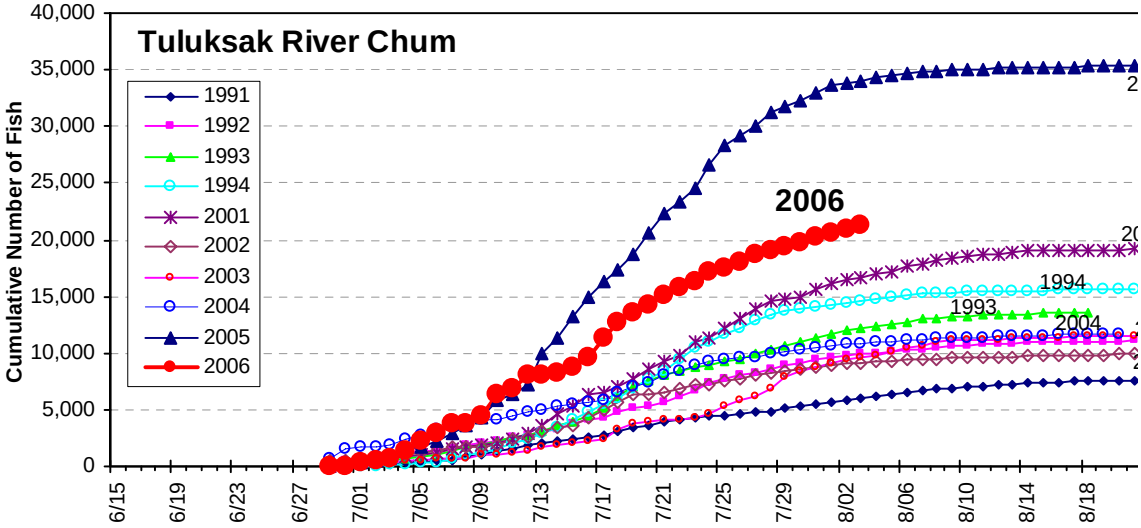
Chum Salmon Weirs and Sonar





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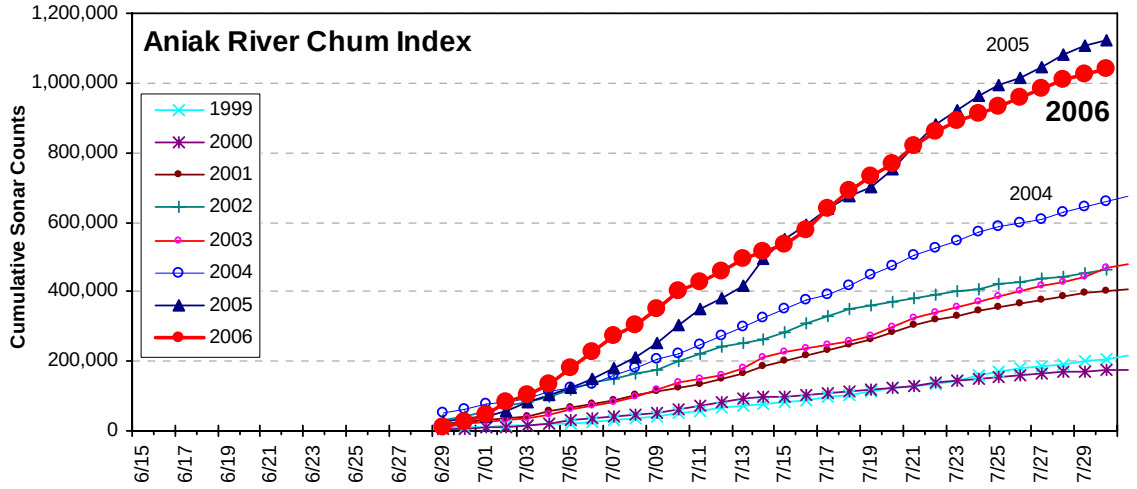
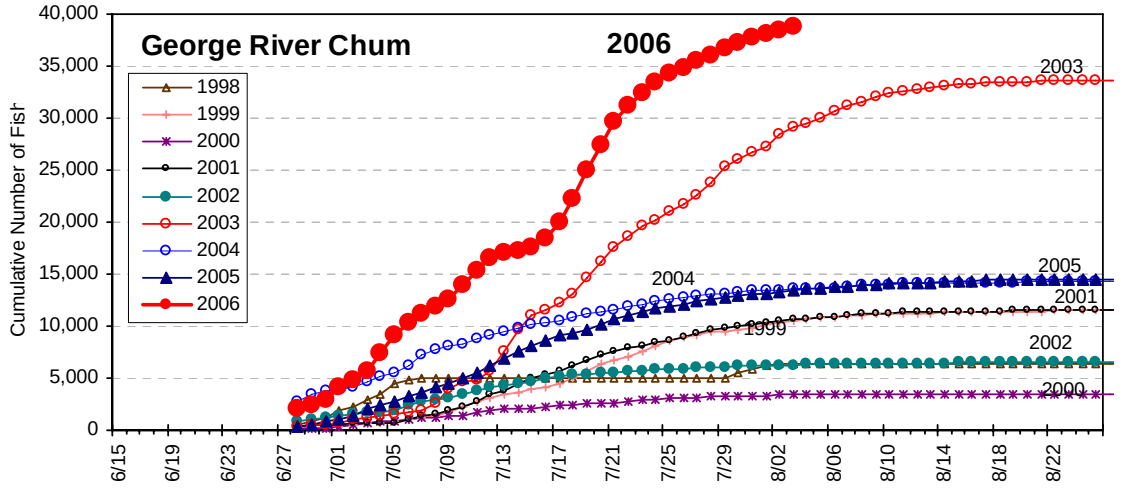
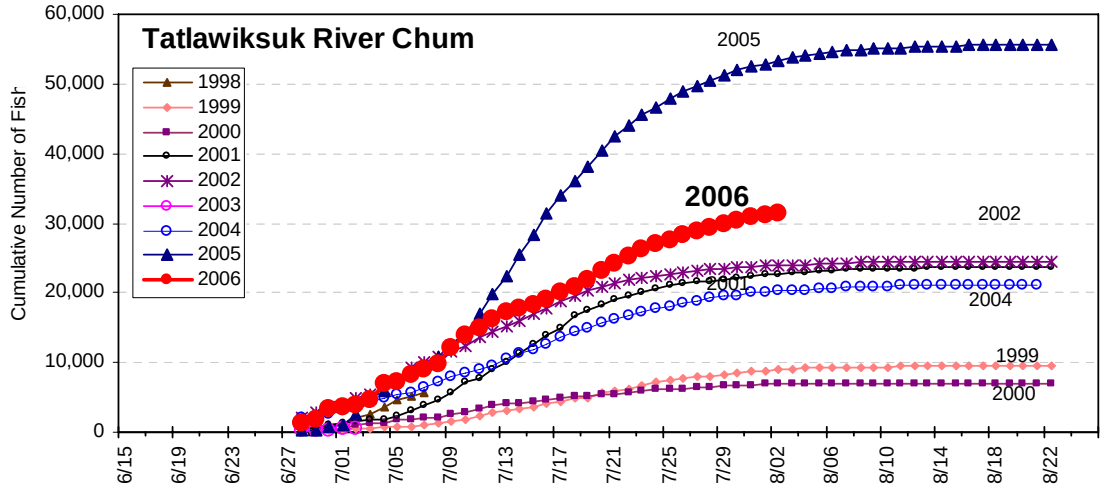

Aniak River Chum Index
Cumulative Sonar Counts
1,200,000
1,000,000
800,000
600,000
400,000
200,000
0
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2005
2006
2004
6/15
6/17
6/19
6/21
6/23
6/25
6/27
6/29
7/01
7/03
7/05
7/07
7/09
7/11
7/13
7/15
7/17
7/19
7/21
7/23
7/25
7/27
7/29


George River Chum
Cumulative Number of Fish
40,000
35,000
30,000
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2006
2003
2005
2004
2001
1999
2002
2000
6/15
6/19
6/23
6/27
7/01
7/05
7/09
7/13
7/17
7/21
7/25
7/29
8/02
8/06
8/10
8/14
8/18
8/22


Tatlawiksuk River Chum
Cumulative Number of Fish
60,000
50,000
40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000
0
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2005
2006
2002
2001
2004
1999
2000
6/15
6/19
6/23
6/27
7/01
7/05
7/09
7/13
7/17
7/21
7/25
7/29
8/02
8/06
8/10
8/14
8/18
8/22

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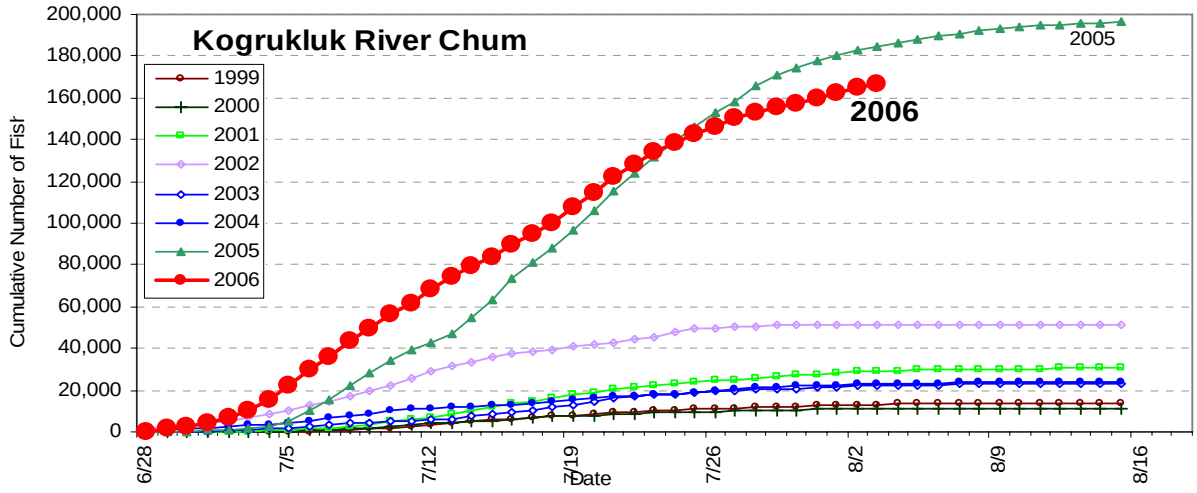
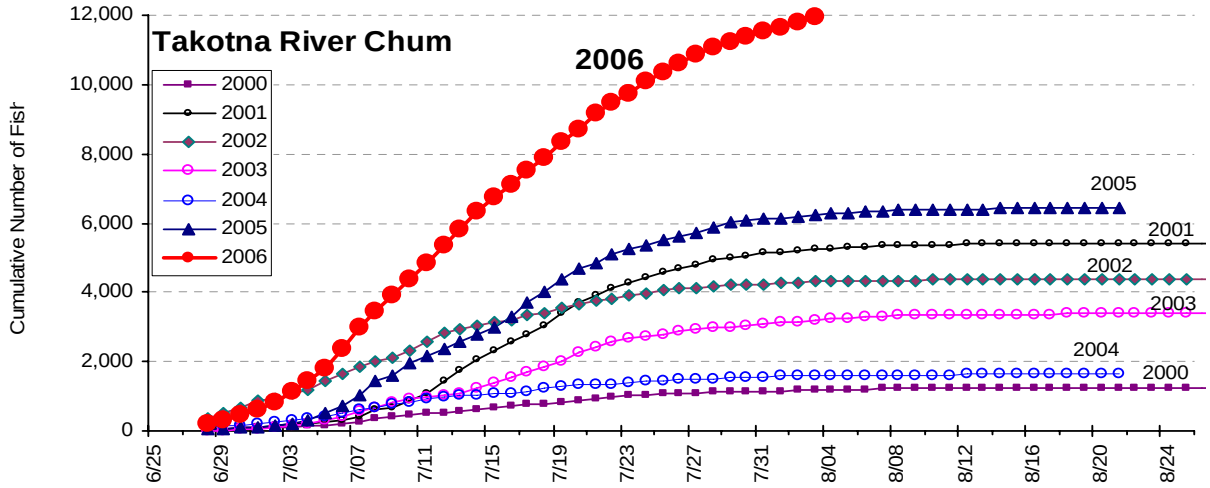
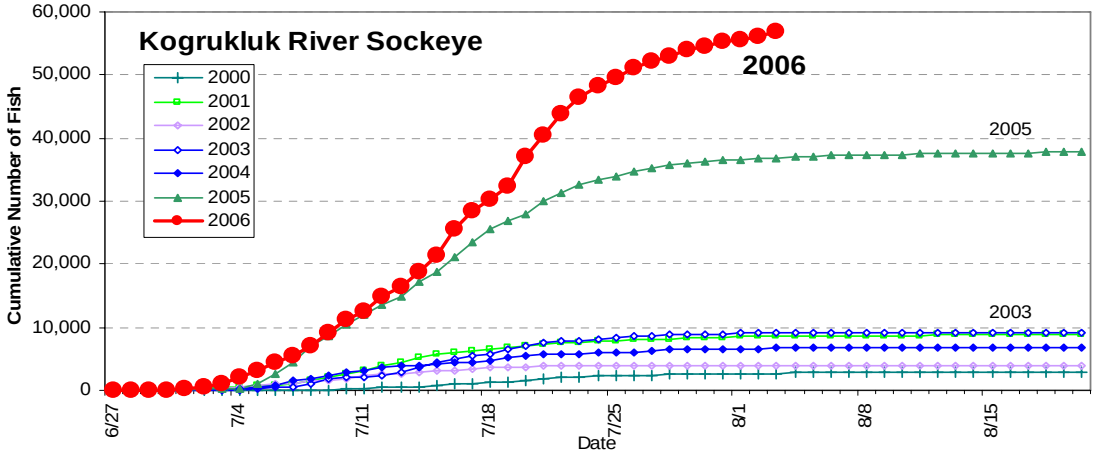




Sockeye Salmon Weir



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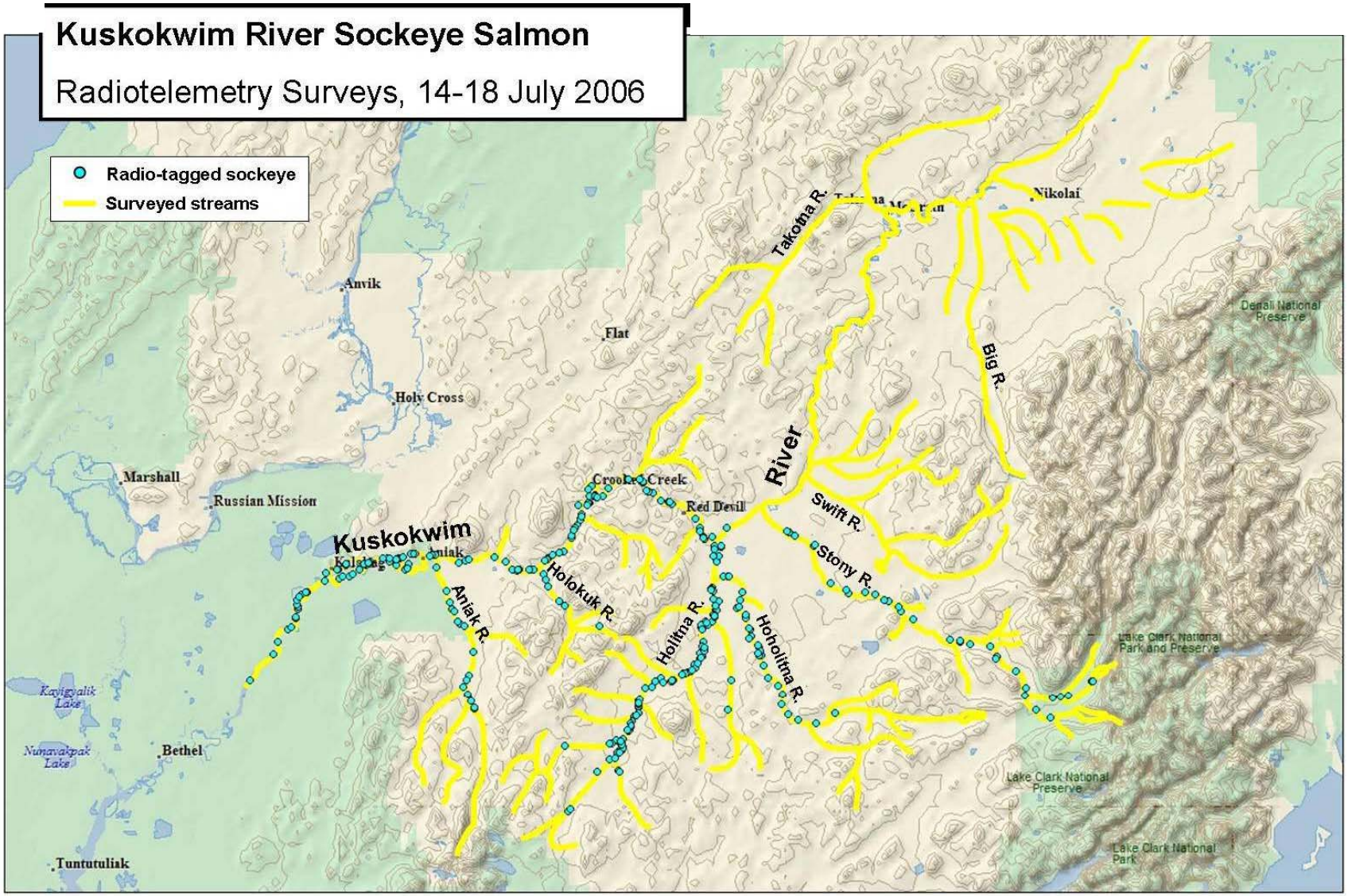
Kuskokwim River Sockeye Salmon
Radiotelemetry Surveys, 14-18 July 2006
Radio-tagged sockeye
Surveyed streams
Anvik
Flat
Holy Cross
Marshall
Russian Mission
Kuskokwim
Kolsta
Aniak
Aniak R.
Holokuk R.
Holitna R.
Hoholitna R.
Crooked Creek
Red Devill
River
Swift R.
Stony R.
Takotna R.
Big R.
Nikolai
Denali National Preserve
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
Lake Clark National Preserve
Lake Clark National Park
Kayigyalik Lake
Nunavakpak Lake
Bethel
Tuntutuliak

-continued-

Coho Salmon Weir

Table 14. Historical coho passage at Kwethluk River tower (1996 to 1999) and weir (1992 and 2000-present).

= poor year for escapement in the Kuskokwim basin

Date	Cumulative Passage									
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
KWE Total	189	1,110	2,367	693	25,610	21,596	23,298	107,789	64,216	0
Kog Esc.	50,555	12,237	24,348	12,609	33,135	19,387	14,516	74,604	27,041	24,116
7/31		36	129	48	265	149	84	775	758	
8/01		42	183	75	369	205	142	840	927	
8/02		63	207	111	460	257	202	1,142	1,109	
8/03		102	240	141	687	357	287	1,419	1,195	
8/04		255	279	162	869	441	401	1,500	1,278	
8/05		477	342	174	1,111	567	423	1,831	1,630	
8/06		597	432	180	1,197	714	474	2,165	2,475	
8/07		687	531	219	1,402	835	525	2,915	2,827	
8/08		759	672	240	1,560	924	572	4,268	3,007	

Table 19. Historical coho daily cumulative passage at Tuluksak River weir.

= poor year for escapement in the Kuskokwim basin

Date	Cumulative Passage									
	1991	1992	1993	1994	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2
TUL Total	4,651	7,501	8,328	4,809	10,430	11,487	39,627	20,336	11,324	
KOG. Esc.	9,964	26,100	20,100	34,695	19,387	14,516	74,604	27,041	24,116	
7/31	0	10	19	52	38	4	106	237	38	
8/01	0	13	23	60	76	5	121	281	67	
8/02	0	16	27	70	99	5	136	324	80	
8/03	0	18	34	90	118	8	139	399	91	
8/04	1	21	59	117	127	16	152	463	123	
8/05	3	41	81	150	135	18	190	521	165	
8/06	3	69	102	180	141	24	292	837	188	
8/07	7	90	168	194	162	31	393	1,107	224	
8/08	7	101	218	228	253	37	728	1,181	266	

Table 25. Historical coho daily cumulative passage at George River weir.

= poor escapement year in the Kuskokwim River basin.

Date	Cumulative Passage									
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
GEO Total		9,210		8,930	11,262	14,415	6,759	33,280	13,248	8,200
Kog Esc.	50,555	12,238	24,348	12,609	33,135	19,387	14,516	74,604	27,041	24,116
7/31	c	29	15	1	21	10	6	127 b	25	47
8/01	c	38	29	1	26 e	17	8	148 b	42	57
8/02	c	60	52	2	33 b	28	17	178 b	52	74
8/03	c	85	c	2	44	37	30	201 b	58	87
8/04	c	137	c	3	50	40	52	223 e	101	94
8/05	c	178	c	15	66 b	52	68	285	143	112
8/06	c	237	c	15	89	77	86	383	181	131
8/07	c	312	c	18	114	99	92	539	250	153
8/08	c	381	c	22	233	161	106	652	322	352

-continued-

Table 35. Historical coho passage at Tatlawiksuk River weir, 1999-2002.

= poor escapement year in the Kuskokwim River basin.

Date	Cumulative Passage							
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	**2006**
TAT Total	3,455		10,539	11,363		16,410	7,559	3
KOG. Esc.	12,609	33,135	19,387	14,516	74,604	27,041	24,116	
7/31	15	45	27 e	20	c	231	165	2(
8/01	15	85	56 b	25	c	286	185	2:
8/02	15	195 b	98 b	36	c	379	214	3(
8/03	15	367	152 e	52	c	477	284	3
8/04	15	582	194	56	c	605	320	
8/05	17	755	285	89	c	819	356	
8/06	17	884	332	112	c	1,271	407	
8/07	22	1,161	406	158	c	1,739	487 a	
8/08	23	1,269	541	201	c	2,176	547	

Table 30. Historical coho salmon passage at Kogrukluk River weir.

Current escapement goal range = 13,000 to 28,000 (

Date	Cumulative Passage									
	1996	**1997**	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total Esc	50,555	12,238	24,348	12,609	33,135	19,387	14,516	74,604	27,041	24,116
7/31	169	3	7	2	24	2	25	164	96	62
8/01	223	7	9	2	25	4	25	211	129	83
8/02	305	12	12	2	34	13	28	278	151	112
8/03	415	15	22	2	67	18	34	329	162	155
8/04	456	19	29	2	99	30	39	380	208	189
8/05	492	42	43	2	150	34	45	417	281	206
8/06	707	64	49	2	215	54	53	470	357	236
8/07	858	111	56	3	294	61	59	605	468	273
8/08	998	122	61	4	388	93	79	672	563	351

Table 41. Historical coho passage at Takotna River tower (1996 to 1999) and weir (2000 to present).

= poor year for escapement in the Kuskokwim basin

Date	Cumulative Passage						
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	**2006**
TAK Total	3,957	2,606	3,984	7,171	3,207	2,216	13
Kog Esc.	33,135	19,387	14,516	74,604	27,041	24,116	0
7/31	0	1	2	25 b	1	11	2
8/01	0	1	2	31 b	2	13	3
8/02	0	1	2	35	3	15	5
8/03	0	2	2	43	3	16	13
8/04	3	2	2	56	6	24	
8/05	14	2	2	71	10	31	
8/06	22	5	4	98	26	36	
8/07	36	6	4	123	40	38	
8/08	55	7	6	171	59	48	

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Kuskokwim River Commercial Catch Report

Summary of the District W-1 (Kuskokwim River) commercial fishery, 2006.										
			Chinook Salmon		Chum Salmon		Sockeye Salmon		Coho Salmon	
Date	Sub-district	Permits Participating	Catch	Cumulative	Catch	Cumulative	Catch	Cumulative	Catch	Cumulative
24-Jun	W-1A	74	1,647	1,647	19,694	19,694	5,218	5,218	0	0
28-Jun	W-1B	99	846	2,493	16,312	36,006	6,456	11,674	0	0
1-Aug	W-1B	133	45	2,538	1,078	37,084	282	11,956	10,135	10,135
3-Aug	W-1A	***80***	***28***	***2,566***	***1,032***	***38,116***	***63***	***12,019***	***8,872***	***19,007***
4-Aug	W-1B									

District W-1 historical and current year commercial harvest

	Chinook		Chum		Sockeye		Coho	
	Harvest	CPUE	Harvest	CPUE	Harvest	CPUE	Harvest	CPUE
Avg. for Aug 1 +/- 1 Day ('95–'04)	61	0.07	1,060	1.32	131	0.12	28,299	28.47
Commercial Harvest, Aug 1, 2005	***45***	***0.06***	***1,078***	***1.35***	***282***	***0.35***	***10,135***	***12.7***
Avg. for Aug 3 +/- 1 Day ('95–'04)	37	0.05	564	0.82	84	0.10	38,193	38.03
Commercial Harvest, Aug 3, 2005	***28***	***0.06***	***1,032***	***2.15***	***63***	***0.13***	***8,872***	***18.48***
Avg. for Aug 4 +/- 1 Day ('95–'04)	29	0.03	494	0.57	71	0.08	36,159	33.56
Commercial Harvest, Aug 4, 2005								
Cumulative Harvest to date, 2006	***2,566***		***38,116***		***12,019***		***19,007***	
Cumulative Average Commercial Harvest ('80–'05)	23,810		291,370		49,091		396,993	
Cumulative Average Commercial Harvest ('95–'04)	7,059		55,761		23,763		283,060	

* *Harvest data for August 1, 3 and 4, 2006 is based on preliminary verbal reports from processors and is subject to change.*

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Area M Report

Weekly Total Alaska Peninsula through 8/02/2006					
	Chinook	***Sockeye***	***Coho***	***Pink***	***Chum***
Total South Peninsula					
Daily	1	966	19	5,284	1,876
Total to date	4,528	1,550,128	89,297	2,409,097	750,480
Total North Peninsula					
Daily	0	1,414	32	0	136
Total to Date	7,156	1,920,034	6,082	1,809	83,047
Total Alaska Peninsula					
Daily	1	2,380	51	5,284	2,012
Total Through 8/02/2006	**11,684**	**3,470,162**	**95,379**	**2,410,906**	**833,527**
Total Through 8/02/2005	**11,425**	**4,808,179**	**111,372**	**6,726,072**	**634,201**
Total Through 8/02/2004	**17,182**	**4,461,306**	**160,312**	**2,614,076**	**725,272**

Area M Report: Total chum salmon harvest through August 2 this year is higher than chum harvests in 2004 and 2005 through the same time period. Total Chinook salmon harvest through August 2 this year is similar to 2005 and lower than 2004 harvest through the same time period. Total sockeye and coho salmon harvests through August 2 this year are lower than harvests in 2004 and 2005 through the same time period. Total pink salmon harvest through August 2 this year is lower than pink harvests in 2004 and 2005 through the same time period.

APPENDIX D

Appendix D1.–Example of meeting summary, August 5, 2006.

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

P.O. Box 1467 • Bethel, AK 99559 • 907-543-2433 • 907-543-2021 fax

August 5, 2006

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) meeting was called to order at 10:04 am on Saturday, August 5, 2006, at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conference room in Bethel. The Working Group adjourned at 12:02 pm. Seven of eleven representatives were present, a quorum was established.

Agenda Items:

I. Continuing Business:

II. New Business:

III. Old Business:

Working Group Motions:

1) Motion made and carried to approve the agenda.
2) Motion made and carried to accept the Departments recommendation as amended.

Working Group action items:

1) The Department was asked to provide a comparison of early average weights of coho salmon between fish caught in 2006 and previous years.

2) The seat holders for Upriver Elder and Downriver Elder agreed to look into the issue of alternates for those seats.

3) Members to begin thinking about dates and items to be added to the agenda for the Fall Meeting of the Working Group.

ADF&G Recommendation: The Department recommended announcing a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A (above Bethel) Monday, August 7, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm, and announcing a second six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Tuesday, August 8, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm.

After the agenda was approved the chair asked for comments from the public and Working Group members.

- The Department introduced Dr. Jim Finn and Jason Baker of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Biological Survey division to the Working Group. Dr. Finn and Mr. Baker have secured funding from the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative (AYKSSI) to study the spring outmigration of juvenile salmon from the Kwethluk River. The study will begin in the spring of 2007 and consist of capture, tagging, and recapture of juvenile Pacific salmon of all five species endemic to the Kwethluk River.

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- Iyana Gusty, the Upriver Elder said that he felt very blessed by the abundance of subsistence foods available this year. He thanked the Working Group and the Department for working together to manage fisheries and said that he appreciated the respect and attention paid to elders and their long experience with regards to these important decisions. The Upriver Elder felt that the Working Group came together like a family and learned from one another little by little. He thanked the Department and other members for listening to each other and learning.
- James Charles, the Lower River Elder commented on the recent commercial openings in subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel). He said that fishing had been slow in the lower river and pointed out that catches had been better above Bethel. He pointed out that the lower river is very wide and that fish are hard to catch while the area above Bethel works as a funnel to concentrate fish and makes for better fishing. The Lower River Elder said that in years gone by, the Department, recognizing the greater difficulty for fisherman in the lower river, had opened the W-1B subdistrict a few times each season prior to opening the full district.
- The Lower River Elder directed further comments to fish processors: He said that Coastal Villages Seafoods (CVS) was the only buyer in the lower river and that they had refused to buy chum salmon during the opening on 4 August. The Elder said that if fishermen had known that the buyer would refuse chums they would have taken care to release chum salmon alive when possible. Instead, some people ended up wasting chum salmon that they could not sell and could not use.
- The Lower River Elder commented that the scheduling of recent commercial openings had not taken the tide into account. He said that tidal influence in the lower river translated into substantial changes in water level and that openings scheduled on the high tide would result in low catches. The Elder felt that these concerns were not being adequately addressed by the Department and the Working Group.
- Joe Hall, the representative from CVS in response to comments from the Downriver Elder stated that the CVS tender operator stationed in the area had confirmed that a small number of chum salmon had been refused. Mr. Hall said that this was not the policy of CVS and assured the Elder and the Working Group that this practice would not continue.
- Vince Goddard, the representative from Inlet Fish Processors (IFP) said that his organization had not and would not refuse to buy chum salmon. He said, although chum salmon represented a negative value for processors, the proportion of chum salmon in the commercial catch was not high enough to present a problem. The IFP representative also stated that if anyone would like chum salmon for subsistence needs or as dog food, IFP would be glad to give them away free of charge.
- Greg Roczicka of Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) offered to act as a contact for processors looking to give away quality chum salmon to area organizations in need of fish.
- Greg Roczicka, Working Group Co-Chair and alternate to the Middle River Subsistence seat wished to correct a mistake in the summary for the July 28 Working Group meeting regarding a Joint Board administrative meeting of the Board of Fish (BOF). Discussion of a Joint Board meeting will be raised at the October BOF work session. If it is decided that a meeting of the Joint Boards will take place, a period of time will be specified in which interested parties may submit administrative proposals addressing the BOF process, organization, and state Fish and Game Advisory Councils. . It is important to note that Joint Board meeting proposals will not relate directly to the BOF regulatory process, but will deal with administrative procedures of the BOF.

I. Agenda Items: Continuing Business:

1. Subsistence fishing reports:

a. Lower River Subsistence: The Downriver Elder said that most people in the lower river had finished catching fish for subsistence. A few people were still catching coho for canning and salting.

The Lower River Subsistence representative commented that a few people in the Akiak area were still canning coho salmon. The majority of subsistence nets still in the water were white fish nets. The representative reported that one fisher the previous week had caught 125 coho and 65 chum in a ten minute drift. Most subsistence fishing had

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been completed and people were concentrating on berry picking.

b. Lower Kuskokwim Subsistence Catch Monitoring Project: The ONC Catch Monitoring Program has been completed for 2006. No further reports will be given this season.
c. Middle River Subsistence: The YK Delta RAC representative reported that coho in the Kalskag area were finally appearing in decent numbers. Some fishers were still taking a few coho for salting and canning but most subsistence salmon fishing had been completed. People were mostly concentrating on berry picking at that time.
d. Upper River Subsistence: The Upper River Subsistence representative was not present. No report was given.
e. Headwaters Subsistence: The Headwaters Subsistence representative stated that the late run of chum (fall chum) had begun to arrive in the headwaters area, but that fishers had not begun fishing for them.

2. Overview of 2006 Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment projects:

a. Bethel Test Fishery (BTF):

i. Catches of coho salmon in the BTF remain consistent. When compared to years with similar water levels, catches in 2005 were just below 2002 and above 1995 and 2005. The cumulative BTF catch is above all years of poor coho salmon escapement. Coho salmon caught in early commercial openings in 2006 appear to be a bit small (6.2 lbs on average).
ii. Catches of chum salmon in the BTF have decreased dramatically which is typical for this time of year as the chum salmon run comes to an end. Cumulative catches remain the second highest on record after 2005.

b. Weirs/Sonar/Mark–recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other: Chinook and sockeye runs appear to be a week to ten days late at most Kuskokwim River Salmon run assessment projects. Chum salmon appear to be similarly late, but the high abundance this year masked this pattern early on.

i. Kwethluk River weir: High water early in the season resulted in a late start for the Kwethluk River weir in 2006 (July 4). The early portion of the run for Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon was likely missed and escapement is likely underestimated.
   1) Chinook: Despite the late start, Chinook salmon are above average at Kwethluk River weir. Counts of Chinook salmon are similar to 2003 and the second highest on record after 2004.
   2) Chum: Counts of chum salmon are the highest on record.
   3) Coho: Counts of coho salmon were not affected by the late start date. Counts to date are the second highest recorded for this time of year.
ii. Tuluksak River weir: High water early in the season resulted in a late start for the Tuluksak River weir in 2006 (July 1). The early portion of the run for Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon was missed and escapement is likely underestimated.
   1) Chinook: Chinook salmon counts at Tuluksak River weir are the second lowest on record for this time of year. The Low numbers of Chinook observed at Tuluksak River weir in 2006 may be partially attributed to late start-up.
   2) Chum: Counts of chum salmon are the second highest on record for this time of year.
   3) Coho: Counts of coho salmon were not affected by the late start date. Counts to date are the second highest recorded at Tuluksak River weir for this time of year.

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iii. Kalskag fish wheels: Comparisons between fish wheel catches in 2005 and 2006 correspond only to those locations in use during both years. Fish wheel catches from locations no longer in use are not considered.
   1) Chinook: Cumulative catches of Chinook salmon are one third higher than catches in 2005. Tagging of Chinook salmon is nearing completion for 2006.
   2) Sockeye: Cumulative catches of sockeye salmon are 25% higher than those of 2005 for this date. Tagging of sockeye salmon is nearing completion for 2006.
   3) Chum: Cumulative catches of chum salmon are twenty percent higher for this date compared with 2005.
   4) Coho: Cumulative catches of coho salmon are three times higher for this date compared with 2005.

iv. Aniak River sonar: 2006 operations at Aniak River sonar were completed on 30 July. Sonar counts are used as an index of chum salmon abundance. Sonar counts in 2006 were among the highest on record.

v. Salmon River (Aniak) weir: The first year of operation at Salmon River weir (Aniak) is nearing completion. Operations for this project have been successful in providing counts for four species of Pacific salmon and marked-to-unmarked ratios of tagged Chinook and sockeye salmon.

vi. George River weir:
   1) Chinook: Chinook salmon counts in 2006 are the third highest on record for this time of year.
   2) Chum: Chum salmon counts are the highest recorded.
   3) Coho: Coho salmon counts are near average for this time of year.

vii. Tatlawiksuk River weir:
   1) Chinook: Chinook counts in 2006 are above years of low escapement, but below several high escapement years for Chinook salmon in the Tatlawiksuk River.
   2) Chum: Chum counts are the second highest on record behind 2005.
   3) Coho: Coho salmon counts are the second highest on record for this time of year.

viii. Kogrukluk River weir:
   1) Chinook: Chinook counts in 2006 are the third highest on record.
   2) Chum: Chum counts are the second highest on record.
   3) Sockeye: Sockeye counts are the highest in the thirty-one years of operation at Kogrukluk River weir and continuing to rise.
   4) Coho: Coho salmon counts are the third highest recorded in the last ten years of operation for this time of year.

ix. Takotna River weir:
   1) Chinook: Chinook counts are currently the second highest on record for Takotna River weir.
   2) Chum: Chum salmon counts are at an all time high for Takotna River weir.
   3) Coho: Coho salmon counts are the second highest on record for this time of year.

x. Aerial Surveys: In 2006, aerial surveys began in the upper Kuskokwim drainage on 19 July. To date, surveys have been conducted from the headwaters down to the Kisaralik River. The Kuskokwim River Chinook Salmon Escapement Index for 2006 is the third highest on record after 2004 and 2005. Consistent with observations at ground based projects, aerial

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surveys indicate that the Chinook and sockeye run timing was a week to ten days late in 2006.

xi. Sockeye Radio Telemetry: The first of three sets of Aerial Surveys to locate radio tagged sockeye salmon were flown between 14 and 18 July. Surveys extended from tributaries above Nikolai down to Kalskag. Now radio tagged sockeye were found in tributaries above the Stony River drainage. Sockeye were found on the Stony River, Holitna and Hoholitna Rivers, Holokuk and Aniak Rivers. The highest concentrations by far were found in the mainstem Holitna River.

3. Commercial Catch Report:
   a. A six (6) hour commercial fishing period was conducted in Subdistrict W-1B on August 1, 2006.
      i. Verbal reports indicate that 133 permits were fished, which was well below historical highs.
      ii. Chinook: 45 Chinook were harvested.
      iii. Chum: 1,078 chum salmon were harvested.
      iv. Sockeye: 282 sockeye salmon were harvested.
      v. Coho: 10,135 coho were harvest. This was well below the ten year average of 28,299. The CPUE was 12.7, which was less than half of the recent ten year average (28.5).
   b. A six (6) hour commercial fishing period was conducted in Subdistrict W-1A on August 3, 2006.
      i. Verbal reports indicate that 80 permits were fished, which was well below historical highs.
      ii. Chinook: 28 Chinook were harvested.
      iii. Chum: 1,032 chum salmon were harvested.
      iv. Sockeye: 63 sockeye salmon were harvested.
      v. Coho: 8,872 coho were harvest. This was well below the ten year average of 38,193. The CPUE was 18.5, which was less than half of the recent ten year average (38.0).
   c. A six (6) hour commercial fishing period was conducted in Subdistrict W-1B on August 4, 2006.
      i. Verbal reports indicate that 129 permits were fished, which was well below historical highs.
      ii. Chinook: 8 Chinook were harvested.
      iii. Chum: 3,391 chum salmon were harvested.
      iv. Sockeye: 20 sockeye salmon were harvested.
      v. Coho: 10,584 coho were harvest. This was well below the ten year average of 36,159. The CPUE was 13.7, which was less than half of the recent ten year average (33.6).
   d. Overall effort was well below historical highs for all periods.

4. Processor Report: The representative from IFP held voting privileges during this Working Group meeting.
   - The IFP representative stated that:
     i. The processor was pleased with the fishery so far and would like to see a regular schedule of commercial openings.
     ii. Considering good indications of run strength, little apparent interest in subsistence fishing at that time, and low initial catch rates, the processor felt that the impact of the commercial fishery on coho salmon stocks was negligible.

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iii. The processor did not anticipate any problems with airlift or processing capacity.

- The representative from CVS echoed statements by the IFP representative.
- The Downriver Elder, speaking as a commercial fisherman, said that area commercial fishers wished to continue fishing.

5. Sport Fish Report: The Sport fishing representative commented that many people were rod and reel fishing from Bethel to Aniak and fishers were catching well.
6. Area M Report: Total chum salmon harvest through August 2 this year is higher than chum harvests in 2004 and 2005 through the same time period. Total Chinook salmon harvest through August 2 this year is similar to 2005 and lower than 2004 harvest through the same time period. Total sockeye and coho salmon harvests through August 2 this year are lower than harvests in 2004 and 2005 through the same time period. Total pink salmon harvest through August 2 this year is lower than pink harvests in 2004 and 2005 through the same time period.
7. ADF&G Recommendation: The Department recommended announcing a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A (above Bethel) Monday, August 7, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm, and announcing a second six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Tuesday, August 8, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm.

   In addition, the Department said that the Working Group's decision during the previous meeting to leave further commercial fishing announcements to the Department's discretion had worked well. The Department suggested that the Working Group consider leaving the decision to schedule further openings later in the coming week to the Department's discretion.

   The recommendation was followed by some discussion by the Working Group.

   - A motion was made and seconded to accept the Departments recommendation.
   - The IFP Processor representative offered a friendly amendment: Include the Department's suggestion regarding the scheduling of further openings in the coming week within the motion to accept the Department's recommendation.
   - The Sport Fishing representative suggested that it might be worthwhile to have a meeting Wednesday to discuss up to date salmon assessment information and commercial catch data rather than giving up any say in the decision. The Sport Fishing representative expressed a concern about the commercial fishery "running rough shod over subsistence".
   - The YK Delta RAC member clarified that, traditionally, there had been minimal subsistence use of coho salmon and even less interest in recent years.
   - The Sport Fishing representative maintained that commercial fishing was a new development relative to traditional use and that it was still important to go slow and keep an eye on how the run progresses.
   - Department staff pointed out that in recent years, subsistence fishing has been allowed in the majority of the subdistrict adjacent to the one open to commercial fishing and subsistence closures before and after commercial fishing periods have been reduced by 60%. These changes have allowed for increased subsistence opportunity compared to previous years. Staff also reiterated that few people were interested in subsistence fishing for coho. The Department did not feel that subsistence was at issue at that time.
   - The Sport fishing representative asked to attend a Department working session on Wednesday, 9 August to review salmon assessment and commercial catch data.
   - The chairman clarified with the Department that whitefish nets (4" mesh, 60') were not subject to subsistence fishing closures associated with commercial salmon openings.
   - The question was called and the amended motion passed unanimously.

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II. Agenda Items: Old Business: The positions of alternates to the Upriver Elder and Downriver Elder on the Working Group are currently unfilled:

- The seat holders for Upriver Elder and Downriver Elder agreed to look into the issue of alternates for those seats.

III. Agenda Item: New Business: Open discussion on date selection for the Working Group Fall Meeting:

- The Department suggested the last week of September (September 25–29) for the Fall Meeting.
- The Department also suggested that the meeting be 1 to 2 days in duration and be held at the ADF&G office in Bethel to conserve Working Group funds for member travel to interagency and BOF meetings in Anchorage during the coming winter.
- The YK Delta RAC member pointed out that other organizational meetings were scheduled for the first week of October and suggested that the Working Group meeting be adjourned on Wednesday or Thursday of that week to avoid conflicts.
- Department Staff asked that members provide scheduling information for other meetings/events to prevent conflicts.
- It was agreed that the meeting would probably take a minimum of 1.5 days.
- The Downriver Elder suggested that Working Group members be brought in for the meeting on the Morning of the first day and go home the evening of the second. The meeting could be convened at one o'clock on the first day and be finished by early afternoon the second.
- It was tentatively decided :
    1. Wednesday 27 September was preferable.
    2. Maximum of 1.5 days.
    3. Larger facility preferred.

APPENDIX E

Appendix E1.–Executive Summary of Working Group and ADF&G actions, 2005 and 2006.

Date	Comment
3/22/2005	The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) met from 10:06a.m. to 11:43 a.m. on Tuesday, March 22, 2005 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Ten of the twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. It was noted that there were no alternates to the seat of Upriver Elder. Members provided FSB and RAC meeting summaries. ADF&G presented the 2005 Kuskokwim River Outlook, the Kuskokwim River Salmon Rebuilding Management Plan, and 2004 subsistence salmon harvest data for the Kuskokwim Area. The Working Group discussed establishing an additional seat to represent the communities of the upper reaches of the Kuskokwim drainage. This discussion was tabled for a later meeting. Action Taken: The Working Group approved Pete Mellick as alternate to the Upriver Subsistence seat, Carl Morgan as alternate to the Western Interior RAC seat. The Working Group chose James Charles, Member at Large, to represent the Working Group at the Kuskokwim River Interagency Meeting in Anchorage, March 30 and 31.
5/25/2005	The Working Group met at 10:05 a.m. on Wednesday May 25, 2005, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m. Eleven of the twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. Discussion of amendments to the by-laws was tabled for a future meeting. Eva Patton, newly hired Fisheries Partners Biologist for the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), was introduced. ADF&G staff provided a brief review of the Kuskokwim River salmon forecast. The Working Group also reviewed the status of funding for the Working Group, including funding from ADF&G for the 2005 season and the progress and status of a funding proposal submitted to USFWS OSM for 2006–2008. Action Taken: The Working Group resolved to draft a letter (Resolution 05-01) of support for the Kuskokwim River subsistence fishing schedule to be presented at AVCPs Rural Providers Conference on 6 June (Appendix F1). The Working Group resolved to have two WG representatives participate in an ADF&G June 1 radio call-in show concerning the subsistence schedule. The Working Group moved to create a Subsistence users seat to represent the communities above McGrath on the Working Group. The Working Group moved to appoint Sam Alexei of Eek to be alternate to the seat of Commercial fisher and Sophie Gregory as second alternate to the Upriver Subsistence seat on the Working Group.
6/15/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:05 a.m. on Wednesday June 15, 2003, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m. Eleven of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence fishers, the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), the USFWS, and ADF&G regarding inseason indicators of salmon run strength. The subsistence harvest reports indicated that subsistence fishing in the lower river was improving and

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Date	Comment
	that fishers were pleased. In the upper river and headwaters regions, fishers had not yet begun drying fish, though Chinook had begun to arrive and seemed to be developing spawning colors early. The BTF reported that catch numbers for Chinook and sockeye salmon looked promising though it was still early for chum and numbers remained low. The Working Group heard testimony from fish processors citing differences of opinion and a request by Coastal Villages Seafoods to have its own seat on the Working Group. The Working Group decided that processors were adequately represented and that issues of opinion, voting rights, and seat possession were issues for discussion between processors. Action Taken: Establish a 7-day per week subsistence fishing schedule.
6/22/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:13 a.m. on Thursday June 26, 2003, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m. Ten of Twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group heard testimony from a number of middle river fishers that commented on the inconvenience associated with the subsistence fishing schedule. Subsistence reports indicated good subsistence harvests of Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon in the lower Kuskokwim River. The ADF&G Bethel test fishery (BTF) report indicated record Chinook salmon and sockeye salmon catches and improving catches of chum salmon. Chinook and chum salmon had been noted arriving at area weir projects. ADF&G reported draft subsistence harvest numbers for the Kuskokwim Area from 2004. Processors and Working Group members agreed that the two Kuskokwim River processors, Coastal Villages Seafoods and Inlet Fish Processors, would alternately hold voting rights for the Processor seat between meetings of the Working Group. Action Taken: Open the Kuskokwim River to commercial fishing in District W-1B for four (4) hours on Friday, June 24, 2005 from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
6/26/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 1:05 p.m. on Sunday July 26, 2005, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m. Nine of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. Subsistence reports indicated that fishers in the lower river were meeting their needs, and many fishers appeared to have completed subsistence fishing for Chinook, sockeye and chum salmon in 2005. Fishers in the middle, upper, and headwaters areas reported fish in good numbers and that fishing activity was proceeding well. ADF&G reported high catches of Chinook and sockeye salmon and that catches of chum salmon were the highest ever recorded by BTF by a wide margin. Weir counts were above average for Chinook salmon and somewhat behind for chum salmon, consistent with a late arrival of chum observed in the lower river. Action Taken: Open the Kuskokwim River, Subdistrict W-1A (above Bethel), to commercial fishing on Tuesday, June 28, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

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Date	Comment
6/29/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:05 a.m. on Wednesday, July 29, 2005, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m. Eleven of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group heard reports from commercial fish processing representatives, subsistence fishers, elders with traditional Yup'ik knowledge, ONC, KNA, and the Department concerning the status of the Kuskokwim River subsistence fishery, commercial fishery, and salmon runs in general. Subsistence representatives from the lower and middle rivers, along with the ONC inseason survey reported that fishing for Chinook, sockeye and chum salmon were nearing completion. Subsistence representatives from the upper river reported that fishing was progressing well. ADF&G reported that catches of Chinook were still good, that catches of chum salmon remained the second highest on record, and that catches of sockeye were the highest on record with a CPUE of over 100 fish per day for the past 10 days. Processor representatives reported that recent commercial openings had gone well. Capacity had been adequate due to low relative participation by commercial fishers. Weir projects and sonar projects reported above average to record passage of Chinook, chum and sockeye for that date. Action Taken: The Working Group chose not to support ADF&Gs recommendation to open the Kuskokwim River, Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel), to commercial fishing on Thursday, June 30, 2005 from 12:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ADF&G stated that when escapement and subsistence needs are met and a harvestable surplus is identified, it is incumbent upon the Department to provide opportunity for other uses of the resource, including commercial fishing. Citing this responsibility, ADF&G chose to schedule the above opening despite the Working Group's position.
7/20/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 1:05 p.m. on Wednesday, July 20, 2005, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m. Eleven of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. Dr. John White, chair of the AYK Sustainable Salmon Initiative (AYKSSI), brought two reports before the Working Group: 1) Developing a Research and Restoration Plan for Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (Western Alaska) Salmon, and 2) Draft AYK Salmon Research & Restoration Plan. Dr. White asked that the Working Group participate in the public comment process with relation to the above draft. Dr. White also urged the Working Group to consider the questions of salmon abundance vs. the subsistence-fishing schedule. Dr. White stated that the subsistence schedule was in place to provide temporal (time) and spatial distribution of salmon throughout the entire drainage, from the mouth to the headwaters and smallest tributaries. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence users, commercial processors, ONC, and ADF&G. Subsistence fishers from the mouth to the headwaters were

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Date	Comment
	satisfied with the run and meeting their needs. Lower river subsistence fishing was completed for 2005. Camps were full of fish and processing of the catch was progressing. Middle river subsistence fishing was nearing completion for the season with all interviewed fishers satisfied with the catch. BTF catches of Chinook salmon were leveling off, sockeye and chum salmon catches remained the record highest in the history of the project. Upper river and headwaters subsistence fisheries were proceeding well. Coho had begun to appear in the BTF. Weir and sonar projects reported very good to excellent counts of Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon to that date. ADF&G also reported that its annual Chinook salmon aerial survey program had begun. Processor representatives reported that processors had no capacity at that time for storing or processing catches. Processors would not be prepared to buy fish again in District W-1 until August 1, 2005. Working Group Request: The Working Group requested that ADF&G make the agreed upon changes to Working Group By-laws and present them at the next meeting for review and confirmation.
7/29/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:04 a.m. on Friday, August 7, 2005, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. Eight out of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence users and ADF&G. Upper River subsistence fishers reported that fishing activity was nearly complete for 2005. Headwaters representatives reported that fish were still arriving in that region and that fishers were meeting their needs. Subsistence fishers all along the river reported satisfaction with the run and fishing opportunity in 2005. ADF&G reported that catches of Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon were declining consistent with the seasonal end of those runs. Coho salmon were becoming more prominent in BTF catches, though it was still early for coho. Weir and sonar projects reported good counts for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon and that coho salmon had been noted at all projects. Aerial surveys indicated that Chinook salmon were present in good numbers on middle and upper river tributaries, which was encouraging after many years of poor returns in the upper river. Action Taken: Schedule a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (that portion of District W-1 downstream from regulatory markers located at Bethel) on Tuesday, August 2, 2005. The Working Group also voted to accept and finalize changes made to the by-laws during previous meetings.

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Date	Comment
8/3/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:11 a.m. on Wednesday August 3, 2005, at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:013 a.m. Six of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was not established. The Working Group heard reports from ADF&G regarding the status of Kuskokwim River salmon runs. Catches of Chinook, sockeye, and chum numbers continued to decline, though run CPUEs were among the best ever recorded in the BTF. Catches of coho salmon in the BTF appeared to be average for this time of year and years of similar water level. Counts recorded at weir projects indicated average to above average runs of coho salmon at all projects. Aerial surveys had been completed and indicated above average runs of Chinook salmon throughout the Kuskokwim River drainage. Processors reported that the recent coho salmon fishing periods had gone well and the fishery had not exceeded processor capacity. The working Group received news that USF&WS OSM technical review committee had reached a consensus to fund proposal 06-307, "Inseason support for cooperative management of the Kuskokwim River subsistence fishery". This proposal would fund ADF&G staff time for an inseason Working Group coordinator, Working Group member travel, logistical support, and a postseason Working Group conference. This funding would be available for the 2006 though 2008 seasons. Action Taken: Schedule two six (6) hour commercial fishing periods in District W-1, the first in Subdistrict W-1A, (that portion of District W-1 upstream from regulatory markers located at Bethel) on Thursday, August 4, 2005, and a second opening in Subdistrict W-1B (that portion of District W-1 downstream from regulatory markers located at Bethel) on Friday, August 5, 2005.
8/6/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:05 a.m. on Wednesday, August 6 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m. Six of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was not established. The Working Group heard run assessment reports from ADF&G. BTF catches of coho salmon remained average for that time of year. Counts of coho salmon at weir projects appeared to be average. Processors felt the season was progressing well. Action Taken: Schedule two six (6) hour commercial fishing periods in District W-1, the first in Subdistrict W-1A, on Monday, August 8, 2005, and a second opening in Subdistrict W-1B on Tuesday, August 9, 2005. Both fishing periods were scheduled to take place between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
8/10/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:07 a.m. on Wednesday, August 10 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m. Six of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was not established. The Working Group heard run assessment reports from ADF&G.

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Date	Comment
	BTF catches of coho salmon were above those of most years in which escapement goals were not reached. Kuskokwim River water levels as measured at the USGS gauging station at Crooked Creek indicated that water levels were near record low for that time of year potentially having an affect on catch-ability of coho salmon, a species noted to respond strongly to water level. Run indices from weir projects remained adequate but had recently dropped off. CPUE observed in recent commercial openings had shown strong catches in subdistrict W-1A and much smaller catches in subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel). Action Taken: Schedule a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A, on Thursday, August 11, 2005, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and a second opening for Subdistrict W-1B on Monday, August 15, 2005.
8/16/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:06 a.m. on Tuesday, August 16 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m. Seven of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group heard run assessment reports from ADF&G. BTF catches of coho salmon were above those of most years in which escapement goals were not reached. Kuskokwim River water levels as measured at the USGS gauging station at Crooked Creek indicated that water levels were near record low for that time of year potentially having an affect on catchability of coho salmon, a species noted to respond strongly to water level. Run indices from weir projects remained adequate but continued to drop off. CPUE observed in recent commercial openings had shown catches continuing to diminish in W-1B (below Bethel). ADF&G could not identify a harvestable surplus of coho salmon at that time. Action Taken: Noting the decrease in run strength observed in coho salmon, the Working Group chose not to pursue commercial fishing at that time. Working Group Request: The Working Group asked that discussion of the application for oil and gas exploration in the Holitna River basin be added to the agenda for the next Working Group meeting.
8/18/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 18 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. Ten of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group heard run assessment reports from ADF&G. BTF catches of coho salmon were above those of comparable years in which escapement goals were not reached. Kuskokwim River water levels as measured at the USGS gauging station at Crooked Creek were near record low for that time of year potentially affecting the catchability of coho salmon. Run indices from weir projects remained adequate but continued to drop. ADF&G could not identify a harvestable surplus of coho salmon at that time.

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Date	Comment
	Action Taken: Schedule a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Thursday, August 25, 2005 from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
	The Working Group chose to draft an official statement regarding proposed oil and gas exploration in the Holitna River basin. The letter would be drafted through the cooperation of the three co-chairs and be submitted for review by the next Working Group meeting (Appendix G1).
	Working Group Request: The Working Group asked that the Western Interior RAC representative make inquiries among headwaters communities regarding possible candidates for the Headwaters subsistence seat.
8/24/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 24 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m. Seven of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group heard run assessment reports from ADF&G. BTF catches of coho salmon were above those of most years in which escapement goals were not reached. Kuskokwim River water levels as measured at the USGS gauging station at Crooked Creek were near record low for that time of year potentially affecting catchability of coho salmon. Run indices from weir projects were low but looked adequate to meet escapement needs. CPUE observed in a recent commercial opening in W-1B (below Bethel) was slightly above average for that time of year.
	Action Taken: Schedule a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Thursday, August 25, 2005, from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
	The Working Group resolved to continue seeking candidates for the Headwaters Subsistence representative.
	The Working Group co-chairs agreed to complete, sign, and submit the official statement from the Working Group regarding proposed oil and gas exploration in the Holitna River basin to the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Oil and Gas (OG) by the end of the public comment period (September 30, 2005) (Appendix G1).
8/27/2005	The Working Group was called to order at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 27 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m. Six of twelve Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was not established. The Working Group heard run assessment reports from ADF&G. The BTF project had been completed for 2005. Run indices from weir projects

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Date	Comment
	were low but looked adequate to meet escapement needs. CPUE observed in a recent commercial opening in W-1B (below Bethel) was slightly below average for that time of year. Fisher participation for 2005 was on the decline. Low participation in the fishery equated to little impact on the resource from the commercial fishery. Action Taken: Schedule a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A (that portion of District W-1 upstream from regulatory markers located at Bethel) on Monday, August 29, 2005, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and an additional six (6) hour full District 1 commercial fishing period on Thursday, September 1, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
9/26/2005	Unlike the Working Group "Fish Summit" of 2004, the 2005 Fall Meeting was similar to regular Working Group meetings and was intended as an informational meeting to recap the 2005 season. Little funding was available in 2005 and Working Group member travel was not provided (Appendix H1). Seven of twelve members participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group was called to order at 1:04 p.m. on Monday, September 26, 2005. The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m. Action Taken: The Working Group nominated of Nick Petruska of Nikolai to the Headwaters Subsistence representative seat on the Working Group. The Working Group selected James Charles to be its representative at the Kuskokwim River Fall Interagency meeting in Anchorage, November 2 and 3, 2005. Other Working Group members, principally RAC representatives, cited other funding sources by which they would be able to attend the meeting. The Working Group resolved to participate more fully in the Board of Fish process and elected to send a representative, to be decided later, with a letter confirming authority to represent the Working Group, to future BOF meetings. The Working Group resolved to compose a statement by the Working Group recognizing the importance of the Holitna River basin to the health and vitality of the Kuskokwim River and the communities along it because of its substantial contribution to fisheries resources (Appendix I1).

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Date	Comment
5/18/2006	The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) was called to order at 9:08 a.m. on Thursday, May 18 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m. Seven of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Working Group observed a moment of silence in respect to former Working Group member Steven White. Mr. White passed away on May 7, 2006. ADF&G presented the 2006 Kuskokwim River Outlook, the Kuskokwim River Salmon Rebuilding Management Plan, 2005 subsistence salmon harvest data for the Kuskokwim Area, and an overview of planned Pacific salmon investigations and management in the Kuskokwim Area for 2006. The Working Group was informed that USFWS Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) has provided funding for the Working Group for the next three years. Funding will be used for Working Group member travel to various events (i.e. End of season meetings, Board of Fish (BOF) meetings, etc) and for a project coordinator (ADF&G Fishery Biologist–Chris Shelden). Action Taken: The Working Group moved to accept nominee Nick Petruska to the seat of Headwaters Subsistence representative on the Working Group. The Working Group discussed drafting a letter to State Gubernatorial and Legislative Representatives, ADF&G Departmental staff, the Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Regional Advisory Council (RAC), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) protesting the lack of funding to maintain ADF&G Subsistence Division (SD) staff in the Bethel ADF&G office.
6/2/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 9:04 a.m. on Friday, June 2 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Eight of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence fishers, the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), the USFWS, ADF&G regarding early salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Early reports indicated that few if any salmon had yet arrived in the Bethel area. The ONC inseason survey was ready to begin, but there had not yet been any fishers identified for survey. BTF had begun operations but had not yet caught fish of any species. According to the USGS monitoring site in Crooked Creek, water levels on the Kuskokwim were unusually high for that time of year. Weir and sonar projects were in the process of coming online and had not yet observed any salmon passage. Processors stated that they would be ready to receive fish by the time of the traditional commercial fishery. The Working Group reviewed member status. Action Taken: Establish a 7-day per week subsistence fishing schedule beginning 4 June. The Working Group voted to add Nick Alexia of Nikolai as alternate to the seat of Headwaters Subsistence, and to add Steve Sathers, Perry Hendricks,

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Date	Comment
	and Jim Sartelli as alternates to the Processor seat. The Working Group agreed that in 2006, area processors CVS and IFP would each have voting rights at alternate Working Group meetings. Working Group Request: The Working Group requested that an updated member list be provided at the next meeting. The Working Group also requested that ADF&G provide an informational packet containing run assessment data during the week of 4 June to keep members informed between meetings.
6/15/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 7:05 p.m. on Thursday, June 15 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Seven of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence fishers, the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), and ADF&G regarding early salmon run strength in the Bethel area. ONC reported that the inseason catch monitoring program had begun and that interviewed fishers reported Chinook salmon to be a bit late, but otherwise progressing normally. Fishers felt it was too early to assess chum and sockeye salmon strength at that time. Middle river representatives reported a few fish showing up. Upper river representatives reported higher abundance for all species than normal for this time of year. Headwaters fishers had not yet observed salmon passage in their area. ADF&G reported that water levels as measured by the USGS station in Crooked Creek had dropped below average for this time of year. However, water temperature as measured by the BTF was approximately 3 degrees C below average for that time of year. Catches of Chinook and chum salmon were behind other years with similar water levels. This was attributed to late breakup and low water temperatures. The Working Group continued its review of member status. Action Taken: Establish a 7-day per week subsistence fishing schedule. The Working Group resolved to seek recommendations for a new representative for the Downriver Elder seat, and new alternates for the Downriver Elder and Member at Large seats on the Working Group.
6/20/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 20 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Ten of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The Group adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence fishers, the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), and ADF&G regarding salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Lower river representatives reported that subsistence fishers in that area were catching well. ONC reported that the inseason catch monitoring program was well underway and that most families were reporting catches of

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Date	Comment
	Chinook and chum salmon to be normal to very good for that stage of the run. The ONC representative offered the personal observation that many families had waited until the lifting of the subsistence fishing schedule to begin fishing. Middle and upper river representatives expressed satisfaction that the subsistence fishing schedule had been lifted. Most middle and upper river subsistence fishers had not yet begun fishing, though two Chinook salmon had been caught in Headwaters area. The Working Group received an overview of 2006 Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment projects which included a list of cooperative projects with participation from Kuskokwim Native Association (KNA), ADF&G, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Office of Subsistence management (OSM), and Bering Sea Fisherman's Association (BSFA). ADF&G reported Kuskokwim River surface water temperatures as recorded by the BTF had recently begun to increase. Water temperatures earlier in the month had been well below average. Increases in salmon catches in the BTF and subsistence fisheries was attributed to increasing water temperature following an abnormally late breakup and subsequent low temperatures earlier in the month. Catches in the BTF remained behind other years of similar water level. Weir projects had not yet seen many salmon arriving on the spawning grounds. Action Taken: The Working Group chose to take no action on commercial fishing at that time. The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Saturday, 24 June, to reassess salmon run indicators and revisit opening the commercial fishery. The Working Group voted to name James Charles (Member at Large) to the seat of Downriver Elder. Tuntutuliak residents Ronald Simon and Henry Lupie were invited to attend the next meeting as prospective replacements for James Charles as Member at Large.
6/24/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 24 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Seven of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence fishers, the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), and ADF&G regarding salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Lower river representatives reported that approximately half of the subsistence fishers in the Bethel area had finishing fishing for 2006. Fishers in the middle river, upper river, and headwaters areas were just getting started. Cumulative Chinook salmon catches in the BTF were climbing. Sockeye salmon catches still seemed to be behind other years. Catches of chum salmon had risen above any other year with similar water levels. Catches of Chinook and chum salmon at the Kalskag fishwheels were above those of the year before, though catches of sockeye salmon seemed to be behind those of the year before. Few salmon had yet been observed at area escapement projects.

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Date	Comment
	Action Taken: Scheduling a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A (above Bethel) Monday, June 26, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm, and announcing a second six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Tuesday, June 27, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm.
6/29/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 12:04 p.m. on Thursday, June 29 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Nine of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 p.m. The Working Group heard reports from subsistence fishers, the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), and ADF&G regarding salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Lower river representatives reported that fishers in the Bethel area felt that the Chinook salmon run was late but progressing well. Most families reported Chinook and chum fishing as very good. A few families reported sockeye fishing as poor. Fishers in the middle river were nearly finished and fishers in the Upper river area were having no trouble catching what they needed. Fishers in the headwaters area were still reporting slower than normal fishing for this time of year. Cumulative catches of Chinook and sockeye salmon in the BTF remained behind years with similar water levels. Catches of chum salmon appeared to be well above comparable years. At the Kalskag fishwheels project, catches of Chinook, sockeye and chum salmon had increased substantially in recent days. Counts of salmon at escapement projects appeared to be slow for that time of year. Processors reported that they had had trouble keeping up with airlift capacity for salmon caught in the Bethel area. There would be no foreseeable remedy to this lack of capacity in the near future.
	Action Taken: The Working Group confirmed Henry Lupie to the seat of Member at Large and Ron Simon as alternate to the seat of Member at Large on the Working Group.
7/28/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 10:10 a.m. on Friday, July 28 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Six of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was not established. The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m. The Working Group heard reports from ADF&G regarding salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Kuskokwim River subsistence representatives reported that few subsistence users make use of drift or set net gear to catch coho salmon, most preferring rod and reel. Subsistence users typically take few coho salmon except those they wish to eat right away. BTF catches of Chinook salmon had decreased to zero. Cumulative BTF catches of sockeye, the second highest on record, were steadily decreasing. Cumulative catches of chum salmon were also the second highest on record and remained above average for that time of year. BTF catches of coho salmon had been steadily increasing.

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Date	Comment
	Action Taken: The Working Group confirmed Henry Lupie to the seat of Member at Large and Ron Simon as alternate to the seat of Member at Large on the Working Group. The Working Group chose to grant ADF&G the latitude to schedule commercial openings for coho salmon in District W-1 if run indices and ratios between chum and coho salmon within the BTF proved favorable.
8/05/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 10:04 a.m. on Friday, August 05 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Seven of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m. The Working Group heard reports from ADF&G regarding salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Catches of coho salmon in the BTF have been consistent and are average for years of similar water levels. BTF catches of Chinook salmon had decreased to zero. BTF catches of sockeye, the second highest on record, were steadily decreasing. Catches of chum salmon were also the second highest on record and remained above average for that time of year. BTF catches of coho salmon had been steadily increasing. A six (6) hour commercial fishing period was conducted in Subdistrict W-1B on August 1, 2006 and a six (6) hour commercial fishing period was conducted in Subdistrict W-1A on August 3, 2006 followed by a six (6) hour commercial fishing period was conducted in Subdistrict W-1A on August 3, 2006. Commercial CPUE for coho salmon were well below average for this time of year. Overall effort was well below historical highs for all periods. Processors reported being pleased with the results of recent commercial openings.
	Action Taken: Schedule a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A (above Bethel) Monday, August 7, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm, and announcing a second six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Tuesday, August 8, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm. The Working Group left the decision to schedule further openings later in the coming week to the Department's discretion.
8/12/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 12:05 p.m. on Saturday, August 12 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Eight of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m. The Working Group heard reports from ADF&G regarding salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Catches of coho salmon in the BTF had recently improved. Small relative catches of coho salmon in the BTF and commercial fishery were in contrast with counts and catches of coho salmon recorded at escapement projects and the Kalskag fish wheels. It was suggested that the small relative size of coho salmon in 2006 could have been reducing the BTF catch and the resulting abundance index compared to years when coho salmon were larger on average. Coho salmon counts at escapement projects were

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Date	Comment
	near to above average for this time of year. Commercial harvest of coho salmon remained below average as did CPUE. Fishers reported better catches when switching to smaller size mesh nets. Three six (6) hour commercial openings were conducted in the week prior to the meeting on 8, 10, and 11 august in subdistricts W-1B, W-1A, and W-1B respectively. Coho salmon were observed to be of below average size. Processors were pleased with the fishery so far. Action Taken: Schedule announcing a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A (above Bethel) Monday, August 14, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm, and announcing a second six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Tuesday, August 15, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm. The Working Group left the decision to schedule further openings later in the coming week to the Department's discretion. Working Group Request: The Working Group requested for the next meeting that ADF&G provide information regarding the three proposals for the Kuskokwim Area scheduled to come before the Board of Fish in February 2007.
8/19/2006	The Working Group was called to order at 12:05 p.m. on Saturday, August 19 at the ADF&G conference room in Bethel. Seven of thirteen Working Group representatives participated; a quorum was established. The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m. The Working Group heard reports from ADF&G regarding salmon run strength in the Bethel area. Catches of coho salmon in the BTF had decreased. Small relative catches of coho salmon in the BTF and commercial fishery were in contrast with counts and catches of coho salmon recorded at escapement projects and the Kalskag fish wheels. It was suggested that the small relative size of coho salmon in 2006 could have been reducing the BTF catch and the resulting abundance index compared to years when coho salmon were larger on average. Coho salmon counts at escapement projects were above average for that time of year. Commercial harvest of coho salmon remained below average as did CPUE. Fishers reported better catches when switching to smaller mesh-size nets. Four six (6) hour commercial openings were conducted in the week prior to the meeting on 14, 15, 16 and 17 August in subdistricts W-1A, W-1B, W-1A and W-1B respectively. Coho salmon were observed to be of below average size. Processors were pleased with the fishery. Action Taken: Schedule a six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1A (above Bethel) on Monday, August 21, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm, and a second six (6) hour commercial fishing period in Subdistrict W-1B (below Bethel) on Tuesday, August 22, 2006 from 12:00pm to 6:00pm. The Working Group left the decision to schedule further openings later in the coming week to the Department's discretion.

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Appendix E1.–Page 15 of 15.

Date	Comment
9/28/2006	The Working Group 'Fall Meeting' was called to order at 9:00 a.m. in the conference room of the Joe Lomack Building (AVCP) in Bethel. Ten Working Group representatives were present along with ADF&G staff, USFWS staff, and representatives from the AVCP, ONC, KNA, University of Alaska Fairbanks, CVRF and IFP, the local media, and the general public. Travel to the meeting was arranged by ADF&G staff and funded by USFWS OSM under project number 06-307. End of season fisheries summaries were presented regarding: (1) The Division of Subsistence Kuskokwim Area Post Season survey. (2) District W-1 commercial fishery summaries. (3) Kuskokwim Area sport fisheries. (5) Kuskokwim Area escapement monitoring projects. In addition, Working Group members discussed proposals for the Kuskokwim Area to come before the BOF at the upcoming meeting in early 2007. Working Group members voted not to support Proposals 155 and 156 and unanimously voted to support proposal 157. The Working Group also requested and heard a presentation by Tom Crafford from Alaska DNR regarding current and future mineral exploration and development within the Kuskokwim Area. <u>Meeting Action Items</u>: (1) The Working Group would draft and hand carry a letter before the Board of Fish (BOF) at its AYK Regulatory meeting in late January, supporting proposal 157 to designate the Holitna River Basin as a 'fisheries reserve'. (2) The Working Group discussed assembling a list of questions regarding the impacts of mineral development within the Kuskokwim Area (3) The Working Group resolved to be prepared to participate in the scoping process related to the application for the development of the Donlin Creek Mine.

APPENDIX F

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

May 25, 2005

RESOLUTION 05-01

TITLE: SUPPORTING THE KUSKOKWIM RIVER SUBISISTENCE FISHING SCHEDULE AS IT APPLIES TO THE EARLY PORTION OF THE CHINOOK SALMON RUN.

WHEREAS The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG) is an organization which is charged with the responsibility of managing the Kuskokwim River Salmon resources; and

WHEREAS The KRSMWG membership consists of subsistence fishermen, commercial fishermen, sport fishermen, all from lower, middle and upper river communities, processors and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game; and

WHEREAS The KRSMWG has a vested interest in the development and utilization of the salmon resources for subsistence, commercial, and sport uses in the Kuskokwim River.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP supports the Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fishing Schedule as it applies to the early portion of the Chinook salmon run.

Adopted this 25th day of May 2005, at the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group's meeting in Bethel, Alaska, at which a duly constituted quorum of delegates was present.

_____ _____

James Charles, Member at Large Beverly Hoffman, Co-Chairman

_____

Greg Roczicka, Co-Chairman

APPENDIX G

Appendix G1.–Letter from the Working Group to Department of Natural Resources, September 20, 2005.

Holitna Oil and Gas Exploration Public Comment letter

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Group

P. O. Box 1467

Bethel, AK 99559-1467

Oil & Gas Permitting/BIF Manager

Jonne Slemons

Division of Oil and Gas

550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 800

Anchorage, AK 99501

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Group, an organization comprised of members from the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River to Kuskokwim Bay, wishes to participate in the "final best interest finding…" for the proposed "Holitna Basin Exploration License for gas only." Since the final written finding will affect us for better or worse, we respectfully request the opportunity to participate at whatever level and, wherever on the Kuskokwim River, dialogue and planning continue.

While it is not this body's position to support or oppose any exploration for gas in the Holitna Basin, we are obligated to ensure that all due diligence be given to guaranteeing that the natural resources which allow us to utilize our fisheries, whether for subsistence, commercial, or sport fish purposes, not be compromised in any way.

Inasmuch as any action taken upriver will influence our downriver fisheries, we urge you to conduct hearings in Bethel and other downriver communities so that their testimony can be included and given the appropriate weight in the State of Alaska's decision-making process.

Decisions rendered based on limited public participation will be incomplete, not have the support of the area's residents and perhaps will not be in compliance with minimum statutory requirements. The Kuskokwim River Watershed area is a tremendously large portion of Alaska's land and any actions taken which may or may not be beneficial to our indigenous flora and fauna (and those who depend on same), deserve an open and honest public participation process.

We respectfully thank you for your consideration.

Bev Hoffman LaMont E. Albertson Greg Roczicka

Co chairs, Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Group

APPENDIX H

Appendix H1.–ADF&G Letter to the Working Group, September 20, 2005.

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

P.O. Box 1467 • Bethel, AK 99559 • 907-543-2433 • 907-543-2021 fax

Tuesday, September 20, 2005:

The end of season meeting for the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group has been scheduled to take place in the Bethel ADF&G conference room on Monday, September 26, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. The meeting time and place has been confirmed by the call of the chair and set to occur prior to the 'Kuskokwim River Watershed Council' meeting taking place in Bethel on Tuesday & Wednesday, September 27 & 28. We hope that those interested parties planning to attend the Watershed Council meeting will make travel arrangements to include the Working Group end of season meeting on Monday as part of their itineraries. The Working Group meeting will include teleconference capabilities as normal for those parties not planning to attend in person.

This end of season Working Group meeting will follow a time frame and format similar to inseason Working Group meetings by summarizing the 2005 season in addition to continuing business. We plan to distribute a meeting agenda and packet by Friday, September 23.

Unfortunately, due to a budget shortfall in 2005, ADF&G does not have funding to provide travel for Working Group members to an end of season meeting. However, we do hope to have travel funding for Working Group members secured for next year. Thank you, if you have any questions please feel free to contact myself or the Area Management Biologist, John Linderman (543-2709) directly.

Michael Martz
Fisheries Biologist
Bethel Office
(907) 543-1678

APPENDIX I

Kuskokwim River Salmon
Management Working Group
P. O. Box 1467
Bethel, AK 99559-1467

28 October 2005

Oil & Gas Permitting/BIF Manager
Jonne Slemons
Division of Oil and Gas
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 800
Anchorage, AK 99501

Ms. Slemons:

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group met in Bethel on 26 September 2005 and discussed the upcoming public hearing on the proposed gas-only exploration license for the Holitna River basin.

We thank you for holding a hearing in Bethel on 28 September, and the prior hearings in Aniak, Sleetmute, Crooked Creek, and Red Devil. We also noted that there is a deadline of 30 September for written comments.

We would like to go on record as opposing the granting of a lease at this time unless or until it can be assured that water quality and quantity will not be effected by this lease.

We make this request based on the importance of the Holitna river system to the fish of the Kuskokwim, and the importance of those fish to the residents of the Kuskokwim. Studies over the last few years have established that 25% of the Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon run comes from the Holitna River basin. Just this year we have also learned that perhaps as much as 50% of the sockeye salmon entering the Kuskokwim River are headed to the Holitna River basin. Also notable is that these sockeye may be unique in that they spawn and rear in river environment as compared to most other sockeye populations that are dependent on lake systems for their early life history. It has not been determined which part of the river system the resulting fry and smolt depend on for the 2 years they spend in the river. There is also heavy use of the Holitna River basin by whitefish species that likely contribute to subsistence harvest throughout the entire Kuskokwim River basin.

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Subsistence users alone have harvested 80,000 Chinook salmon annually for the last two years, and escapement goals have been met. This catch represents 50% of the total statewide subsistence harvest of Chinook salmon. We state this to emphasize the importance of the Holitna River basin in relation to other streams in the State.

Thank you for your consideration of these important concerns.

Bev Hoffman **Greg Roczicka**

Co chairs, Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Group

APPENDIX J

PROPOSAL 155 -5 AAC 07.331. Gillnet specifications and operations. Amend this regulation to provide the following:

In District 1, salmon may be taken with gillnets of up to eight or smaller mesh in the early part of the season (June 15 to July 1).

ISSUE: The mesh sizes for gillnets were reduced to 6-inch or smaller in response to the decline in Chinook in the Kuskokwim area about ten or more years ago. The current department information shows a rapid increase of Chinook in the Kuskokwim within the last five years. Therefore, commercial fishermen in District 1 would like to see a limited Chinook targeted fishery with use of larger mesh gear to harvest the surplus of Chinook in the first part of the season while they are still fresh and marketable.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? The local residents of district 1 will continue to not be able to take advantage of harvesting a limited number of Chinook to boost the overall economy in the area.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? Yes, the Kuskokwim area fish are historically of best quality in the lower part of the Kuskokwim River and during the period suggest in this proposal.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? All district 1 commercial fisherman, fish buyers, and the local economy.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? There will not be any significant loss or suffering to other users or the resource as the numbers indicate there is sufficient surplus at this time to merit this small increase in harvest.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Return to prior to 1985 management. It would be too extreme at this time.

PROPOSED BY: Lower Kuskokwim Advisory committee (SW-06F-040).

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PROPOSAL 156 -5AAC 07.365. Kuskokwim Rive Salmon Rebuilding Management plan. Amend this regulation as follows:

During commercial openings, the lower portion of the river will be open for eight (8) hours while the upper portion remains the same at six (6) hours.

The Kuskokwim River is divided into two, the upper and lower, districts thus having different openings depending on the fish runs.

ISSUE: Commercial districts in the Kuskokwim River. Open the lower portion of the river for eight (8) hours per opening. Upriver fishermen report catching more than we, due to river narrowing towards Bethel. The lower portion is about two and one half to three miles wide in some areas and thus fish are more spread out than in narrower areas. Average fish caught on the lower portion of the Kuskokwim for about one half (0.5) hour would be 25 to 30 on the other hand, upriver would catch about twice the average or more in the same amount of time. The other idea would be to separate the district into two lower and upper, both having different times of openings depending on the fish run.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Probably the department will be the one to take the findings of not having openings even though there was an average run during that time and only opened up the upriver portion. Also, mainly fish run is always dependent on fish tests done near Bethel and not always accurate readings/tests. Bethel is far from the mouth of the river and when fish runs are abundant downriver, they may not be upriver and when they abundant upriver they may not be downriver, so it is like playing a game of see-saw.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? Production will probably go up due to a better managed organization of the two districts, or prolonged hours fished downriver.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Lower portion and upper portion of the Kuskokwim.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? The department, trying to manage two districts.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Separate the district into two lower and upper, both having different times of openings depending on the fish run.

PROPOSED BY: Douglas Kernak (HQ-06-011)

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PROPOSAL 157 – This proposal asks the Board of Fisheries to recommend to the legislature, as per AS 16.05.251 (a)(1), that a reserve area be designated as follows:

Per authority granted under 16.05.251(a)(1), that the Board of Fisheries may adopt regulations it considers advisable for setting apart fisheries reserve areas, refuges, and sanctuaries in the water or on the land of the state over which it has jurisdiction, subject to approval of the legislature, the Board hereby establishes the Holitna Basin Fisheries Reserve consisting of the mainstem and tributaries of the Holitna River from Gemuk Lake to its confluence with the Kuskokwim.

For the purposes of this designation, "reserve" means to specifically recognize, elevate and emphasize the area's high productivity potential; and that habitat maintenance for its abundant fisheries resources, dependent subsistence and other human harvest opportunity is the primary over-riding management purpose, such that any other activities are of secondary consideration in their potential degradation to the areas' highest and best use; this being, preservation in perpetuity for the Holitna Basin's significant productivity and contribution for salmon and other fisheries species to the entire Kuskokwim drainage.

ISSUE: The Holitna Basin is a highly productive ecosystem essential to the regional health of human and fisheries resources in the Kuskokwim region that has little in place against other competitive use interests to assure conservation of habitat and related fish stocks in the future.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Future development activities representing significant threat to maintain long term integrity of the Holitna River system's fisheries productivity for the entire Kuskokwim drainage may well occur.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOUCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? The magnitude and fundamental support of the Holitna River system for sustained yield of fish stocks to residents of the Kuskokwim cannot be over emphasized. Studies over just the last few years have established that 25 percent of the Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon (a board recognized stock of concern) comes from the Holitna River Basin. To punctuate this area's comparative importance in the broader state perspective, the subsistence catch of Kuskokwim Chinook represents 50 percent of the total King salmon subsistence harvest statewide.

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It also has recently been found that as much as 50 percent of the sockeye salmon for the Kuskokwim originate in the Holitna River Basin. Of special note is that these sockeye may be unique in that they spawn and rear in a river environment, as compared to most other statewide sockeye populations that are dependent on lake systems for their early life history. It has yet to be determined which parts of the river system are most important for the 2 rearing years spent in the river. There is also heavy use of the Holitna Basin by whitefish species that are important in contributing to subsistence harvests throughout the entire Kuskokwim region.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? All consumptive and non-consumptive user groups dependent upon the fish stock contributions of the Holitna river Basin.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? Entities focused or oriented towards speculative, short term interest gains, without abiding consequences incumbent to degradation aftereffects.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Pursue designation as a Critical Habitat Area: The Kuskokwim area has been woefully lacking historically in funding and research activities common to other areas of the state. With the recent advent of management support, significant findings as referenced above have already been found in just a few short years. At present this remains an option for further discussion.

PROPESED BY: Orutsararmiut Native Council and Sleetmute Traditional Council (HQ-06F-118)

Board of Game – Action on Proposals **March – 2006 Interior Region Meeting**

Proposal No. 158 **Action: Carried**

DESCRIPTION: Create a big game reserve in the entire Holitna drainage.

DISCUSSION: This regulation is contingent upon legislative approval, and the board encouraged the sponsor to talk to local senator and representatives to get a statutory designation. Since there are fish habitats, the sponsor must get Board of Fisheries approval too. The board's intent was not to restrict fish and game uses, but to designate the area as being very important to fish and wildlife resources, especially as other proposed uses of the area come up in the future.