

**Fishery Management Report No. 10-42**

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**Activities of the Kuskokwim River Salmon  
Management Working Group, 2009**

**Final Report for Study 06-307  
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management  
Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program**

**by**

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**and**

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November 2010

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries



## Symbols and Abbreviations

The following symbols and abbreviations, and others approved for the Système International d'Unités (SI), are used without definition in the following reports by the Divisions of Sport Fish and of Commercial Fisheries: Fishery Manuscripts, Fishery Data Series Reports, Fishery Management Reports, and Special Publications. All others, including deviations from definitions listed below, are noted in the text at first mention, as well as in the titles or footnotes of tables, and in figure or figure captions.

<b>Weights and measures (metric)</b>		<b>General</b>		<b>Mathematics, statistics</b>	
centimeter	cm	Alaska Administrative Code	AAC	<i>all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations</i>	
deciliter	dL	all commonly accepted abbreviations	e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.	alternate hypothesis	$H_A$
gram	g	all commonly accepted professional titles	e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.	base of natural logarithm	$e$
hectare	ha	at	@	catch per unit effort	CPUE
kilogram	kg	compass directions:		coefficient of variation	CV
kilometer	km	east	E	common test statistics	(F, t, $\chi^2$ , etc.)
liter	L	north	N	confidence interval	CI
meter	m	south	S	correlation coefficient (multiple)	R
milliliter	mL	west	W	correlation coefficient (simple)	r
millimeter	mm	copyright	©	covariance	cov
		corporate suffixes:		degree (angular)	°
<b>Weights and measures (English)</b>		Company	Co.	degrees of freedom	df
cubic feet per second	ft <sup>3</sup> /s	Corporation	Corp.	expected value	$E$
foot	ft	Incorporated	Inc.	greater than	>
gallon	gal	Limited	Ltd.	greater than or equal to	≥
inch	in	District of Columbia	D.C.	harvest per unit effort	HPUE
mile	mi	et alii (and others)	et al.	less than	<
nautical mile	nmi	et cetera (and so forth)	etc.	less than or equal to	≤
ounce	oz	exempli gratia		logarithm (natural)	ln
pound	lb	(for example)	e.g.	logarithm (base 10)	log
quart	qt	Federal Information Code	FIC	logarithm (specify base)	log <sub>2</sub> , etc.
yard	yd	id est (that is)	i.e.	minute (angular)	'
		latitude or longitude	lat. or long.	not significant	NS
<b>Time and temperature</b>		monetary symbols (U.S.)	\$, ¢	null hypothesis	$H_0$
day	d	months (tables and figures): first three letters	Jan, ..., Dec	percent	%
degrees Celsius	°C	registered trademark	®	probability	P
degrees Fahrenheit	°F	trademark	™	probability of a type I error (rejection of the null hypothesis when true)	$\alpha$
degrees kelvin	K	United States (adjective)	U.S.	probability of a type II error (acceptance of the null hypothesis when false)	$\beta$
hour	h	United States of America (noun)	USA	second (angular)	"
minute	min	U.S.C.	United States Code	standard deviation	SD
second	s	U.S. state	use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)	standard error	SE
				variance	
<b>Physics and chemistry</b>				population	Var
all atomic symbols				sample	var
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				

***FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT NO. 10-42***

**ACTIVITIES OF THE KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT  
WORKING GROUP, 2009**

by

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November 2010

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## ABSTRACT

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) was formed in 1988 by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF). Working Group meetings provide the forum for area fishermen, user representatives, community representatives, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (RAC) representatives, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Advisory Committee members and State and Federal managers to come together and discuss issues relevant to management of Kuskokwim River salmon populations. The Working Group meets several times a year to review run assessment information and strives to reach a consensus on how to proceed with management of Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries. The first meeting of 2009 was held in March in conjunction with the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area Interagency meeting, and inseason meetings occurred during May through August. A summary and review session was held in late September, for a total of 16 meetings in 2009.

Key words: subsistence fishing, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, salmon fishery management, Bethel, Kuskokwim River, Chinook *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, chum *O. keta*, sockeye *O. nerka*, and coho salmon *O. kisutch*.

## 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 management of salmon fishery resources (Francisco et al. 1989). The Working Group has become the forum through which inseason management decisions are made regarding Kuskokwim River subsistence, commercial and sport salmon fisheries (Figure 1). Pre- and postseason Working Group activity provides the opportunity to participate in regulatory processes that establish fishery management policies and regulations. In 2001, the Working Group modified their bylaws in order to more effectively address Federal subsistence management views by including seats for member representatives from the Kuskokwim River of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (RAC). The Working Group further modified their bylaws in 2005 to include representation from communities at the headwaters of the drainage. The Working Group is made up of 13 member organizations or constituencies (Appendix B1). These members represent: 2 elders (Upriver, Downriver), 4 subsistence fishermen (Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, and Headwaters), one processor representative, one commercial fisherman, one sport fisherman, one Member-at-Large seat, two RAC members (Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior), and ADF&G staff. One or more alternates are assigned for each designated Working Group member in the event the primary representative is unable to attend a meeting.

Participation in the Working Group process requires a great deal of time from its members and agency staff. The Working Group typically meets in spring each calendar year, conducts intensive and frequent meetings during the summer fishing season, and holds a wrap-up session in fall or early winter. Funding provided by Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) is an essential part of enhancing the Working Group process. This funding allows Alaska Department of Fish and Game (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 meetings relevant to Kuskokwim River fisheries, such as the postseason meeting in Anchorage and Kuskokwim Area interagency meetings. State general funds provide additional salary for ADF&G staff that coordinates the Working Group.

Working Group representative participation in meetings in Bethel and outside the Kuskokwim River drainage allows for an exchange of information between members and fishery assessment project leaders and research planners. Representatives were also able to testify at regulatory meetings in support of Working Group positions. The relationship among Working Group members, project leaders, research planners, and policy makers continues to be fostered, and these interactions are critical to the process. This relationship ensures that stakeholders remain up-to-date on new information and maintain their direct involvement in management of the fishery.

From July, 2002 through October, 2004, funding was available for support of the Working Group process through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) OSM project FIS 01-116. OSM funding was discontinued in 2005 and reestablished in 2006 under project FIS 06-307. The current OSM project provides funding through 2009 for Working Group member travel to meetings and conferences; meeting supplies and arrangements; and ADF&G staff time to coordinate the Working Group process and to summarize and distribute information for Working Group members.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Working Group process are:

1. Provide local fishermen and other users with an avenue for direct involvement in the management of Kuskokwim River fisheries.
2. Work towards the development of a comprehensive management plan for all Kuskokwim River salmon stocks.
3. Provide a forum for all parties with an interest in Kuskokwim River fisheries to work together to reach a consensus on management of the fisheries.
4. To strengthen the Working Group process.

The objective of project FIS 06-307 is to strengthen the 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 RAC 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 participation 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 bylaws of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group as amended July 29, 2006 (Appendix A1). The Bylaws describe the purpose, rules of conduct, representation, and selection of officers for the Working Group process. Meetings are generally held in the conference room located in the ADF&G Bethel field office. Working Group members from villages surrounding Bethel (particularly upriver

representatives) often participate in meetings by teleconference. Efforts are made to conduct two meetings per year where all members are able to attend in person (funding from this project provides the travel money for these meetings).

Working Group meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (Robert III et al. 2000) 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. Reports are heard and discussed regarding test fishery, escapement monitoring projects, and subsistence and commercial harvests. Based on these reports, ADF&G makes recommendations to the Working Group concerning management of Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries. The Working Group makes motions on ADF&G recommendations to facilitate discussion and work towards consensus on management decisions. Through this process, the Working Group has the ability to influence and affect management decisions, while the authority to implement management actions rests with ADF&G. 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, Federal Subsistence Board, ADF&G Advisory Committee meetings, RAC meetings, and other public meetings dealing with relevant fisheries 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 D), news releases, and newspaper articles.
3. Initiates Working Group meeting teleconferences.
4. Organizes and provides logistics for member travel.
5. Assists the Working Group by recommending potential members to fill vacancies.
6. Drafts an annual report of Working Group meetings and actions.
7. Distributes informational packets and summaries for each meeting.
8. Secures funding for the Working Group process.

## **2009 SEASON**

The Working Group met 16 times in calendar year 2009. The first meeting was held in March in conjunction with the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area Interagency meeting, and inseason meetings occurred May through August. A summary and review session was held in late September. Agenda and information packets were assembled prior to each meeting and distributed to members and other interested parties (Appendix C1). All inseason meetings were held in the Bethel ADF&G conference room. Detailed summaries of each meeting were sent to all members and any interested parties that requested to be included on informational distribution lists, usually within two weeks of the meeting (Appendices D1–D16).

The 2009 commercial fishing season began on June 23 and ended on August 22. Water level was below average through June, July and August as recorded at the Crooked Creek United States Geological Survey (USGS) gauging station. Water levels reached near historic lows during the

first week of July, towards the end of July, and during the middle of August. The water level was the second lowest recorded in 26 years at the Bethel Test Fish (BTF) assessment project. Water temperature was highly variable during June, above average during early and middle July, average during late July, below average during early and middle August, and highly variable during late August. Water clarity was above average during June, below average during early July, above average during middle July, and remained average for the remainder of the fishing season.

The midpoint of the Chinook salmon run reached Bethel on June 22. Chinook salmon abundance was below average in 2009, but generally adequate for achieving escapement goals and providing subsistence harvest opportunity (Estensen et al. 2009). Inseason, the BTF and Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) subsistence harvest monitoring reports indicated adequate abundance to allow the subsistence fishery to proceed 7 days per week (except for closures before, during and after commercial openings), and to provide opportunity for commercial fishing. Seven tributaries with established Chinook salmon escapement goals were assessed (four weirs and three aerial surveys). Four of the goals were achieved (weirs: George and Kogrukluks rivers; aerial surveys: Gagaryah and Salmon, or Pitka Fork rivers), and three were not (weirs: Tuluksak and Kwethluk rivers; aerial surveys: Cheeneetnuks River). With the exception of Tuluksak River, those tributaries where goals were not achieved had escapements close to the lower end of the escapement goal range. Additionally, escapements were monitored in six tributaries that do not have formal escapement goals, four of which were considered to have adequate escapement (aerial surveys: Holokuk, Oskawalik, Bear, and Upper Pitka Fork rivers), and two that fell slightly short of what was considered adequate (weirs: Tatlawiksuk and Takotna rivers). Overall, weir and aerial assessment projects suggested that adequate numbers of Chinook salmon escaped, and opportunity for subsistence and commercial harvest was provided.

The midpoint of the sockeye salmon run reached Bethel on June 30. Sockeye salmon abundance was above average in 2009 (Estensen et al. 2009). Inseason, the BTF and ONC subsistence harvest monitoring reports indicated adequate abundance to allow the subsistence fishery to proceed 7 days per week (except for closures before, during and after commercial openings), and to provide opportunity for commercial fishing. No formal escapement goals exist for sockeye salmon in the Kuskokwim River. Escapement monitoring for the species is mostly limited to weirs operated on the Kogrukluks and Kwethluk rivers, both of which had sockeye escapements that were fourth and third highest, respectively, on record in 2009, so it is reasonable to assume escapements were at least adequate.

The midpoint of the chum salmon run reached Bethel on July 8. Chum salmon abundance was near average in 2009 (Estensen et al. 2009). Inseason, the BTF and ONC subsistence harvest monitoring reports indicated adequate abundance to allow the subsistence fishery to proceed 7 days per week (except for closures before, during and after commercial openings), and to provide opportunity for commercial fishing. Chum salmon escapement goals are established for Aniak sonar and Kogrukluks weir. Escapement was at the upper end of the Aniak sonar escapement goal range and 70% above the upper end of the Kogrukluks weir goal, indicating more chum salmon could have been harvested; however, there was a limited commercial market for chum salmon in 2009. Chum escapements were also monitored in five other tributaries that do not have formal goals (Kwethluk, Tuluksak, George, Tatlawiksuk, and Takotna weirs), where escapements ranged from average to below average.

The midpoint of the coho salmon run reached Bethel on August 5. Coho salmon abundance in 2009 was below the recent 10-year average (Estensen et al. 2009). Inseason, the BTF and ONC subsistence harvest monitoring reports indicated adequate abundance to allow the subsistence fishery to proceed 7 days per week (except for closures before, during and after commercial openings), and to provide opportunity for commercial fishing. The KogrukluK is the only tributary with a formal escapement goal established for coho. KogrukluK coho escapement fell within the goal range in 2009. Coho escapements were also monitored in five other tributaries that do not have formal goals (Kwethluk, Tuluksak, George, Tatlawiksuk, and Takotna weirs), and escapements were generally below average at these locations.

## **COMMERCIAL HARVEST**

In 2009 there were 16 commercial opening periods in district W-1, two of which were directed towards the catcher/seller market. A total of 6,664 Chinook salmon; 25,673 sockeye salmon; 76,790 chum salmon and 104,546 coho salmon were commercially harvested. A total of 342 individual permit holders (making at least one recorded landing) participated in the District W-1 commercial fishery. That level of effort (average number of permit holders per opening) is below the historical and most recent 10-year average. Total Chinook salmon harvest was below historical average but above most recent 10-year average, and was the second highest harvest since 1998. Total chum salmon harvest was below historical average but above most recent 10-year average, and was the highest since 1998. Total sockeye salmon harvest was below historical average but above most recent 10-year average, and was the second highest harvest since 1998. Total coho salmon harvest was below most recent 10-year average and third lowest harvest since 1998. The estimated value of the 2009 total commercial catch in district W-1 was \$502,848; with an average income of \$1,470 per permit holder. From 1999 to 2008 the 10-year average value for total District 1 commercial catch was \$445,296, with an average income of \$1,102 per permit holder. The average income for individual permit holders has increased slightly since 2007; however, it is less than half the average income earned in the 1990's (Estensen et al. 2009).

In 2009, the processor, Coastal Village Seafood (CVS), opened a new processing plant in Platinum and continued operation of their Quinhagak plant.

## **DISCUSSION**

In April of 2009 a Fishery Biologist II position was created within the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area management staff to serve as the project leader to the Post Season Subsistence Harvest Survey project and to serve as the Working Group Coordinator; this position was filled by Holly Carroll. Duties of Working Group Coordinator are carried out either directly, or delegated to the Working Group Coordinator Assistant Nick Bradley. These duties include planning meeting logistics, compiling informational packets, coordinating Working Group member meeting attendance, summarizing and archiving meeting minutes, authoring the annual Working Group report, assisting with development and tracking of Working Group budgets and expenditures, making arrangements for member travel to Anchorage and Bethel for meetings. Salary for Nick Bradley's position was provided for by FIS 06-307 and State of Alaska general fund monies.

Some administrative changes that were made this year to improve the Working Group process included the use of a new teleconference system that allowed callers to dial in, unassisted, with an access code. This proved to be cheaper than the previous teleconference system which involved more staff time calling each member to confirm their attendance, and provided wider

access to those interested in attending the meetings telephonically. Another improvement was the streamlining of the meeting minutes. These were summarized (after listening to meeting recordings) in an easy-to-read bulleted format. Increased efforts were also made to produce these quickly for distribution before each subsequent meeting.

The Working Group process provided an opportunity for stakeholders in Kuskokwim Area fisheries to make recommendations regarding policies, regulations, and potential actions for salmon management. Meetings also allowed managers to listen to feedback from fishermen regarding subsistence harvest and other issues affecting the region.

Some of the notable decisions or actions made by the Working Group during 2009 included the sponsorship of a proposal to the BOF to eliminate the regulation allowing (by emergency order) 8” mesh fishing gear in commercial fisheries; and support of a cap limit on salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery (Appendix D1).

Membership changes in 2009 included naming Wayne and Angela Morgan as Middle River Subsistence member alternates, and Calvin Simeon as the primary Middle River Subsistence member. Peter Miller was removed (at his request) as Downriver Elder alternate, and was replaced by Chuck Chaliak.

In 2009 the Working group held six more meetings than in 2008, and attendance appeared to have been slightly lower with quorums established at 10 of the 16 meetings. Throughout the season members commented on the frequency, time of meetings, length of meetings, and also about the lack of compensation for attending meetings. These issues were added to the agenda for discussion at the 2010 Kuskokwim Interagency meeting.

During the 2009 fishing season, there were three occasions when motions to support the commercial openings recommended by ADF&G area manager failed because consensus was not reached by the Working Group. On these occasions the fisheries were prosecuted as recommended because ADF&G staff felt that the recommended commercial openings would not negatively affect salmon escapement or subsistence opportunity (Appendices D4, D10 and D13).

Overall, in 2009, the Working Group process ensured that management agencies kept the public informed of fishery issues, gave timely fishery run status information, and maintained an open dialogue with area fishermen. In addition to interactions with Working Group members, the process encouraged and supported participation of a number of tribal organizations and federal agencies including the Kuskokwim Native Association (KNA), ONC, the McGrath Native Village Council, the Association of Village Council Presidents, Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association, Coastal Villages Region Fund, the USFWS Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta National Wildlife Refuge, and the USFWS OSM. The Federal Subsistence Board attended the June 23 meeting in Bethel as an opportunity to see the Working Group process and to receive an overview of each member’s involvement. Participation in this process by such a broad spectrum of 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.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Through the Working Group process, management of Kuskokwim River salmon stocks was successfully conducted during the 2007, 2008 and 2009 seasons. The majority of salmon escapement goals were achieved or exceeded and opportunities were provided to Kuskokwim

Area residents for subsistence fishing. Additional harvestable surpluses were utilized by commercial and sport fisheries.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Kuskokwim Area residents want to be informed of salmon resource issues and to be involved in the fishery management process. We recommend that the current Working Group process be maintained and the following actions continue to be pursued:

1. While the inseason meetings can be conducted by teleconference, every effort should be made postseason to get Working Group members together in person to review management strategies and run forecasts for the upcoming season and to discuss relevant issues.
2. ADF&G staff and Working Group efforts to inform area fishermen of fishery status and management strategies through discussion, news releases, newspaper articles, and radio talk shows should be maintained.
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. Funding should continue to be pursued to pay for Working Group members' travel expenses when participating in regulatory and policy meetings such as the BOF. Working Group member involvement in this process is essential in developing understanding and agreement on regulatory fisheries issues in the Kuskokwim Area.
5. Travel expenses should be paid for Working Group member participation in other fishery related meetings associated with the Kuskokwim Area, such as the bi-annual interagency meetings in Anchorage, to allow them to contribute and stay informed of management and research planning programs and regulatory issues.
6. Effort should be made to select informed alternates for each Working Group seat. Currently the upriver elder seat is unrepresented. 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.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We wish to thank the Working Group members, ADF&G Kuskokwim Area and Regional fishery staff, USFWS Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta Refuge staff and OSM staff, RAC members and those individuals and groups that have participated in this open and voluntary cooperative management process. Thanks also to staff at OSM, Fisheries Division, USFWS who reviewed this document.

ADF&G wishes to thank OSM for providing \$121,973 in funding 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 06-307.

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## **FIGURE**



Figure 1.-Kuskokwim Management Area.

## **APPENDIX A**

BYLAWS OF THE  
KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

---

**PURPOSE**

To provide local fishermen and other users with an avenue for direct involvement 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

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- 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 where in 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 where in 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 Fishermen (1), Member at Large (1), Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Committees (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior) (2), and the Department of Fish and 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 and 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 and 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.

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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

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purpose of conducting meetings. The Co-Chairs will be elected annually at the first meeting occurring after March 1<sup>st</sup>. 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.

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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.

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- 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 BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new bylaws 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 bylaws at such meeting.



## **APPENDIX B**

Appendix B1.-2009 Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group Representation.

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<b>SEAT</b>	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ALTERNATE</b>
<b>Downriver Elder</b>	James Charles	Chuck Chaliak
<b>Headwaters Subsistence</b>	Nick Petruska	Nick Alexia Sr.
<b>Upriver Elder</b>	Iyana Gusty	Vacant
<b>Lower R. Subsistence</b>	Mike Williams	Greg Roczicka
<b>Middle R. Subsistence</b>	Calvin Simeon	Angela Morgan Wayne Morgan
<b>Upriver Subsistence</b>	Evelyn Thomas	Pete Mellick Sophie Gregory
<b>Processor</b>	Stuart Curry (CVS)	Steve Sather Perry Hendricks Tim Hillyer
<b>Member at Large</b>	Henry Lupie	Fritz Charles Ron Simon
<b>YK Delta RAC</b>	Bob Aloysius	Mary Gregory
<b>Commercial Fisher</b>	Charlie Brown	Sam Alexie Douglas Kernak
<b>Western Interior RAC</b>	Ray Collins	Carl Morgan
<b>Sport Fishing</b>	Lamont Albertson	Beverly Hoffman
<b>Chair Members</b>	Lamont Albertson Beverly Hoffman Greg Roczicka	

## **APPENDIX C**

**Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group  
IN-SEASON AGENDA FORM**

1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

Date: July 2, 2009 Time: 10:00 a.m. Meeting Place: Bethel Fish and Game Office

**CALL TO ORDER:** \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**ROLL CALL:**

**Upriver Elder:**

**Processor:**

**Downriver Elder:**

**Member at Large:**

**Commercial Fisher:**

**Sport Fisher:**

**Lower River Subsistence:**

**Western Interior RAC:**

**Middle River Subsistence:**

**Y-K Delta RAC:**

**Upper River Subsistence:**

**ADF&G:**

**Headwaters Subsistence:**

**INTRODUCTIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INVOCATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

1. Subsistence Reports: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Lower River: \_\_\_\_\_

b. ONC Inseason Subsistence \_\_\_\_\_

c. Middle River: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Upper River: \_\_\_\_\_

e. Headwaters: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Overview of 2009 Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment projects: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Bethel Test fish \_\_\_\_\_

b. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Commercial Catch Report: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Processor Report: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Sport Fish Report: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Area M Report: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Motion for Discussion and Action: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Meeting Action Announcement: \_\_\_\_\_

**OLD BUSINESS:** Question about dollar value of the commercial catches

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TIME, DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:**

Time \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

**ADJOURNMENT TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

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Kuskokwim River In-season Subsistence Catch Monitoring Report  
 Orutsararmiut Native Council  
 Date June 29, 2009

**Fishing ending the week of June 28, 2009.**

Families Surveyed	Families Not Fishing	Using Driftnets	Using Setnets	Both	Rod & Reel	Gillnets More than 6" mesh	Gillnets 6" mesh Or less	Both
36	5	26	2	3	0	25	4	2

**Compared with this time in a normal year, how are catch rates for salmon this week?**

Chinook			Chum			Sockeye		
Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
12	17	2	1	24	6	2	22	7

**Does the salmon run appear to be running early, late, or normal?**

Chinook			Chum			Sockeye		
Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late
0	29	2	0	24	7	0	20	11

**Comments:** 36 families were interviewed this week for the ONC in-season subsistence program. Of the families contacted 31 families reported fishing this week and 5 families reported not fishing this week. 26 families (84%) reported using drift nets. 2 families (6%) reported using only a set net. 3 families (10%) reported using both drift and set nets. No families reported using rod and reel. 25 families (81%) reported using greater than 6-inch mesh. 4 families (13%) reported using 6-inch mesh or less. And 2 families (6%) reported using both.

Subsistence fishing was closed at and below Bethel on Friday June 26th from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. around a scheduled 4 hour commercial fishery opening that day.

**Chinook:** 12 families (34%) reported the fishing as very good. 17 families (55%) reported the fishing as normal. 2 families (6%) reported the fishing as poor. No families reported the Chinook run being early. 29 families (94%) reported the run being normal and 2 families (6%) reported the run being late. Many of the families interviewed reported that the King run had very good catches with many large females compared to past years.

**Chum:** 1 family (3%) reported the fishing as very good. 24 families (77%) reported the fishing as normal. 6 families (19%) reported the fishing as poor. No families reported the chum run being early. 24 families (77%) reported the run as normal and 7 families (23%) reported run as late.

**Sockeye:** 2 families (6%) reported the fishing as very good. 22 families (71%) reported the fishing as normal. 7 families (23%) reported the fishing as poor. No families reported the run as early. 20 families (65%) reported the run as normal and 11 families (35%) reported the run as late.

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*Historical Summary, ONC Inseason Subsistence Catch Reports*

Year	Week Ending	Number of Families			Chinook salmon <sup>b</sup>			Chum salmon <sup>b</sup>			Sockeye salmon <sup>b</sup>		
		Inter-viewed	Fishing	Not Fishing	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
2008	Jun 08	27	5	22	1	3	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 16	34	17	17	0	13	4	0	17	0	0	17	0
	Jun 22	32	27	5	15	12	0	0	20	7	22	5	0
	Jun 29	33	27	6	14	13	0	4	23	0	15	12	0
	Jul 08	35	15	20	3	12	0	0	15	0	7	8	0
	Jul 13	32	3	29	0	3	0	1	2	0	0	3	0
2007	Jun 03	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 12	39	28	11	0	8	20	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 17	40	33	7	0	10	23	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 24	44	40	4	0	14	26	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jul 02	36	20	12	9	9	2	16	4	0	0	8	12
	Jul 08	33	10	23	6	4	0	8	2	0	3	7	0
2006	Jun 03	22	0	22	0	0	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 10	32	19	13	6	13	0	0	0	0	ND	ND	ND
	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
2005	Jun 06	26	5	21	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0
	Jun 11	34	12	22	0	12	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 18	39	26	13	20	6	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 25	48	42	6	36	6	0	14	28	0	31	11	0
	Jul 02	48	34	14	25	5	0	19	15	0	28	6	0
	Jul 09	32	2	30	3	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0
2004	Jul 09	22	2	20	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
	Jun 05	31	10	21	6	4	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	Jun 12	41	37	4	27	8	2	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	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
2003	Jul 10	44	13	31	0	10	0	8	2	0	0	4	6
	Jun 07	18	9	9	7	2	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	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
2002	Jul 12	46	14	32	0	12	2	13	1	0	0	12	2
	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	

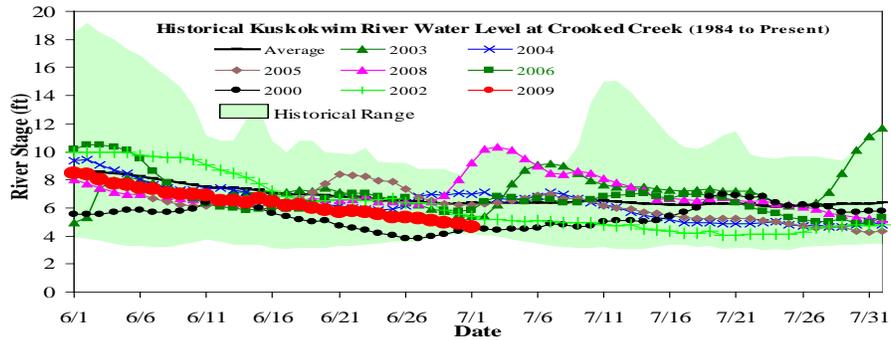
<sup>a</sup> Only reports from the month of June and the first two weeks of July were used for comparison between years.

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

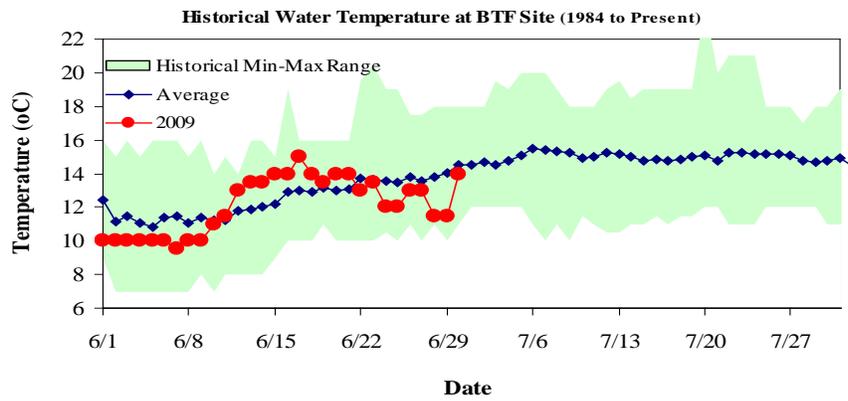
"ND" indicates that no data was collected.

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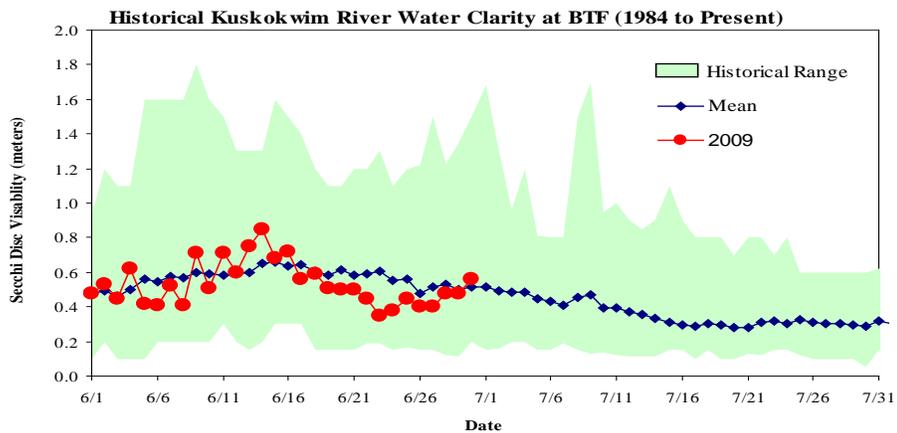
*Historical water level, Kuskokwim River at Crooked Creek, USGS.*



*Historical water temperature, Kuskokwim River, BTF.*



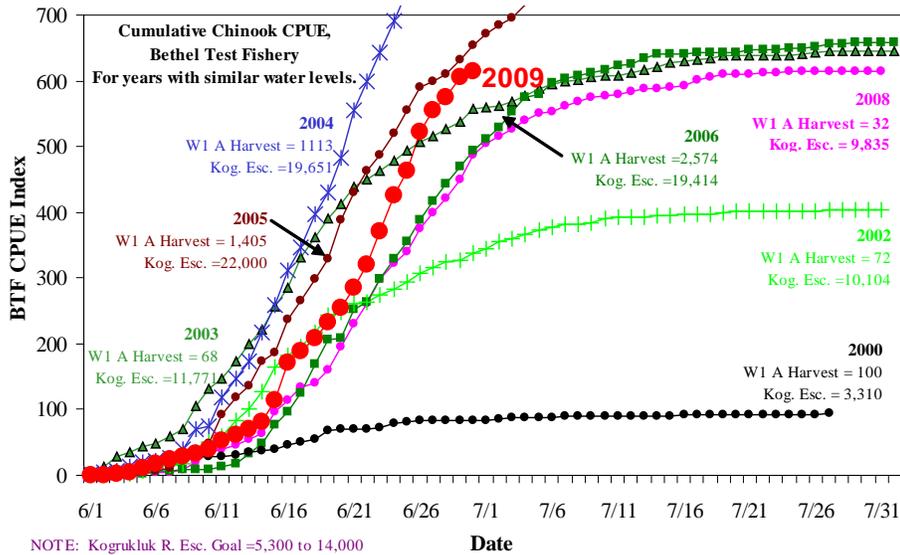
*Historical water clarity, Kuskokwim River, BTF.*



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*Bethel Test Fishery, Chinook salmon.*

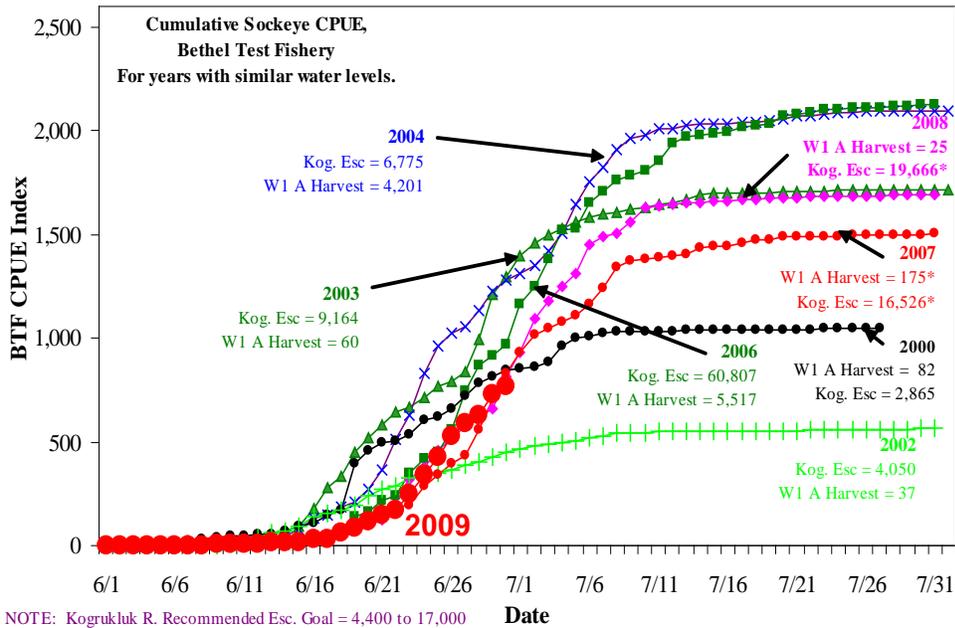
Chinook Cumulative CPUE								
Kogrukluk	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2008	2009
6/01		0	1	3	0	0	0	0
6/02		1	13	5	0	0	3	0
6/03		1	29	7	1	0	3	1
6/04		1	35	13	1	0	3	4
6/05	1	6	44	19	6	3	3	10
6/06	7	13	48	23	7	6	4	17
6/07	10	15	59	27	11	6	4	24
6/08	10	18	70	40	23	8	10	28
6/09	11	36	106	70	30	9	20	33
6/10	16	51	131	75	49	9	36	40
6/11	27	59	147	118	91	14	40	52
6/12	28	82	172	147	118	18	46	62
6/13	28	101	199	174	137	33	56	71
6/14	30	127	221	217	173	48	63	81
6/15	30	165	258	258	186	77	96	114
6/16	31	181	285	311	236	96	115	171
6/17	35	196	332	347	265	126	135	189
6/18	37	217	362	396	299	170	142	209
6/19	40	243	390	430	330	207	160	232
6/20	47	248	413	484	389	208	195	255
6/21	51	262	439	556	430	252	230	286
6/22	56	263	450	600	464	263	262	320
6/23	68	273	463	643	488	298	298	371
6/24	70	284	478	691	520	329	323	426
6/25	71	295	493	738	555	356	339	463
6/26	71	308	508	785	589	388	374	522
6/27	73	316	515	801	600	417	399	555
6/28	78	325	527	848	611	444	422	575
6/29	81	328	537	893	632	469	451	606
6/30	83	339	556	928	653	493	488	615
7/01	83	344	558	951	672	511	505	
7/02	84	356	563	967	684	530	515	
7/03	84	359	569	979	696	553	527	
7/04	84	368	578	985	715	576	539	



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*Bethel Test Fishery, Sockeye Salmon*

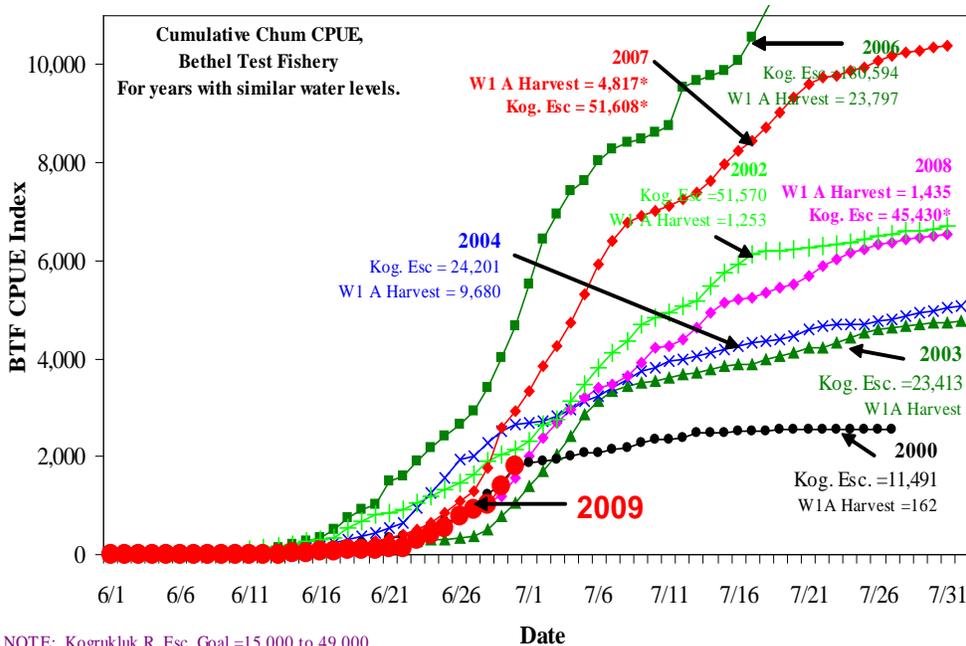
Sockeye Cumulative CPUE									
	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Kogrukluk	2,865	4,050	9,164	6,775	37,939	60,807	16,526	19,666	
6/01		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6/02		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6/03		0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
6/04		0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
6/05	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
6/06	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
6/07	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
6/08	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	1
6/09	3	3	5	8	11	0	0	0	4
6/10	6	8	24	11	22	0	0	0	4
6/11	20	18	38	22	46	0	0	0	7
6/12	31	35	46	27	63	3	0	0	10
6/13	37	61	54	38	96	3	3	3	13
6/14	45	67	67	49	149	3	6	6	13
6/15	48	92	97	77	154	11	34	34	16
6/16	51	138	176	130	181	24	45	45	31
6/17	57	158	279	145	236	42	48	48	34
6/18	71	174	335	189	336	81	62	62	61
6/19	91	196	446	212	444	136	87	87	86
6/20	108	240	518	270	634	160	102	102	113
6/21	146	272	585	364	866	219	128	128	146
6/22	172	290	646	509	1056	239	237	237	171
6/23	395	325	670	628	1239	350	320	320	251
6/24	461	346	718	833	1370	422	381	381	340
6/25	499	353	771	966	1489	454	455	455	429
6/26	505	368	793	1,027	1640	556	518	518	528
6/27	536	385	836	1,055	1785	748	572	572	588
6/28	605	407	994	1,133	1901	869	619	619	629
6/29	622	424	1,207	1,222	2052	920	660	660	729
6/30	660	446	1,296	1,283	2204	971	833	833	813
7/01	724	464	1,395	1,315	2298	1164	933	933	
7/02	782	482	1,462	1,352	2365	1247	1014	1092	
7/03	817	486	1,495	1,418	2440	1379	1046	1178	
7/04	845	496	1,528	1,507	2512	1520	1077	1251	



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*Bethel Test Fishery, Chum Salmon*

Chum Cumulative CPUE		2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Kogrukluuk		11,491	51,570	23,413	24,201	197,723	23,797	51,608	45,430	9
6/10		18	50	6	22	0	15		9	9
6/11		18	103	8	25	13	35		12	9
6/12		18	146	11	34	25	41		18	12
6/13		18	180	17	71	38	133		18	14
6/14		18	202	30	110	49	210		20	20
6/15		18	285	49	144	87	266		41	42
6/16		18	299	77	179	95	350		66	69
6/17		20	338	103	229	131	499		80	75
6/18		29	552	108	310	188	747		94	91
6/19		43	665	148	371	252	927		106	99
6/20		86	801	198	450	537	1,012		161	105
6/21		124	836	226	547	844	1,482		190	135
6/22		155	903	235	659	1288	1,595		264	149
6/23		224	1,047	270	959	1587	1,916		337	301
6/24		250	1,181	291	1,260	1817	2,188	632	437	397
6/25		324	1,329	312	1,583	1918	2,412	840	598	532
6/26		363	1,466	349	1,926	2077	2,646	1075	753	783
6/27		435	1,622	375	2,014	2183	2,941	1308	921	904
6/28		574	1,897	496	2,271	2273	3,402	1783	1,099	
6/29		676	2,048	791	2,514	2631	4,031	2589	1,176	
6/30		727	2,136	1,059	2,653	2989	4,660	2917	1,550	
7/01		908	2,299	1,387	2,690	3455	5,530	3341	2,010	
7/02		1,222	2,660	1,711	2,736	3982	6,437	3861	2,377	
7/03		1,475	2,768	2,031	2,819	4650	6,937	4252	2,680	
7/04		1,794	3,147	2,413	2,965	5464	7,424	4736	2,953	



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***ESCAPEMENT MONITORING***

**CHINOOK SALMON**

**Historical daily cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Kwethluk River tower (1996 to 1999) and weir (1992 and 2000-present).**  
Esc. Goal =6,000 to 11,000

Date	Cumulative Passage													
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
KWE Total	7,415	10,395			3,547		8,502	14,474	28,605	0	17,619	13,267	5,312	10
KOG. Esc.	14,199	13,286	12,107	5,570	3,310	9,298	10,104	11,771	19,651	22,000	19,414	13,029	9,730	0
6/27	344	846			35		107 b	81	1,528		297 b	0	25 b	
6/28	560	1,170			50		414	231	2,322		595 b	0	36 b	
6/29	812	1,485			60		1,174	678	2,860		1,131 b	2	44 b	0
6/30	1,025	1,746			76		1,342	705	5,460		1,584 b	8	57 b	10
7/01	1,076	1,809			117		1,425	839	7,774		2,051 b	55	96 b	
7/02	1,190	2,253			150		1,536	2,245	9,257 a		2,786 b	98	128 b	
7/03	1,316	3,030			205		1,827	3,335	9,951		3,495 b	170	181 b	
7/04	2,420	3,855			261		2,253	3,663	11,804		3,655	296	246 b	
7/05	3,170	5,055			333		2,397	4,333	12,700		4,855	1,152	347	
7/06	3,734	6,105			770		3,114	4,805	13,621		6,563	1,652	553	

**Historical cumulative daily Chinook passage at Tuluksak River weir.**

Esc. Goal =1,000 to 2,100

Date	Cumulative Passage												
	1991	1992	1993	1994	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TUL Total	697	1,083	2,218	2,917	997	1,346	1,064	1,475	2,653	1,044	374	665	1
KOG. Esc.	7,850	6,755	12,332	15,227	9,298	10,104	11,771	19,651	22,000	19,414	13,029	9,730	0
6/25	4	0	2			3	8	0	0	2 b	0	0	
6/26	7	1	2			3	8	1	5	3 b	0	0	0
6/27	10	1	4			7	8	6	19	4 b	0	0	0
6/28	14	3	5			16	8	80	26	14 b	0	0	0
6/29	15	7	5	0	1 b	149	8	114	66	33 b	0	0	0
6/30	21	17	19	5	7 b	175	8	180	91	46 b	2	0	1
7/01	29	32	59	9	18 b	192	10	255	94	55	5	1	
7/02	35	44	94	14	27 b	198	33	259	118	66	18	2	
7/03	41	66	196	17	46 b	205	242	352	511	67	19	2	

**Historical daily cumulative Chinook salmon passage at George River weir.**

Esc. Goal =3,100 to 7,900

Date	Cumulative Passage													
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
GEO Total	7,716	7,834	2,505	3,548	2,960	3,309	2,444	4,693	5,207	3,845	4,357	4,883	2,698	54
KOG. Esc.	14,199	13,285	12,107	5,570	3,310	9,298	10,104	11,771	19,651	22,000	19,414	13,029	9,730	0
6/15	23 b	26	c	0 b	0 b	0 b	0 b	1 b	0 b	6	0 e	0	0 b	
6/16	34 b	39 e	c	0 b	0 b	0 b	0 b	1 b	1 b	9	1	0	0 b	
6/17	44 b	50	c	0 b	0 e	0 b	0 b	1 b	4 b	23	1	0	0	
6/18	51 b	58	c	0 b	0	0 b	0 b	5 b	6 b	35	1	0	0	0
6/19	88 b	100	c	0 b	0	0 b	0 b	8 b	10 b	39	1	0	0	2
6/20	88 b	100	c	0 b	0	0 b	0 b	22 b	17 b	45	7	1	2	5
6/21	115	117	c	0 b	0	0 b	3 e	46 b	26 b	48	11	1	2	6
6/22	132	135	1 d	0 b	2	2 b	58	76 b	34 b	104	19	1	4	6
6/23	401	497	4	9 b	12	13 b	98	120 b	38 b	125	20	2	5	6
6/24	1,163	985	8	14 b	23	25 b	103	130 b	40 b	231	22	3	6	9
6/25	1,377	1,892	22	19 b	28	31 e	111	293 b	47 b	303	25	3	7	10
6/26	1,418	2,180	66	33 b	29	46	141	499 b	99 b	363	26	3	9	16
6/27	1,601	2,694	101	43 b	149	62	165	636 b	409	506	31	13	11	19
6/28	1,699	3,091	271	76 b	149	162	208	881 b	639	620	72	13	15 e	20
6/29	1,790 e	3,657	397	88 b	157	467	232	1,152 b	944	1,012	90	49	22 b	23
6/30	1,874	4,424	561	93 b	165	482	652	1,438 b	1,164	1,214	281	110	32 b	54
7/01	2,908	4,880	849	131 b	228	525	1,018	1,792 e	1,264	1,322	669	123	44 b	
7/02	3,619 e	5,157	1,246	142 b	644	688	1,041	2,305 e	1,289	1,444	733	204	58 b	
7/03	4,008	5,741	1,674	173 b	759	696	1,148	2,641 b	1,698	1,848	832	283	75 b	
7/04	4,328	6,088	1,961	235 b	828	732	1,187	2,684 b	1,859	2,184	1,421	402	94 b	
7/05	4,608	6,309	2,206	268 b	876	764	1,289	3,044 b	2,398	2,386	1,621	495	115 b	

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ESCAPEMENT MONITORING (Cont.)

## CHINOOK SALMON

## Historical Daily Cumulative Chinook Salmon Passage at Kogrukuk River weir

Esc. Goal=5,300 - 14,000

Date	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	14,199	13,285	12,107	5,570	3,310	9,298	10,104	11,771	19,651	22,000	19,414	13,029	9,730	15
6/15														
6/16		0 b												
6/17		0 b												
6/18		0 b												
6/19	0 b	1 b												
6/20	1 b	2 b	0 b											
6/21	3 b	4 b	1 b			1 b		0	0					
6/22	7 b	8 b	5 b			4 b		1	0	1				
6/23	19 b	17 b	7 b			11 b		1	9	2				
6/24	35 b	32 b	11 b			20 b		1	9	2				
6/25	65 b	60 b	14 b			36 b		8	56	60				
6/26	102 b	94 b	24 b			64 b	15	13	107	118				0
6/27	170 b	161 b	111 b			108 b	158	37	215	154		0 d	1	0
6/28	265 b	212	151 b			137 b	261	77	302	210	0 d	2	2	5
6/29	412 b	822	268 b			261 b	540	127	730	291	6	2	2	9
6/30	492	1,418	348 b			315 b	629	201	1,011	362	31	3	3	15
7/01	756	1,925	546 b	6 b		454 b	816	218	1,308	741	111	17		
7/02	1,754	2,097	703 b	8 b	1	709 b	1,126	490	1,658	1,284	344	27		
7/03	2,585	3,024	957 b	10 b	43	952 b	1,255	834	2,320	2,135	539	43	0	
7/04	2,982	3,611	1,355 b	15 b	83	1,495 b	1,873	1,063	2,898	2,252	1,170	160	14	
7/05	4,446	4,636	1,789 b	58 b	178	1,655	1,963	1,473	3,754	3,327	1,681	188	19	

## Historical daily cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Tatlawiksuk River weir.

Date	Daily Cumulative Passage											
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TAT Total	970	1,490	810	2,010	2,237	1,683	2,833	2,920	1,700	2,061	1,071	20
KOG. Esc.	12,107	5,570	3,310	9,298	10,104	11,771	19,651	22,000	19,414	13,029	9,730	0
6/15	0 b	0	0	0 b	0 b	0 b	2	0	0	0	0	0
6/16	0 b	0	0	0 b	0 b	0 b	4	0	0	0	0	0
6/17	0 b	0	0	0 b	0 e	0 b	4	0	0	0	0	0
6/18	0	0	2	0 b	0	0 b	8	1	0	0	0	0
6/19	0	0	4	0 b	0	0 b	16	2	0	0	0	0
6/20	1	0	4	0	0	0	19	3	0	0	0	0
6/21	1	0	4	1	1	0	21	9	0	0	0	2
6/22	1	0	5	3	20	6	22	16	0	0	0	2
6/23	9	4	5	4	87	6	22	19	0	0	0	2
6/24	21	6	15	7	90	11	33	25	0	0	0	2
6/25	28	8	15	12	92	24	107	30	1	2	0	2
6/26	40	14	35	83	100	43	348	57	4	10	2	5
6/27	77	18	37	101	617	46	369	67	26	13	2	9
6/28	108	32	42	139	638	198	453	72	29	36	2	11
6/29	131	37	44	154	833	495	528	77	33	37	3 b	17
6/30	136	39	66	259	858	552	571	269	75	37	5 b	20
7/01	235	55	92	623	873	593	886	293	98	129	8 b	
7/02	417	60	241	647	957	601	1,017	367	119	151	12 b	
7/03	588	73	288	674	1,065	697 b	1,103	848	124	223	17 b	
7/04	812	99	318	687	1,200	726 b	1,268	1,096	252	306	23 b	
7/05	886	113	360	798	1,538	786 b	1,511	1,335 a	299	358	30 b	

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*ESCAPEMENT MONITORING (Cont.)*

## CHINOOK SALMON

## Historical daily cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Takotna River.

Date	Cumulative Passage														
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TAK Total	n.a.	422	1,197	n.a.	0	345	721	316	378	461	499	539	418	413	5
Kog. Esc.	20,651	14,199	13,285	12,107	5,570	3,310	9,298	10,104	11,771	19,651	22,000	19,414	13,029	9,730	0
6/24	c	0	12	c		0	1	1	c	1	1	0	0	0	0
6/25	c	0	42	c		2	4	1	c	3	1	1	0	1	0
6/26	c	9	66	c		4	5	1	c	6	5	1	0	1	2
6/27	c	26	75	c		5	9	3	c	13	8	1	0	2	2
6/28	c	34	108	0		5	10	7	c	29	31	1	0	3	3
6/29	c	55	144	0		6	11	10	c	33	45	3	0	3	4
6/30	c	73	201	0		7	24	11	c	49	95	3	3	10	5
7/01	c	88	201	0		7	41	16	c	51	96	6	4	15	
7/02	c	100	231	3		22	45	16	10 d	52	97	9	4	18	
7/03	c	112	303	6		38	68	17	15 d	56	98	9	24	23	
7/04	c	185	369	9		41	78	19	15 d	79	108	21	39	28	
7/05	c	224	423	21		55	79	22	21	85	121	32	56	33	

## CHUM SALMON

## Historical daily cumulative chum salmon passage at Kwethluk River tower (1996-1999) and weir (2000-present).

Date	Cumulative Passage														
	1992	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
KWE Total	30,595	26,049	10,659		11,691		0	35,854	41,812	38,646	0	47,490	57,230	20,048	30
KOG. Esc.	34,105	48,495	7,958	36,442	13,820	11,491	30,569	51,570	23,413	24,201	197,723	180,594	49,505	44,978	0
6/27	1,347	945	123		261			1,173 b	212	1,321		1,003 b	64	43 b	
6/28	1,661	1,251	207		333			1,407	333	1,789		1,366 b	68	62 b	
6/29	1,948	2,064	294		411			1,988	435	2,721		1,929 b	157	62 b	0
6/30	1,978	3,315	429		483			2,308	466	4,106		2,432 b	203	94 b	30
7/01	2,125	3,684	501		611			2,522	691	5,035		2,920 b	421	140 b	
7/02	2,615	4,368	708		806			3,004	1,105	6,203 a		3,744 b	565	218 b	
7/03	3,523	5,547	1,176		1,202			3,886	1,409	8,014		5,103 b	765	351 b	
7/04	4,378	8,370	1,755		1,410			4,709	1,632	9,260		6,368	1,160	493 b	
7/05	4,847	9,717	2,247		1,758			5,417	1,799	9,965		8,427	2,019	1,032	
7/06	5,601	11,433	2,619		2,014			6,700	2,006	10,653		10,502	2,825	1,437	

## Historical cumulative daily chum salmon passage at Tuluksak River weir.

Date	Cumulative Passage													
	1991	1992	1993	1994	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
TUL Total	7,675	11,183	13,804	15,724	19,321	9,958	11,724	11,796	35,696	25,648	17,286	12,518	7	
KOG. Esc.	24,188	34,105	31,899	46,635	30,569	51,570	23,413	24,201	197,723	180,594	49,505	44,978	0	
6/25	2	40	40			35	4	82	0	59 b	1			
6/26	5	120	57			65	4	167	0	125 b	1		3	
6/27	11	195	79			87	4	290	38	271 b	1		3	
6/28	13	266	121			278	5	612	81	474 b	1		3	
6/29	24	359	147	8	59 b	451	9	772	163	596 b	1	7	3	
6/30	44	529	184	12	159 b	505	9	1,568	299	1,017 b	2	13	7	
7/01	67	771	285	20	316 b	735	44	1,706	332	1,356	91	24		
7/02	117	867	431	54	450 b	837	124	1,707	460	1,570	146	49		
7/03	181	1,022	550	89	610 b	888	305	1,859	1,012	1,785	165	58		
7/04	294	1,162	704	185	825 b	968	522	2,336	1,475	2,441	381	194		
7/05	391	1,312	853	306	1,040 b	1,166	592	2,826	1,802	3,199	628	328		
7/06	450	1,419	1,058	376	1,216 b	1,386	615	3,221	2,208	3,879	736	496		

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ESCAPEMENT MONITORING (Cont.)

CHUM SALMON

**Daily Daily cumulative fish passage estimates at the Aniak River sonar site.**

Esc. Goal =220,000 to 480,000

Date	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>ANI Total</b>	177,384	408,830	472,346	477,544	673,445	1,173,155	1,108,626	699,178	427,911	5,029
6/26	2,002	3,436	6,545	3,971	3,774	4,338	9,562	1,396	201	78
6/27	3,985	9,741	13,467	11,273	15,882	9,846	36,599	3,472	483	624
6/28	5,206	13,452	21,621	14,762	32,837	16,471	43,345	5,414	829	1,454
6/29	6,024	19,870	30,161	18,187	50,061	26,123	56,817	7,501	1,011	2,636
6/30	6,600	24,476	41,661	20,435	63,358	38,230	68,755	10,549	1,691	5,029
7/01	8,365	29,785	54,856	24,221	77,500	43,235	95,595	17,048	2,338	
7/02	10,574	33,905	74,389	28,601	83,482	56,690	128,353	23,856	3,771	
7/03	16,391	42,147	84,153	35,116	94,748	82,025	148,744	29,925	4,952	
7/04	22,875	56,091	95,748	47,386	111,404	101,097	181,283	50,142	7,592	

**Historical daily cumulative chum salmon passage at George River weir.**

Date	Cumulative Daily Passage													
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>GEO Total</b>	19,393	5,907	6,391	11,558	3,492	11,601	6,543	33,666	14,411	14,828	41,467	55,842	29,978	115
<b>KOG. Esc.</b>	48,478	7,958	36,441	13,820	11,491	30,570	51,570	23,413	24,201	197,723	180,594	49,505	44,978	0
6/15	1 b	0	c	0 b	0 b	0 b	0 b	4 b	6 b	5	0 e	0	0 b	
6/16	2 b	2 e	c	0 b	0 b	0 b	1 b	12 b	20 b	6	0	1	0 b	
6/17	6 b	4	c	0 b	0 e	0 b	2 b	25 b	83 b	13	0	1	0	1
6/18	7 b	4	c	0 b	0	0 b	2 b	42 b	161 b	17	2	1	0	2
6/19	12 b	6	c	0 b	0	0 b	4 b	63 b	253 b	32	7	4	0	7
6/20	14 b	6	c	0 b	0	0 b	5 b	89 b	298 b	34	48	6	1	11
6/21	79	8	c	0 b	5	17 b	16 e	137 b	436 b	42	97	6	1	22
6/22	692	11	1 d	0 b	11	36 b	123	150 b	552 b	60	255	7	19	23
6/23	2,006	46	1	0 b	49	162 b	181	161 b	672 b	75	451	26	31	24
6/24	2,698	98	7	21 b	66	219 b	204	173 b	692 b	134	631	47	53	28
6/25	2,747	141	30	29 b	83	275 e	328	184 b	851 b	169	897	53	104	34
6/26	3,123	190	192	50 b	84	285	573	195 b	1,353 b	192	1,123	68	130	59
6/27	3,631	269	308	79 b	174	302	691	256 b	2,236	257	1,390	244	266	60
6/28	3,798	303	597	157 b	174	341	928	353 b	2,838	318	2,014	313	400 e	68
6/29	3,989 e	481	885	235 b	178	481	1,077	435 b	3,405	588	2,371	475	587 b	88
6/30	4,204	685	1,284	302 b	190	488	1,280	460 b	3,765	816	2,946	833	828 b	115
7/01	4,702	749	1,918	408 b	298	528	1,455	641 e	3,913	967	4,142	1,074	1,121 b	
7/02	5,432 e	826	2,306	507 b	571	638	1,489	973 e	4,092	1,307	4,877	1,601	1,468 b	
7/03	6,393	1,093	2,863	625 b	699	659	1,640	1,217 b	4,635	2,026	5,755	2,138	1,868 b	
7/04	7,467	1,176	3,468	752 b	776	685	1,677	1,396 b	5,107	2,462	7,353	3,120	2,321 b	
7/05	7,793	1,350	4,428	862 b	848	753	1,869	1,531 b	5,551	2,812	9,060	4,024	2,827 b	

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*ESCAPEMENT MONITORING (Cont.)*

CHUM SALMON

Historical daily cumulative chum salmon passage at Kogrukluk River weir.

Date	Esc. Goal=15,000 - 49,000													
	Cumulative Passage												2009	
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
KOG Total:	48,494	7,958	36,441	13,820	11,491	30,570	51,570	23,413	24,201	197,723	180,594	49,505	44,978	158
6/15														
6/16		0 b												0
6/17		0 b												0
6/18		0 b												0
6/19	5 b	0 b												0
6/20	5 b	0 b	0 b											0
6/21	15 b	0 b	0 b			c		2	0					0
6/22	39 b	1 b	5 b			c		4	15	1				0
6/23	73 b	2 b	10 b			c		14	69	3				0
6/24	107 b	4 b	19 b			c		16	99	4				0
6/25	156 b	10 b	48 b			c		18	196	19				0
6/26	277 b	18 b	86 b			c	247	25	289	35		0 d		10
6/27	438 b	25 b	119 b			c	877	59	438	60		22		25
6/28	666 b	69	172 b			6 b	1,351	107	552	105	336 d	37		58
6/29	1,095 b	285	375 b			31 b	2,324	135	1,012	210	1,293	72		118
6/30	1,300	442	605 b			40 b	3,405	216	1,560	370	2,644	116		158
7/01	2,434	598	1,007 b	3 b		77 b	4,450	283	2,076	768	4,686	220		
7/02	5,489	763	1,437 b	18 b	27	163 b	5,383	555	2,507	1,084	7,189	395		
7/03	8,323	1,014	2,010 b	25 b	88	315 b	6,494	946	3,012	1,739	10,405	596	3	
7/04	10,535	1,259	3,156 b	46 b	209	653 b	8,421	1,311	3,732	2,688	15,238	1,049	123	
7/05	14,072	1,758	3,945 b	97 b	399	1,076	10,126	2,023	4,541	5,430	22,037	1,369	233	

Historical daily cumulative chum salmon passage at Tatlawiksuk River weir.

Date	Cumulative Daily Passage											
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TAT Total	5,726	9,599	6,965	23,718	24,542	n.a.	21,245	55,720	32,301	83,246	30,896	132
KOG. Esc.	36,441	13,820	11,491	30,570	51,570	23,413	24,201	197,723	180,594	180,594	44,978	0
6/15	0 b	0	1	0 b	1 b	0 c	9	0	0	0	0	0
6/16	0 b	0	2	0 b	3 b	0 c	24	3	0	0	2	1
6/17	0 b	0	2	0 b	7 e	0 c	31	3	0	0	2	3
6/18	0	0	4	0 b	9	0 c	53	5	3	0	2	6
6/19	0	0	4	0 b	15	0 c	128	15	3	0	2	6
6/20	0	0	4	0	18	0	233	19	3	2	2	7
6/21	5	0	6	3	60	0	286	28	6	5	5	16
6/22	9	0	13	7	228	1	367	41	18	5	10	18
6/23	21	0	14	37	490	6	438	48	76	10	15	18
6/24	46	18	32	59	518	12	607	80	191	25	22	20
6/25	72	25	62	120	621	16	1,201	95	425	72	45	27
6/26	137	43	159	251	1,104	28	1,651	131	690	125	80	47
6/27	334	68	166	320	1,496	48	1,826	174	1,131	226	129	78
6/28	609	135	176	463	2,070	154	2,002	230	1,398	468	129	98
6/29	804	202	179	596	2,904	225	2,268	360	1,862	541	210 b	112
6/30	950	260	267	964	3,538	360	2,646	726	3,231	684	347 b	132
7/01	1,414	351	443	1,404	3,962	438	3,108	939	3,689	1,469	541 b	
7/02	1,943	437	935	1,547	4,999	479	3,798	2,544	3,897	1,917	791 b	
7/03	2,499	538	1,215	1,718	5,500	c	4,458	4,924	4,661	3,059	1,098 b	
7/04	3,504	648	1,362	1,880	6,259	c	4,983	6,034	6,851	4,709	1,461 b	
7/05	4,515	742	1,687	2,368	7,537	c	5,465	7,421 a	7,198	6,144	1,880 b	

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ESCAPEMENT MONITORING (Cont.)

CHUM SALMON

**Historical daily cumulative chum salmon passage at Takotna River.**

= poor year for escapement in the Kuskokwim basin

Date	Cumulative Passage														
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TAK Cum:	1,685	2,872	1,779	n.a.	n.a.	1,254	5,414	4,377	3,393	1,630	6,467	12,598	8,900	5,691	123
Kog Esc:	31,265	48,478	7,958	36,441	13,820	11,491	30,570	51,570	23,413	24,201	197,723	180,594	49,505	44,978	0
6/24	c	102	12	c		1	3	29	0 b	4	2	20	1	9	2
6/25	c	102	39	c		25	12	84	0 b	12	6	41	9	21	15
6/26	c	102	51	c		48	22	139	1 b	43	15	73	10	28	45
6/27	c	239	102	c		59	34	250	6 b	71	24	138	25	54	66
6/28	c	297	147	0		68	38	366	13 b	103	38	208	44	73	84
6/29	c	424	231	0		74	57	534	17 b	132	54	302	62	93	112
6/30	c	541	279	9		80	77	681	29 b	166	94	459	105	125	123
7/01	c	642	297	9		90	119	861	39 b	220	118	634	149	161	
7/02	c	727	330	24		108	143	933	79 e	261	159	815	202	202	
7/03	c	816	363	30		125	190	1,078	136 e	320	206	1,121	361	306	
7/04	c	939	432	33		164	230	1,172	190 e	378	292	1,430	508	415	
7/05	c	1,203	504	45		176	251	1,422	301	426	514	1,781	674	526	

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**COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT**

Summary of District W-1(Kuskokwim River) Commercial Salmon Fishery, 2009.

Date	Sub-Distrit	Permits	Hours	Chinook			Chum			Sockeye			Coho		
				Catch	CPUE	Cumulative	Catch	CPUE	Cumulative	Catch	CPUE	Cumulative	Catch	CPUE	Cumulative
23-Jun	W-1B	167*	4	3,211*	4.8*	3,211*	8,944*	13.4*	8,944*	7,845*	11.7*	7845*	0*	0.0	0*
26-Jun	W-1B	172*	4	3,149*	4.6*	6,360*	14,802*	21.6*	23,746*	6,697*	10.2*	14,812*	0*	0.0	0*

Comparison of Most Recent Opening to Similar Dates With Fishing Since 2000

Date	Sub-Distrit	Permits	Hours	Chinook			Chum			Sockeye			Coho		
				Catch	CPUE	Cumulative	Catch	CPUE	Cumulative	Catch	CPUE	Cumulative	Catch	CPUE	Cumulative
6/26/2009	W1-B	172*	4	3,149*	4.6*	6,360*	14,802*	21.6*	23,746*	6,697*	10.2*	14,812*	0*	0.0	0*
6/27/2008	W1-B	135	3	990	2.4	8,777	7,867	19.4	27,353	3,842	9.5	15,401	0	0.0	0
6/28/2006	W1-B	99	6	846	1.4	846	16,312	27.5	16,312	6,456	10.9	6,456	0	0.0	0
6/24/2005	W1-B	188	4	2,276	3.0	2,276	13,553	18.0	13,553	7,938	10.6	7,938	0	0.0	0

\* Results are preliminary and subject to change.

**AREA M REPORT**

<b>Weekly Total Alaska Peninsula through 06/30/2009</b>					
	<b>Chinook</b>	<b>Sockeye</b>	<b>Coho</b>	<b>Pink</b>	<b>Chum</b>
<b>Total South Peninsula</b>					
Total to date	4,175	1,149,342	281	2,201,796	706,850
<b>Total North Peninsula</b>					
Total to Date	1,775	577,478	1	8	4,973
<b>Total Through 6/30/2009</b>	<b>5,950</b>	<b>1,726,820</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>2,201,804</b>	<b>711,823</b>
<b>Total Through 7/02/2008</b>	<b>3,602</b>	<b>2,065,775</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>1,930,129</b>	<b>407,283</b>
<b>Total Through 7/03/2007</b>	<b>7,970</b>	<b>2,543,317</b>	<b>1,904</b>	<b>274,186</b>	<b>306,974</b>
<b>Total Through 7/03/2006</b>	<b>10,318</b>	<b>1,425,592</b>	<b>3,013</b>	<b>1,338,192</b>	<b>318,111</b>
<b>Total Through 7/03/2005</b>	<b>9,542</b>	<b>2,325,555</b>	<b>1,871</b>	<b>1,642,060</b>	<b>426,610</b>

**Area M Report:** Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through June 28 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one (2008) through similar time periods. Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through June 28 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one (2008) through similar time periods. Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through June 28 is above all years since 2004 through similar time periods.



## **APPENDIX D**

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m. Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conference room at Anchorage Rabbit Creek Rifle Range. The Working Group meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. Eleven of thirteen representatives were present. A quorum was established.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Briefing on a New School in Bethel
- 2.) Kuskokwim Commercial Fisheries
- 3.) Federal
- 4.) Donlin Creek Mine Presentation
- 5.) UAF Marine Advisory Program involvement in Kuskokwim River Commercial Fisheries
- 6.) Kuskokwim Commercial Fishery Processor Outlook
- 7.) NPFMC Chinook Salmon By-catch Working Group

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion made and carried to “sponsor proposal to eliminate 8” mesh gear for the commercial fishery.” Motion passed with 7 yes votes and 2 abstention votes.
- 2.) Motion made and carried to “support salmon by-catch alternative #2 with limited transferability.” Motion passed with 7 yes votes and 1 abstention vote.
- 3.) Motion made and carried to accept Angela Morgan as the Middle River Subsistence representative alternate.

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) The Working Group members would like to initiate a press release for community members to read following the Working Group meetings. Sport Fish representative stated that the press release could cover topics such as responsible fishing and sustainability.
- 2.) It was recommended that the word “windows” be replaced with the word “closures” in all ADF&G documents released to the public.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATION:

No ADF&G Recommendation to report.

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

In addition to the working group members, the following representatives attended the meeting: Three Fish & Wildlife Staff members, Fisheries Biologist of the Yukon Delta, Anthropologist from the Office of Subsistence Management, Conservationist, nine ADF&G staff members, two

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Donlin Creek Mine representatives, KNA Fisheries Educator and KNA Fisheries Biologist. ADF&G apologizes for anyone not listed as the microphone had some difficulty picking up voices in far sides of the room.

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Downriver Elder representative led the Working Group members to a Yupik prayer following role call.
- YK Delta RAC representative inquired about sonar vs. weir salmon counts, and noted that sonar systems may not count salmon populations properly.
- Sport fish representative stated that it is important for continuity that all working group members (whether primary or alternate) attend as many meetings as possible.
- Lower River Subsistence representative noted that there are continued discussions to reintroduce the Holitna Basin hunting-trapping-fishing reserve with our legislative representatives, and prospects look good for introduction during the current session.
- Commercial Fisher representative noted that there should be more commercial openings on the Kuskokwim River.
- Middle River Subsistence representative stated that subsistence needs should be met before commercial fishing begins so that everyone has an equal opportunity to catch enough salmon for the year.

AGENDA ITEMS-BRIEFING ON A NEW SCHOOL IN BETHEL:

Sport Fish representative reported the following information: A 19,000 square foot addition has recently been completed on the Yuut Elitnaurviat School. The school will be cooperating with the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Nursing program. The basis for the addition is to focus on math and advanced science courses for rural students. The ultimate goal is for local regional Yupik village students to work in positions oriented towards science and math. According to the board's vision, it will be a magnet school that seeks students from the outlying village schools and prepares them for both immediate work and further educational programs where math and science courses are prerequisites. Funding is being sought through Alaska Native Education grants in Washington D.C. Dormitories are on campus and the board is in the process of raising money for additional dormitories. The program also will entail outreaching careers in natural resource conservation. A newly hired full-time counselor will assist in traveling to village schools and outreaching the program. Outreaching to the villages to inform them about the school and the educational opportunities will be an essential part of moving forward with the schools vision.

ADF&G representative stated that many rural community members often question why local residents are not given priority for employment in departments such as Fish & Game or Fish & Wildlife. ADF&G representative added that to do these jobs you have to have a good background in math, science and writing, and that the Yuut Elitnaurviat School will be an excellent opportunity for rural students to achieve the employment opportunities they seek.

YK Delta RAC representative stressed the importance of rural students mastering the English language, so that they will be fully prepared to successfully complete educational programs following high school graduation.

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AGENDA ITEMS-KUSKOKWIM COMMERCIAL FISHERIES:

ADF&G representative reported the following information regarding commercial and subsistence fisheries along the Kuskokwim river: Through a powerpoint presentation it was noted that even though there are more fish out there now and we do have a harvestable surplus of salmon in the Kuskokwim river, we are not seeing an increase in fish harvested or permit holders fishing. One reason for a harvestable surplus without an increase in fish harvested may be poor market conditions, especially for the Chum salmon that are currently difficult to market and distribute. In addition, the closing of the Bethel fish plant around 1999 only contributed to poor market conditions. Preliminary exploitation rates for salmon were discussed, and it was noted that the 2008 exploitation rate for Chinook salmon was estimated at 40%, with Sockeye and Chum salmon estimated at 28% and 20% respectively. An additional ADF&G representative stated that a moderate exploitation rate for salmon species may be around 40%. With estimated low exploitation rates, the department estimated that the Kuskokwim river does have a harvestable surplus of salmon. Furthermore, due to the possibility of salmon species rebounding and escapement goals being achieved, and with additional fish processing plants in operation, there may be the opportunity to harvest a greater number of salmon. It was added that nobody is advocating going out and fishing the salmon species hard. That is not the intent. The possibility of harvesting greater amounts of salmon is an opportunity that will proceed with caution and assurance that the Kuskokwim salmon species populations will have sustainable numbers for escapement goals and subsistence purposes throughout the region. A graph was shown demonstrating how the average income per permit holder would significantly change as the harvestable amounts of salmon species increased. Two additional graphs included one showing escapement along with subsistence and commercial harvest for each salmon species and another showing exploitation rates for the salmon species. The average salmon prices for commercial fisherman permit holders for the 2008 fishing season were Chinook at .71, Sockeye at .56, Coho at .42 and Chum salmon at .05. One problem the commercial fishing industry has experienced with run timing and processor capacity is the heavy abundance of Chum salmon that have a low market value. The new Platinum fishing plant, scheduled to be in operation for the 2009 fishing season, will have an impact on the Kuskokwim Bay and Kuskokwim river fisheries. What type of impact remains to be seen. Several Working Group members noted the importance of proceeding with caution in the event that there is a harvestable surplus.

Several questions raised during the Kuskokwim Commercial Fisheries portion of the agenda included “Is it possible to separate targeted salmon so that additional surplus of specific salmon species can be harvested without impacting the other species?” “Can CVRF assist in marketing the Kuskokwim river salmon so the commercial fishermen receive a higher price per pound?” and “how can lower river and upper river community members better work together to ensure that both subsistence and commercial needs are met without causing conflict?” No direct answers were provided for these questions.

ADF&G representative estimated the strength of the 2009 salmon populations as follows: Chinook salmon may be as good or possibly a little lower than 2008, Chum salmon numbers may go down but there should be plenty, Sockeye salmon should be good like 2008 and Coho runs usually decline in odd years.

AGENDA ITEMS-FEDERAL

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ADF&G representative stated that the department would probably not be submitting any upcoming proposals. It was added that for anyone interested in submitting a proposal, the deadline is the close of business on 4-10-09. Motion made and carried by Working Group members to “sponsor proposal to eliminate 8” mesh gear for the commercial fishery.”

AGENDA ITEMS-DONLIN CREEK MINE PRESENTATION:

Two Donlin Creek mine representatives reported the following information regarding the implementation of a Gold mine at Donlin Creek: representatives are traveling to villages in the Kuskokwim region to explain the Donlin Creek mine operation. From 1995 to present the project has spent 220 million dollars in exploration, baseline environmental work and engineering. A feasibility study will be completed in the near future. In addition, permit applications, both state and federal, will be submitted in the near future as well. It is anticipated that the process leading up to construction of the Donlin Creek mine may take 2-3 years. There is no guarantee that permits will be granted; however, the representatives stated that the project can be done correctly, environmentally safely, soundly and culturally sensitive. If permits are issued, then, and only then, will a construction decision be made on the mine. This process could be lengthy, and an additional economic evaluation will be needed prior to construction to determine that the project is still economically feasible. If and when a project decision is made to construct, there will be a 3 ½ year construction window. During those years there will be 2500 jobs available. After the mine is constructed, there will be additional 600-800 jobs available for 20 years. The company stated that it has a 93% local shareholder hire success rate, and it has made the commitment to carry that policy forward for the duration of the mine’s existence. At the end of the mine operation the company will go into reclamation and closure, and then ongoing monitoring beyond that. The company is now in the phase of submitting and supporting permit activity. Large costs associated with the project include power supply and transportation. It is estimated that there are at least 30 million ounces of Gold to be extracted from the mine. The project is proposed to be developed in an open pit. It is designed as a zero discharge facility. There will be a tailings facility for any runoff from the plant itself. All organics would be removed from the surface of the project area and replaced following closure of the mine. It is proposed to use barges for transporting materials to the construction site. A loading dock station would be needed with a large storage yard near Aniak, and a 74 mile road would need to be built for transporting materials from the Kuskokwim river to the mine site. In addition, a fuel pipeline would need to be constructed from the loading dock to the mine site, most of which would be buried underground.

Several concerns included the reality of a zero discharge facility keeping everything contained, the damages associated with heavy barge traffic up and down the Kuskokwim river, both subsistence and commercial fishing schedules being affected by heavy barge traffic, whether or not a majority of the skilled employment positions would be granted to regional residents, the long term impact on the environment (including all fish species and wildlife habitats), and safely using, processing and dispensing the chemical cyanide. No direct answers were given as these questions remain valid concerns for all residents living within the YK Delta.

Donlin Creek mine representatives expressed the desire to work closely with the people of the region and, together, figure out an appropriate method to which both sides of the project are happy. They are open to any suggestions, comments or concerns from anyone living in the

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region. In essence, the Donlin Creek mine organization strongly believes that the mine can be constructed and operate fully without disrupting the environment or culture. It was further added that the project brings a significant benefit to the region and that people should work together so that everyone comes out of it a winner. It doesn't have to be done to the exclusion of one group or the other. Donlin Creek mine representative stated that the organization would like to become more active in attending and participating in the Working Group meetings.

AGENDA ITEMS-UAF MARINE ADVISORY PROGRAM INVOLVEMENT IN KUSKOKWIM RIVER COMMERCIAL FISHERIES:

A representative from the University of Marine Extension, under Alaska Sea grant out of UAF School of Fishery and Ocean Sciences gave a presentation on several AYK related projects. The Marine Extension is located at the Kuskokwim college campus in Bethel. Three projects of significance include an applied science educational outreach program to the AYK communities, a drifter buoy project and an archeology project related to Yupik culture. Other job related programs include holding salmon quality workshops and assisting with the marketing of catcher/seller markets.

UAF representative reported the following information on the drifter buoy program: Satellite-tracked oceanographic drifters are being used in a project that determines surface circulation. The drifter data allows us to better understand ocean currents. In addition, the drifter data assists in understanding possible migratory pathways used by juvenile salmon as they enter the marine environment. The 2008 drifter buoys were organized and deployed from Quinhagak with assistance from village residents. Scientific staff and local residents travel by boat into the ocean and release "coffins," which are biodegradable boxes that contain the buoys. The path of each buoy is monitored though satellites. Anyone interested in the project can follow and track the buoys migration patterns at <http://mather.sfos.uaf.edu/drifters>.

Sport Fish representative asked how the catcher/seller program is being promoted so that community residents can better participate. UAF representative responded by stating that there is direct hands on work with community residents that includes salmon quality workshops and information on the equipment needed for the process of packaging and shipping salmon. UAF representative added that the average price per pound of salmon for 2008 in the catcher/seller market was \$2.00-2.10, and that there is a long list of customers willing to purchase the fish. UAF representative added that there will be workshops this summer in Bethel for anyone interested in the catcher/seller program.

Western Interior RAC commented about the feasibility of processing the Chum salmon into dog food as a different marketing strategy. UAF representative stated that you cannot sell a by-product from the catcher/seller fishing periods. UAF representative noted that an individual in Kenai has begun processing salmon into a by-product (pellets and flakes) and has done very well marketing the product. UAF representative further added that an idea like converting Chum salmon into dog food may be a good idea; however, a partner is needed before an idea like that can ever take off. ADF&G representative stated that there is an individual in Fairbanks that does high end processing with Chum salmon (Tanana Chum salmon) for human consumption.

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KUSKOKWIM COMMERCIAL FISHERY PROCESSOR OUTLOOK:

Coastal Village Seafood (CVS) representative stated that CVS is the third largest employer in the region. CVS representative added that the company seeks to continue high employment rates while returning as much money as possible to the fisherman through commercial openings. CVS representative added that nearly 95% of employees are from the region. CVS representative stated the following information: In addition to the Quinhagak fish plant CVS will have an additional fish plant operating in Platinum this summer (which will employ 125 residents). The Platinum fish plant is estimated to produce nearly 150,000 pounds of fish per day. Due to an additional fish processing plant in Platinum fish, one goal for 2009 is for fisherman schedules not to be restricted. In addition, CVS would like to grow in the region so that in future years there will be a market for all fishermen up and down the river. Providing services and a market to everyone above Bethel (not just below) is another CVS goal. A third goal is for a possible fish plant expansion in Bethel in the future.

CVS representative stated there will be no tenders above Bethel for the 2009 season. CVS representative added that current plans are for a tender to be located in the Napaskiak area, a tender to be located at the Johnson River, a tender to be located near Eek and tenders to be located in both Quinhagak and Goodnews Bay. In addition, there will still be a buying station in Quinhagak for the 2009 fishing season. CVS representative stated that CVS will most likely not be buying in Bethel at the dock for the 2009 season.

Commercial Fisher representative inquired about salmon prices that commercial fishermen will be receiving for the 2009 season. Commercial Fisher representative stated that fishermen continue to receive less and less money each year for the salmon. CVS representative stated that it is too early to know how much money the salmon will be worth. CVS representative noted that there are several factors that should assist in raising the Kuskokwim salmon market for the 2009 season. These factors include an absence of a Chinook fishery on the West coast, the Chili farm fish population currently experiencing a disease problem, Bristol Bay currently experiencing a 10-15% decline in commercial harvests and an economic trend towards a cheaper product representing the market.

ADF&G representative asked if there was a cap for how many Chum salmon CVS could process and market with the additional fish plant in Platinum. CVS representative responded by stating that CVS was hoping to process and market 2 million pounds of Chum salmon.

NPFMC CHINOOK SALMON BYCATCH WORKING GROUP

Representative from the Federal Subsistence board reported the following information regarding salmon by-catch. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meeting is upcoming from 3-30-09 to 4-6-09 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage. The main topic to be discussed at the meeting is the amount of by-catch the Pollock industry is going to be allowed to catch. An environmental statement will be available and takes into consideration the Pollock fishery, environmental justice, economic impacts and subsistence ways of life.

A representative from the Bering Sea Fisheries Association (BSFA) presented the following information through a powerpoint presentation: In 2002 there were 40,000 by-catch, with each year thereafter increasing through the present. In 2005 there were 80,000 by-catch and in 2007 it

was a record year with 120,000 by-catch. Looking at scale pattern analysis it is estimated that 56% of the bi-catch migrates to Western Alaska (Yukon, Norton Sound, Kuskokwim) and 31% of the bi-catch migrates to Cook Inlet and British Columbia. Of the 56% bi-catch migrating to Western Alaska, it is estimated that 26% migrate to the Kuskokwim.

After discussing a cap scenario for the by-catch in the Pollock industry, the Working Group voted on and passed a motion to “support salmon by-catch alternative #2 with limited transferability.”

The Working Group meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conference room in Bethel. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. Ten of thirteen representatives were present.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Present and discuss the recent action taken by the NPFMC on Chinook salmon bycatch in the BSAI pollock fishery.
- 2) Question and answer session.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

none

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

none

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATION:

No ADF&G recommendations to report.

## AGENDA ITEMS-NPFMC recent action on Chinook bycatch in the BSAI Pollock fishery:

(Presenters: David Bedford and Stefanie Moreland, both from ADFG Headquarters)  
Provided prior to meeting: PowerPoint slideshow presentation “Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch Management Measures” and one-page summary “Understanding the North Pacific Fishery Management Council Bering Sea Chinook salmon bycatch management measure action.”

Downriver Elder asked if the very high and low salmon bycatch matches the catches of the target species (Pollock). Answer: In 2001 (after meeting corrected to 2000) fishing was affected by sea lion protections. Higher occurrence of Chinook bycatch often occurs inshore near processors, and in that year it was affected by sea lion protections, so this isn't a representative year.

Q: why was Chinook bycatch so high in 07 and low in 08? In 2007, there were lots of salmon everywhere, but in 08 there were fewer Chinook, the low bycatch wasn't just because of measures taken by fishermen, though they may claim that.

Comment from Middle River Subsistence member: people have been bought off from bycatch but Kuskokwim and Yukon Area people have received nothing.

Q: how is age and stock analysis done? S. Moreland responded that three studies were done for this decision, but the 50-60% western Alaskan origin was in agreement between the

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studies, but when try to go to river-system specific the studies don't support to that level. Western Alaska includes Bristol bay, the Yukon, and the Kuskokwim Areas.

**Program:**

There will be 100% observer coverage, annual review of changes in behavior and effects of the program, economic data collection.

2 main options, fleet can decide which one to follow:

Simple Hard cap 47, 591, or if segment of fleet wants, an incentive program with 60k hard cap TOTAL, and develop incentives for each vessel to avoid bycatch and in all years. The performance standard is that 47,591 which may only be exceeded in 2 of 7 yrs or the cap permanently becomes a portion of 47,591. An opt-out option: vessels not participating in an incentive plan will operate under a portion of a 28,296 opt-out cap. (therefore the 60K isn't simply something they can fish to each year)

Q: if only 1 vessel opts out? The vessel only gets a PORTION of the 28k; it would be based on the number of Pollock allocated.

At no time can fleet go over a bycatch harvest of 60,000 Chinook salmon. So this creates conservative fishing each year because fishermen have to think long term. (Rollover of cap does occur but only between A and B season, but not between yrs).

A program exists for salvaging bycatch and donating to food banks.

Sectors include offshore catcher/processors, motherships (3 floating processors), and inshore catcher/processors. These were allocated differently because they have different operations and bycatch rates, etc. I.e. catcher fleet can only go so far offshore because need to deliver quality product, therefore have higher bycatch rates. Sector allocation is based on Pollock allocation as well as the removals based on a 5 yr average 2002 to 2006. Within inshore sector, not everyone was doing well to avoid bycatch, so Council didn't want to reward that behavior. So adjustment made based on distribution of Pollock which shifted the cap so some of it went offshore.

Council allowed caps to be transferred (this was considered a trade-off) because bycatch is variable by sector and by season, so impossible to come up with distribution of the cap. Allowing for transferability helped realign the cap, and allowed council to be able to take action, so this actually makes cap more restrictive. Fishers can't always control the bycatch so the transferability isn't going to work to benefit other vessels because they are competing with each other, and need to save their savings for another fishing season. Council made this accountability at sector level because they can't manage at vessel level, that's for the industry to institute.

Incentive plan: industry has to come to council annually for each program and report their measures, what behavior they changed to reduce bycatch, and whether incentive measures were more effective than doing nothing. Economic data collection will also be done so independent review can be done on the reports provided by industry. The industry is developing incentives now, and council has looked at latest developments. Council adopted

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criteria, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will weigh them against criteria, once approved they will use them for the season, but post-season they'll be evaluated.

(All of this is recommendation of Council, needs to be approved by secretary of Commerce and wouldn't go into effect until January 2011.)

Option 1: hard cap alone:

47,591, there's 6 yrs from 1991 to 2008 where this would be constraining, but this would be constraining because they can't predict when they're going to hit it, just when they're approaching the cap. But with this as the upper limit, this should drive down the AVERAGE bycatch over time.

Option 2 hard cap with incentive:

There should be downward pressure as people approach the higher level, but because of the multi-year cap they will behave conservatively

What's next:

What types of economic data will help inform the effectiveness of the new programs is being developed by a committee of the council (meeting next week).

ADFG produced a paper on how to better sample the stock make up of the bycatch and they want to try to implement it soon. Also, chum bycatch measures are being considered by council and a range of alternatives have been forwarded for analysis. **Now is a good time to weigh in on what we (individuals, Working Group, community groups, etc) feel about this.**

Q: what about Coho salmon in bycatch? Chum makes up over 90% and the chum measures will relate to 'other species' but non-Chinook bycatch made up almost entirely of chum.

[Comments/Questions from group after presentation:](#)

Representative from AVCP was at council meeting in Seattle, and doesn't agree with hard cap decided on. They encourage state of Alaska to ensure the plans generated by industry don't water down the cap (for those that opt out) and work to drive the bycatch down far below the 47k. Research and restoration for salmon resources is important to us for Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers because some sites didn't achieve escapement goals. Encourage commissioner's office to continue to support \$7mil per year requested allocation into PSCRF. Also make bycatch info as public as possible.

S. Moreland is going to pursue how to initiate an information sharing system because they have lots of info to share, she could put things together. (E.g. posting on F&G website, coordinating with WORKING GROUP to distribute info).

Lower River Subsistence member commented: need protocol enhanced for identifying species from specific rivers and communication with tribes in each community is essential because we depend on these species. Sustainability of all species is top priority, health of sea and fisheries are essential. Recommend to council a tribal representative be on council to make sure people affected are represented.

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S. Moreland clarified that she's not on council; she has opinion as to what council does and makes recommendations.

The Council's Salmon bycatch Working Group includes Jennifer Hooper and Tim Andrew (AVCP), Mike Smith (TCC), Tanana corp, Yukon delta CDQ group and three reps from Pollock fishery.

Middle River Subsistence member says that we aren't getting compensated for fish taken from commercial fishery.

Chair member asked: To what level was Yukon Treaty escapement into Canada brought into the decision? D. Bedford answered: State dept .was consulted on this, requirement under treaty isn't an objective numeric requirement. No clear guidance on what's required by treaty and state dept said it was sufficient, and if bycatch is reduced, and the proportion of bycaught Canadian fish is reduced, it should cause increase in escapement to Canada. We need good information hub, i.e. We need to involve relevant/affected individuals, and make it known what the process for involvement is, and what data/research do we need to engage in? Commitment made by council that there's an expectation that this program is going to work, and they'll have the industry back to the table if it doesn't.

USFWS representative asked: what tools will council have if it doesn't work? It has regulatory process, i.e. If incentive plans don't work, the industry will have a new hard cap imposed if the performance standard doesn't improve.

Commercial Fisher member commented: haven't had commercial fishery on kings in-river and would rather have that.

Meeting Chair asked: food banks- how do they work? Regulatory process requires bycaught fish go back to sea, or foodbank, monitored by NMFS. Could bycatch be distributed amongst Yukon/Kuskokwim? They're small fish and in varied conditions, so that may not be useful. The catcher/processor does more with the foodbank system. Bycatch given to foodbank not coming to region, but coastal village is looking into it. B. Robbins-Gisclair added that it has to go through Seashare located in Seattle, the only group licensed to distribute salmon, so all distribution currently is in lower 48. In 2007 about 10% bycaught salmon distributed thru this program. But there is a possibility for others to become distributors if they wanted. The fish are processed, but unknown what form they're delivered in, i.e. in filets, whole fish, etc. J. Linderman said they may not be in condition to be used for subsistence purposes.

ONC representative commented: limitation of bycatch redistribution is that freezer space isn't cost-effective, but S. Moreland says that the incentives may make the fleet increase these storage measures.

Member at Large commented: total bycatch for western AK is 40%, he agrees there should be a representative on the council, most subsistence users are in Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, and Yukon area. Also recommend fishing fleet be educated about local lifestyle and salmon

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storage for winter use. Q: Which other interest groups are concerned about Chinook cap? A: Council heard from 200 individuals from western Alaska and outside of state.

Meeting Chair asked: Is there some action the group needs to take now? S. Moreland says now is a good time to provide feedback (e.g. the “what’s next” section of presentation) - most important is the chum salmon bycatch issue, and the NMFS website has page you can go to [http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current\\_issues/bycatch/bycatch.html](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/bycatch.html)

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

The current Downriver Elder wants to add Chuck Chaliak as the alternate for Downriver elder and remove Peter Miller as alternate. ([New Business for next meeting](#)).

Chair member said Rep. Herron has talked with Rep. Woody Salmon to follow up on Holitna River drainage reserve HB 227.

Commercial Fisher member asked question for Coastal village about summer operation on tenders- same as last year? (S. Curry not available for answer)

Meeting Chair commented: wants to schedule a radio show on KYUK about coming season, expectations and PSAs about fishing conservatively, i.e. “Take what you need.” Also, updated group that Donlin Creek wanted to hold a meeting with just the WORKING GROUP members but it didn’t happen because the chairs insisted that it must be a meeting that is open to the public, but WORKING GROUP may invite them to a later meeting. Also concerned about Yukon salmon situation and heard last year Kuskokwim salmon were being sold as Yukon salmon.

Representative of CVRF commented that they are donating \$202k to research on Kuskokwim.

**Meeting Chair proposed next meeting Tuesday June 16<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.**

Other participants to 5 20 WORKING GROUP meeting:

John Linderman ADFG  
Kevin Clark ADFG  
Chris Dock Coastal Villages Seafoods  
Tim Andrew AVCP  
Eva Patton ONC  
Dan Gilliken USFWS  
Fritz Charles Bethel Community  
Geron Bruce ADFG HQ  
David Bedford ADFG HQ  
Stephanie Moorland HQ  
Lily Ray ADFG Subsist.  
Chris Sheldon ADFG  
Shane Iverson KYUK  
Becca Robins-Gisclair YR DFA  
Calvin Simeon

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG) meeting was called to order at 10:00am Tuesday, June 16th, 2009, at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conference room in Bethel. The meeting adjourned at 12:15p.m. Nine of thirteen members were present. A quorum was established.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) New Business
- 3.) Old Business

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion made and carried to place “New Business” agenda item directly before “Old Business” on the agenda packet.
- 2.) Motion made and carried to accept Calvin Simeon as the primary Middle R. Subsistence member, and to accept Wayne Morgan as an alternate for Middle R. Subsistence.
- 3.) Motion made and carried to accept Chuck Chaliak as the Downriver Elder alternate, and to remove Peter Miller from the Downriver Elder Organization at his own request.
- 3.) Motion made and carried to schedule the next KRSMWG meeting for 6-19-09 at 10:00am.

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) ADF&G will provide information on salmon run timing between physical locations.
- 2.) ADF&G discuss the salmon harvest calendars and post season survey project at a later date.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

ADF&G stated there will be no subsistence schedule, and is not proposing any commercial fishing periods for the remainder of the week ending June 20.

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None.

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- Residents are harvesting adequate numbers of Chinook around Tuntutuliak. The run started picking up on Saturday.

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- Many residents were catching twenty or more Chinook salmon per fishing trip. The first few Chinook were small and went through fishermen's 8" nets. The second pulse of Chinook salmon was larger and thus catches increased.
- Residents of Tuntutuliak are filling up their racks quickly and the weather is good for fishing. Residents are also happy about having no subsistence closures. Downriver Elder added that drifts of 15-20 minutes were productive in catching significant amounts of Chinook salmon.

**B. Orutsararmiut Native Council Inseason Subsistence:**

For fishing ending the week of June 14<sup>th</sup>:

- 11 families reported their Chinook catches as very good, 19 families reported their catches as normal, and 8 families reported their catches as poor.
- 38 families reported their sockeye catches as normal; no families reported their sockeye catches as very good or as poor.
- No families reported their chum catches as very good, nor as poor, 38 families reported their chum catches as normal. Please see KRSWGM agenda packet for complete ONC summary and chart.

**C. Middle River:**

- Many families began fishing this past weekend. One individual did 4 drifts between Aniak and Kalskag on 6-15-09 and caught 6 Chinook salmon, averaging 10-20 lbs. Another individual fishing with chum gear did four 20-minute drifts and caught 13 Chinook salmon, 1 chum and 1 sockeye. Most people are waiting to fish until the salmon run gets stronger, so there has been minimal fishing effort upriver.

**D. Upriver:**

- It was reported that in Crooked Creek a single Chinook salmon had been caught in a subsistence net on 6-10-09.
- ADF&G's George River weir crew confirmed that Chinook salmon are showing up near Sleetmute and Crooked Creek.
- Western Interior RAC reported that no salmon have arrived near McGrath yet.

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- The 2009 cumulative Catch per unit effort (CPUE)s will be compared with BTF data from years of similar water level, these years include 2000, 2003-2005, 2006 and 2008. Water temperature is above average; however, it is well within the average historical range.
- Currently, cumulative Catch per unit effort (CPUE) is showing a similar trend seen in 2006 and 2008, therefore the Chinook run appears to be average. As of June 16, the cumulative CPUE for Chinook is 114, for sockeye is 16, and for chum is 42.
- ADF&G stated that the fish caught in the BTF will continue to be distributed among the community to social service agencies and elders. The public is reminded that a tote will be located at the tundra center and a sign will be posted when fish are available for pickup.

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- For additional information on the BTF project, see attached charts and graphs in the agenda packet.

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) reported that the Tuluksak weir will be put in this week, however the Kwethluk weir has not yet been installed due to high water levels. If the weir cannot be installed, there will be a mark and recapture program implemented on chum and Chinook salmon. This mark and recapture program involves a scientific method where fish are marked and then caught further upriver, which allows for a general estimate of salmon passage. Depending on water levels and funding, the Kwethluk weir may be installed for the coho salmon run.
- USFWS also reported that a crew is sampling the subsistence caught salmon at the village of Tuluksak. In addition, there is federal funding for a study on Ichthyophonus (a fungus associated with Chinook salmon, with symptoms including white puss patches in the flesh).
- ADF&G reported that Aniak river sonar crew will arrive at the project site on June 22 and plan to start salmon estimation on June 26.
- George River weir installation is currently in progress (operated cooperatively by Kuskokwim Native Association (KNA) and ADF&G) and should be operational by 6-17-09. Tatlawiksuk weir (operated cooperatively by KNA and ADF&G) was operational on 6-14-09, but so far no salmon have been recorded. Takotna river weir (operated cooperatively by Takotna Tribal Council and ADF&G) should be operational by 6-18-09. Kogruklu river weir has a planned start date 6-24-09. Salmon river weir project will be operating this year during the coho salmon run, beginning late June or early July, for the mark and recapture program.
- ADF&G gave a report on the Chinook salmon Age-Sex-Length (ASL) sampling program on the lower Kuskokwim River. The ASL program is a collaborative project between ADF&G and ONC. ASL sampling kits have been deployed to several Bethel areas, including Eek, Tuntutuliak, Napakiak and Napaskiak and individuals are being trained to sample their subsistence caught salmon. USFWS also have a similar ASL sampling project in Tuluksak.

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The first 2009 commercial fishery in district 4 was held on 6-15-09 from 9am to 9pm. A total of 79 fishers caught approximately 1600 Chinook salmon. The catch was below historical averages but increased from 2008.

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- The new, state-of-the-art Platinum seafood processing plant will be fully operational around 7-23-09. The Platinum fish plant will be producing pin-bone-out salmon filets vacuum packed and frozen for shipping. Crews for the Platinum plant will be on site at the end of the week.

In prior years, Coastal Village Seafood (CVS) bought fish and flew them to a processor in Kenai, which became an unprofitable operation. With the new Platinum plant in operation, CVS will only purchase fish from W1-B (below Bethel), and will not be purchasing fish in W1-A. CVS is in the preliminary stages of designing and

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- constructing a processing plant in Bethel where a market can be provided to commercial fishermen upriver. There is no timetable set, however, it may be a 1 to 2 year plan.
- CVS is in the process of marketing salmon as a quality product nationwide. They have been travelling to villages and discussing quality issues with fisherman. Mandatory icing and bleeding of all commercial salmon is one step in the process to ensure that CVS fish meet the high standards of a quality wild product. CVS will no longer be buying fish that have not been bled or iced.
- In future, CVS is planning on implementing Radio Frequency Identification Tags (RFID Tags) in all the fish boxes and totes so that all buyers know exactly where the fish arrived from and who caught the fish.
- Questions and concerns from the group were the price of fish paid to fishermen and the fairness of only buying in lower river districts.
- A member stated that commercial fisherman should be receiving higher fish prices due to the aggressive marketing strategy by CVS and the new Platinum plant online. Processor responded by stating that the operational loss for CVS was 2 million dollars last year and will likely be 2 million dollars this year. When CVS can get to the point where they can create a market and get the volume of seafood that allows CVS to operate at break even or better, then fishermen may receive more money per fish.
- This summer the tender locations include Napaskiak, Johnson, and both Eek and Tuntutuliak sides of the Lower River.
- Western Interior RAC asked if a commercial fishery could support local markets to sell fish to local people, and added that it would greatly help people fishing in areas without commercial openings. ADF&G responded by stating that there is a catcher/seller program for that, however, last year it did not generate strong interest. Kuskokwim Permit holders allow fishermen to fish from Goodnews Bay up to McGrath. Terry Reeves is the contact individual for the catcher/seller program.

#### **5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

Too early for a Sport Fish report.

#### **6. AREA M REPORT:**

ADF&G did not go into great detail with the Area M report. There was some discussion about its relevance to the meeting proceedings, and members were asked if they still wanted to receive the updates and some said they found it interesting. Anyone with questions about the report should contact the Area Manager.

#### **COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:**

- Commercial Fisher stated that fishing has been good around Eek, and within the past 2-3 days the Chinook salmon have increased in size.
- Processor stated that many residents of Quinhagak reported the Chinook run being a week or so behind the average run timing.
- Sport Fishing stated that their family began fishing on 6-15-09 and caught 29 Chinook salmon, 1 sockeye salmon and 3 chum salmon. The salmon were caught after 3 to 4 twenty minute drifts.

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- The general consensus among the Working Group members was that the first Chinook salmon to arrive were smaller in size when compared to the second pulse of Chinook salmon.
- Processor asked if anyone tracked snow depths on the Kuskokwim River. ADF&G responded by stating that there is one location in McGrath where they track snow depth consistently. The water content of the snow pack was lower in 2009 than 2008.
- Downriver elder stated that because of tidal action, fish fluctuations go up and down around Tuntutuliak, and catches are never the same depending upon the tides. Downriver elder asked if the tidal action affects the BTF fish data. ADF&G responded by stating that the BTF crew fishes the same drift locations, uses the same net sizes, follows the same times with the tides, and that the project is very consistent in its performance as a way of establishing an accurate scientific method that demonstrates reliability and validity.
- Sport Fish and ADF&G stated the importance of filling out the fish catch calendars, and to remember not to duplicate the fish numbers. Multiple families fishing together should have one person designated to writing down the catches.
- There were several concerns regarding subsistence fishermen having adequate time to catch sufficient amounts of salmon before the commercial fishing periods begin. ADF&G responded by reporting that regulations state commercial fishing must be opened in district 4 before 6-16-09, and that it is the single biggest indicator of possible abundance in district 4. There are no other sources of information to determine salmon run strength. It was added that fish racks in Quinhagak are filling up quickly. There have been no complaints towards ADF&G regarding commercial fishing conflicting with subsistence catches.
- Downriver Elder stated that it would be beneficial for W1-A to be closed for commercial fishing so that CVS can maintain top notch fish quality and that salmon have better chances to reach escapement.
- There were several comments regarding the unfairness of CVS not purchasing fish above Bethel. Processor responded by stating that CVS is not blind to everyone's needs, and that downriver residents and CVS employees are very interested in assisting upriver residents in helping meet their needs. ADF&G added that subsistence fishing is important on the Kuskokwim River and that commercial fishing has to be considered in the context of subsistence fishing.
- Several comments were brought up concerning Working Group members not receiving any reimbursement for travel and time costs as a result of attending the Working Group Meetings either in person, or by teleconference.
- Stuart Currie stated that it's great to be back and working with the residents of the region again. Mr. Currie looks forward to helping provide a strong market for the Kuskokwim river salmon, and ultimately helping increase the prices that commercial fishermen are paid for their catches.

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game conference room in Bethel. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. Eleven of thirteen members were present. A quorum was established.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) Old Business

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion to have a commercial opening June 23<sup>rd</sup> with 6” or less mesh size restriction in sub-district W1-B. Motion amendment made and accepted to have the commercial fishing period from 1-5pm. Motion failed with 4 yeas and 4 nays. .
- 2.) Motion for Working Group to meet 6-21-09 (Sunday) at 1:00pm. Motion Passed.

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) John Chythlook (ADF&G –SF) will provide Aniak resident Clair Morgan with State Trooper contact information in an effort to clarify whether or not hunting/fishing guiding operations can actively harvest salmon while tending to clients.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) ADF&G recommended commercial opening June 23<sup>rd</sup> with 6” or less mesh size restriction in sub district W1-B.

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Upriver community members from Aniak and Crooked Creek are concerned about having commercial openings downriver prior to subsistence needs being met. Subsistence lifestyles are being affected from commercial fishing as many families are not catching enough salmon for the winter months.
- Upriver community member concerned about fishing guides using set nets to give clients fish, and that it should be looked into.
- Upriver community members reported minimal Chinook salmon catches and high fuel costs.

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTNUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- Since the last meeting more Chinook have been caught and fish racks are filling up.
- Most fishermen are using 7 ½” and 8” mesh.

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**B. Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) In-season Subsistence:**

- ONC technicians' interview residents at fish camps Monday through Friday, most subsistence activities are recorded over the weekend.
- In general most folks are getting average catches, largest Chinook salmon have been caught the last couple days.
- Most subsistence fishermen have not met their harvest needs, and meeting harvest goals will most likely be achieved in the upcoming week.
- Sockeye salmon are just beginning to arrive.
- The latest informal report included 43 surveyed families.
- 19 families reported Chinook catches as normal.
- 35 families reported the Chinook run timing as normal.
- 31 families used driftnets and 35 families used 6" or greater mesh size.

**C. Middle River:**

- People reported very few fish per drift.
- Most people using 8" mesh size.
- Chum and sockeye salmon are just beginning to arrive.
- Compared to 30 years ago the salmon run is quite low, and compared to recent years the run is below average.
- Subsistence fishing effort near Bethel has increased over the past few years with greater amounts of fishermen using newer equipment.

**D. Upriver:**

- Upriver residents would prefer to have subsistence needs met before allowing downriver commercial openings.
- Stony River residents reported to Tatlawiksuk river weir crew members that Chinook salmon are beginning to arrive upriver.

**E. Headwaters:**

- Salmon continue to arrive in the Blackwater River. One fisherman caught 10 salmon last night.

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water level at Crooked Creek is still tracking above average for this time period.
- BTF Chinook CPUE data is comparable 2002
- Water temperature hasn't changed and is still tracking above average. Water clarity is around normal for this time of year.
- June 15 and 16 the BTF had an increase in the index for Chinook salmon. BTF is still tracking above 2006 and 2008.
- No red flags for Chinook and sockeye salmon at this time in the BTF when looking at all comparable years.
- Still early for Chum salmon to arrive at the BTF site.

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**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- USFWS crew is beginning a Mark-Recapture project on the Kwethluk River, Tuluksak weir not yet installed.
- George River weir became operational on 6-17-09, 2 chum salmon have passed the site.
- Tatlawiksuk weir became operational on 6-14-09, 6 chum salmon have passed the site.
- Kogrukluq weir is on schedule for installation and crew is flying to site today.
- Takotna weir is on schedule to become operational for fish counts on 6-20-09.
- Aniak sonar plans on being operational on 6-24-09.
- Coho tagging project in Kalskag is proceeding on schedule.

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

No update.

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Quinhagak plant has begun processing fish.

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

No update.

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Through 6-17-09 total Alaska Peninsula harvest for Chinook is below 2004, total sockeye harvest is second lowest since 2004, and total chum harvest is third highest since 2004.

**AGENDA ITEMS: OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Update on bylaws regarding processor:** There is currently only one processor so according to the bylaws there is no need for the processor to alternate.
- **Possible KRSMWG meeting on 6-23-09 with members of Federal Subsistence Board:** There will be a 10:00 a.m. KRSMWG meeting on 6-23-09 to accommodate members of the Federal Subsistence Board.

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSMWG meeting will be held on Tuesday 6-21-09 at 1:00 pm at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

**COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:**

- Comment that upriver subsistence fishing restrictions over the past 5-years have had a negative impact on subsistence fishermen.
- ADF&G clarification: there has been no subsistence fishing closures in middle or upper Kuskokwim in 5-years.
- Group members were reminded that when presenting information on fish catches it is very important to have knowledge of and discuss what type of mesh sizes are being used.
- Comment of being opposed to any type of commercial fishing until all communities have met their subsistence fishing needs, and that downriver commercial fishing makes it difficult for upriver subsistence fishermen to meet their needs.

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- Comment that there are several hundred Lower Kuskokwim River fishermen using large nets (8”), subsistence fishing is open 24-7, and that many of the large Chinook salmon are caught. In contrast, commercial fishermen are limited to 6” and smaller mesh; many of the large Chinook salmon are not caught in commercial openings.
- 90% of commercial catch are male, generally small, and confirmed through internal sexing
- In June 2008, approximately 6,000 Chinook salmon were caught in commercial openings, compared to subsistence fishermen catching approximately 85,000 Chinook. Therefore, commercial openings can serve as a conservation effort that allows more fish to escape upriver
- Comment that a majority of subsistence fishermen are approximately half-way finished with their Chinook salmon catches.
- Weekend fishing is more prevalent in Bethel, so commercial fishing during that time could have a negative impact.
- Question: would a commercial fishery catch more Chinook salmon in a 6-hour opening or would subsistence fishermen catch more Chinook in a 24-hour period? Agreement was that more Chinook salmon are caught through subsistence fishermen than in a commercial opening.
- It was commented that by law and by practice subsistence fishing has priority over commercial. .
- Run timing for salmon from Bethel to Aniak is generally 4-days to 1-week.
- Comment that Working Group members have agreed to take a whole river perspective on things, and members need to have an open mind coming into the meetings and listen to all the information before coming to conclusions. Having strong positions before hearing all the information is contrary to the Working Group purpose.
- Recognition of Doug Bue’s dedication to the Kuskokwim as he has returned for season number 32!
- Comment that in some years the lowest escapements yield the highest returns and in other years the highest escapements yield the lowest returns.
- It was noted that commercial fishing provides residents with income to support subsistence fishing (gas, new nets, outboards, boats, etc.).
- It was confirmed that ADF&G is not mandated to have 2-hour extensions for commercial fishing periods, it is just an option.

**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG** or **Working Group**)

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 (MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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

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June 21, 2009

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG) meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm Sunday, June 21, 2009, at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conference room in Bethel. The meeting adjourned at 2:45p.m. Nine of thirteen members were present. A quorum was established.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion made to have a 4 hour commercial opening June 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 3pm to 7pm in District W-B with 6" or less mesh size restriction . Motion Failed.
- 2.) Motion amendment made to have a 2 hr extension to the commercial opening. Amendment failed.

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) James Charles will provide name of elder from Bethel area who has been trying to receive fish caught in the BTF.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ADF&G recommended commercial opening June 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 3pm to 7pm with 6" or less mesh size restriction in W1 B. Motion Failed with 7 yeas and 2 nays.
- ADF&G Area manager vetoed the group and will announce the opening. ADF&G stated, subsistence harvests are not in jeopardy, with number of commercial fishermen, the level of commercial catch will not be problematic. The timing for the opening is good because there's less chum and sockeye, and if the commercial harvest is timed much later in the run (i.e. after middle and upriver fishers finish harvesting), it could affect escapements to lower rivers.

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None.

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTNUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- In Tuntutuliak, many people fishing, and catching fish with shorter drifts, so many fish racks pretty full now, few more people want a few more kings.
- Friday a few people from Eek caught mostly reds and chums, with small mesh nets.

#### **B. Orutsararmut Native Council Inseason Subsistence:**

- The latest informal report included 29 interviewed families,

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- 17 families said fishing was normal.
- 27 families using more than 6 inch gear,
- 9 families were 25 % done, 7 families were 50% done, 8 were 75% done and 5 families were 100% finished with their King harvests.

**C. Middle River:**

- Report unchanged from last meeting, no one is done fishing, and most have started fishing. A few have said kings have dropped off dramatically, but many have said there were large kings.
- A lot of drifting effort in front of Aniak, a significant number people choosing to fish right in front of town, maybe due to gas prices.
- Most people are just getting started, but a few early folks are more than half done filling their racks. Fish passage may not be dropping off; it may be related to the high effort in front of Aniak.
- Two people have said the kings were larger and they may be dropping out of nets.

**D. Upriver:**

- Nothing new to report from last meeting. Haven't heard of anyone catching kings yet. But at previous meeting reported catching 10 kings on the Blackwater.

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- The Chinook index is tracking most closely with 2002, sockeye seem late, but are picking up. For chums it's still early but they're being caught in the fishery. No red flags yet for any of these species.
- Comment from WG member: had concern about how the fish are distributed from BTF, an elder woman had tried to get some fish, but others are beating her to the shore. Elders should have priority for receiving test fish catches.
- BTF is trying to get fish to senior center and others on the need-based list, but the catches of fish have been very small, around 3 fish total, so they haven't been distributing to centers
- Monday BTF staff will go to senior center, and are working with ONC to get a list of people in need of fish.

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

No update

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

No update

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Quinhagak and Platinum plants are ready to go. Between the two salmon plants, 275 people are employed, 90% of these are locals, and 95% are Alaskans.

Could have 200 fishers on the river during an opening, each with a helper, so up to 400 people participating in commercial fishery on the Kuskokwim, helps people buy supplies

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- and gas for their subsistence harvest, and therefore it's an economic boost to the region when there is a commercial opening.
- Tenders will be located above Napaskiak and also at Eek Island, Johnson River, and Tuntutuliak.
- Ice will be available in Bethel at the dock and on tenders.

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

No update.

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

No update

**7. MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Tuesday 6-23-09 at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Processor does not want the 2-hr commercial opening extension because he's sensitive to upriver fishers, wants the shorter window so have minimal impact, and so did not accept amendment.
- Also concerns that first opening should be of limited duration, because many fishers in Lower River are out harvesting and this coming week is when most folks will fill their racks.
- Also concern that opening should be later in the week to give lower and upriver people more time for their subsistence harvest.
- The reason for the 2 hr extension is to compensate for weather and tidal action.
- If the opening happens now, fishers can get more kings which have highest value, If have an opener later in the week, that would have to coordinate with Kuskokwim Bay and Goodnews Bay openers because of plant processing capacity.
- Last year had opener on this date and 1300 kings were harvested.
- Clarification: during opening subsistence is closed for the area downstream and then upriver of Bethel to straight slough (3 miles upstream of Bethel).
- If people are concerned about people upriver getting fish, remember that ~1300 fish are caught in commercial opener will be less impact than the subsistence fishery total harvest for that time period, especially since the commercial fishery uses 6" inch or less mesh, thus allowing large fish to escape.
- Comment that there's lots of pressure on the resource, so members would like to see a later opening, or at least only one opening total for the week, and that the 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> is when fishers are trying to meet their needs.
- USFWS countered concern that if commercial fishing effort is increased on later end of the run, we might not meet escapement on lower rivers.
- Members need to look at all the science and the cultural facts when making decisions.
- In regards to the bay openings, there's a Monday opener district 4 and 5 and depending on abundance, there may be another later in the week. ADF&G says if abundance allows, the Bay. will go on a Monday and Thursday commercial opener schedule for those districts from here throughout the season.

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- This staggering of openers allows processor to keep up with fish coming to the plant. Processor needs to proceed with these openings to see what their processing capacity can be, and check abundance before agreeing to a 6-hr opening later in the week. Also, as chums pick up they could be over-abundant, and they want to make sure not to get too many fish in one opening so that quality doesn't suffer.
- Recommendation that when ADF&G announces opener, they clarify that it was not a motion passed by the Working Group.
- Middle River member stated that it may be hard to support the WG process with the federal board present when the ADF&G has overridden the group

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG or Working Group**)

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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

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June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

Called to order at 10:09 a.m. Tuesday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 12:30 p.m. A quorum was established with nine of thirteen members present.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

None

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) ADF&G recommended meeting on Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the 6-23-09 sub-district W1-B commercial opening and the salmon run assessment.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1) Motion to meet Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Bethel ADF&G conference room. Motion Passed.

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Upriver community member from Aniak is concerned that having commercial openings downriver affects the upriver subsistence catches

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- A good number of Chinook salmon passed through on Saturday and many families filled their fish racks
- When high tide reaches Tuntutuliak the river widens and many salmon are able to avoid the 50 fathom nets and travel further upriver
- Each year subsistence and commercial fishing becomes more expensive as the cost of living increases
- Downriver residents have almost met their needs for Chinook salmon

#### **B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

- ONC technicians interview residents at fish camps Monday through Friday each week, it is reported that a majority of subsistence fishing occurs during weekends
- 44 families were surveyed for the week ending Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009
- 73% fished with driftnets and 11% of families reported using only set nets. 93% reported using greater than 6" mesh nets.

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- 41% of interviewed families reported Chinook salmon catches as Very Good, 100% families reported Chum salmon fishing as Normal, and 86% of families reported Sockeye salmon catches as Normal
- 98% of families reported the Chinook and chum salmon run timing to be normal, and 57% of families reported the sockeye run timing to be late
- No families reported any loss or souring of fish and some families commented the winds have been good for drying fish
- People commented that the Chinook salmon had good oil content this year
- Many families have either finished or are close to finishing their Chinook salmon harvest, and those families are soon switching to smaller mesh gear for the sockeye, chum and coho salmon

**C. Middle River:**

- No change in water clarity, water level has dropped quickly the last couple days
- The average fisherman is catching 2-3 fish per drift
- Fish are drying well and flies are not a problem this year
- The general consensus is that most families are opposed to commercial fishing, if commercial openings continue in W1-B and Middle River residents continue to struggle with salmon catches “there will be hard feelings”
- residents are reporting seeing tapeworms in the smaller Chinook salmon

**D. Upriver:**

- ADF&G George River weir crew reported that a family caught 11 Chinook salmon upriver

**E. Headwaters:**

- Residents are beginning to catch Chinook salmon and one individual caught 13 this past week, but many people are waiting to fish until the run picks up in the area
- A fisherman caught 4 large female Chinook salmon and released 3 of them for escapement purposes
- Catching lots of Sheefish and the chum salmon are now arriving, even above McGrath near Grayling Creek

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water level at Crooked Creek is average; water temperature and clarity are also average
- June 22nd CPUE for Chinook salmon is 320, which is above the year 2002 when escapement goals at Kogrukluq weir were met
- June 22nd CPUE for sockeye salmon is 171, sockeye are lagging behind most other comparable years at this point
- June 22nd CPUE for chum salmon is 149, chum salmon usually peak around July 4<sup>th</sup>
- BTF does 4 drifts each tide, 2 with 5 3/8” mesh and 2 with 8.0” mesh
- No red flags to indicate poor runs for any of the salmon species at this time

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**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- USFWS is attempting to reinstall Kwethluk weir; crew and materials are on newly selected site
- Tuluksak crew is on site and weir is currently being installed
- Aniak River sonar project is on schedule
- George River weir has been in operation since June 17th, 6 Chinook salmon passed on June 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Takotna River weir began operating on June 21<sup>st</sup>; 1 Chinook and 22 chum salmon have passed
- Kogrukluk River weir is on schedule to be in full operation on June 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Information from weirs does not yet indicate any red flags, nor any information about the strength of the salmon runs

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

No update

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Platinum plant began processing salmon on June 23rd
- There will be a Grand Opening at the Platinum processing plant on July 23rd
- A tentative processing/fishing schedule is to have Bay openings while processing River salmon, and to have River openings when processing Bay salmon
- CVS is the only buyer on the Kuskokwim, there is no lack of demand and currently all fish caught can be processed and shipped out
- CVS processed fish are shipped out both fresh and frozen, there is also fillet facilities at both plants (Platinum and Quinhagak)

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

No update

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total Chinook salmon harvest through June 20th remains lower than the previous four years, with the exception of 2008.
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through June 20th is the second lowest since 2004
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through June 20th is higher than the previous four years, with the exception of 2004

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Thursday, June 25th at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

**COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:**

- Working Group Members introduced themselves for visitors from the Federal Subsistence Board. Each member gave an overview of their involvement in the Working Group process and spoke about community involvement and cultural significance to the Kuskokwim Area

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- Comment that there is an average 7-10 day lag time of salmon traveling from the BTF fishing site to upriver communities
- Comment that District W1-B commercial openings involved 150 to 180 fishermen using 6” or less mesh whereas the, subsistence fishery includes hundreds of fishermen , many using 8” mesh
- Approximately 90% of Chinook salmon harvested in commercial openings are males, generally small in size
- Comment that total harvest from commercial period may be 4,000 Chinook salmon compared to approximately 80,000 Chinook salmon harvested in the subsistence fishery
- ADF&G consensus is that commercial openings in District W1-B will not have an impact on escapement and subsistence fishing upriver
- Comment that Working Group members should share agenda packets with community members for informational purposes
- Sockeye salmon are not extremely abundant in the Kuskokwim River
- Most sockeye salmon spawn in lake systems, however, radio telemetry work indicates that as up to 80% of Kuskokwim River sockeye salmon spawn in river tributaries
- Comment that half the total subsistence harvest of Chinook salmon in Alaska is taken from the Kuskokwim River
- Clarification that the term “souring fish.” refers to fish that are prevented from drying though rain and moisture
- Comment that Ichthyophonosis is not too prevalent on the Kuskokwim, there are generally a couple reports of the disease each year, USFWS is planning on sampling Chinook salmon tissue for the disease in 2010
- Based on decades of high seas tagging, when juvenile Chinook salmon leave the Kuskokwim River, they spend their years at sea in the Bering Sea, and rarely venture south of the Aleutian Islands; consequently, the reported Area M Chinook catch likely includes few if any Kuskokwim river Chinook salmon.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

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# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

**1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)**

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June 25, 2009

Called to order at 10:10 a.m. Thursday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 12:10 p.m. A quorum was established with eight of thirteen members present.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) Old Business
- 3.) New Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) Seat members unable to attend Working Group meetings should make an effort to stay in contact with their alternates so a member can be available at the meetings. If primary and alternate seat members are unable to attend meetings they should search for interested community residents that would like to become Working Group members. Community residents interested in becoming Working Group members should be informed of the process as well as the importance of helping manage the Kuskokwim salmon fishery.
- 2.) ADF&G Jeff Estensen will contact and inform Habitat division that a bank-owned building near Aniak is eroding into the river.
- 3.) ADF&G Jeff Estensen will contact Terry Reeves to find out if catch/seller information is available to the general public.
- 4.) Greg Roczicka will speak with the Delta Discovery and Tundra Drums about articles addressing the significance and importance of ONC In-season reports and ADF&G post-season salmon surveys.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Working Group meeting on Monday, June 29 at 10:00 a.m.
- 2.) A commercial opening June 26, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1) Motion made to have a 4 hour commercial opening June 26, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Motion passed with 5 yeas, 1 nay, and 1 abstention vote. (See detailed vote record below)

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

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AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

**1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

**A. Lower River:**

- Most families have finished their Chinook salmon harvests, downriver families report harvesting enough Chinook for the winter months

**B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

- No full report since June 23
- Primary interview week is Thursday through Sunday, new updates available each Monday, next update on June 29
- There is still Chinook salmon harvest activity, however, many fishermen are preparing for the chum and sockeye salmon harvests

**C. Middle River:**

- An estimated ¼ families have completed Chinook salmon harvests, ½ have reached midpoint, and ¼ are beginning.
- A majority of families report the Chinook harvest as poor through June 25
- A majority of families are harvesting salmon during the daytime, and competition among fishermen may be resulting in lower abundance of Chinook salmon per fishing vessel
- Water levels have decreased and water clarity has increased
- Sport fishing activity has increased in recent days with guides taking fishermen up the Aniak River
- There is a high abundance of mosquitoes this year
- Subsistence fishing with rod & reel has increased recently

**D. Upriver:**

- A majority of families have harvested enough Chinook salmon for the winter months, there are no complaints about shortages of fish
- Ability to harvest salmon on the Yukon River is limited, and some Yukon residents have traveled to the Kuskokwim River to fish with their families
- No significant increase in Chinook salmon reaching McGrath since June 23 meeting

**E. Headwaters:**

No Report

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water level and water temperature remains average, water clarity slightly decreased since June 23
- Chinook salmon cumulative CPUE is 426 through June 24
- Sockeye salmon cumulative CPUE is 340 through June 24
- Chum salmon cumulative CPUE is 397 through June 24
- Chinook salmon abundance is looking very good at this point, no red flags for either sockeye or chum salmon as of June 25

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**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- Kwethluk weir is being installed in an alternate location, and is not yet operational
- Tuluksak weir is being installed and is not yet operational
- George weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 9 as of June 24, no red flags
- Tatlawiksuk weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage remains at 2 through June 24
- Takotna weir has had one Chinook salmon pass through June 24
- George weir Chum salmon cumulative passage is 28 through June 24
- Tatlawiksuk Chum salmon cumulative passage is 20 through June 24
- Takotna weir chum salmon cumulative passage is 29 through June 24
- Aniak sonar provides chum salmon information, installation is going smoothly and should be fully operational on June 25
- Aniak sonar is the only sonar project on the Kuskokwim River, and focuses primarily on Chum salmon; yearly beach saning records high proportions of chums to other salmon species.
- Within known project limitations, the Aniak sonar is very accurate at monitoring the chum salmon run
- Kalskag fish wheel project will focus exclusively on radio tagging coho salmon this year, next year will focus on sockeye salmon

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- Corrections were made to Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon commercial catches in the agenda packet.
- June 23 W1-B commercial catches include: 3,211 Chinook, 8,944 Chum and 7,845 sockeye salmon. Chinook CPUE was 4.8, Chum CPUE was 13.3, sockeye CPUE was 11.8
- Chinook salmon CPUE was second highest since 1990
- 167 permit holders fished in the commercial opening
- Commercial catch results are preliminary and subject to change once fish tickets are processed
- Approximate average of Chinook salmon weight was 10 lbs, although the fish varied in size and were not concentrated in any weight group as has been observed in past years.

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- No fishermen were turned away for not bleeding or icing fish because tenders arrived at their locations late; ice was not readily available for the fishermen.
- 65,000 salmon were caught during the June 23 W1-B commercial opening
- The average income per commercial fishing vessel was \$380
- 30-40 thousand pounds of fish were processed in platinum on June 24, with the remaining salmon scheduled to be processed on June 25
- The time needed to offload fish onto the tenders took longer than anticipated, CVS is following up to ensure faster offloads during future commercial openings
- CVS is using a new fish ticket system
- CVS has purchased a forklift for the tender stationed near Eek to assist with faster offloading

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- Chum salmon prices have increased from .05 in 2008 to .15 cents in 2009
- CVS has raised wages at the processing plants from \$8 in 2008 to \$9 in 2009

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

- Sport fishing activity is beginning and residents should be aware of the regulations

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through June 23 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one through similar time periods
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through June 21 is below all harvests since 2004 except two through a similar time period
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through June 21 is highest harvest in all years since 2004.

AGENDA ITEMS: OLD BUSINESS:

**1. TWO-HOUR EXTENSIONS DURING COMMERCIAL FISHING OPENINGS:**

According to regulations, 2-hour extensions will occur only when fish abundance and capacity allow for such and will occur only *before* the opening, not afterward.

AGENDA ITEMS: NEW BUSINESS:

1. WORKING GROUP MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING MEETINGS. Primary and alternate Working Group members should stay in contact with one another so that a seat member is available for each meeting. In the event that primary or alternate members are no longer able to attend the meetings, then replacement Working Group members should be sought after. Current Working Group members and ADF&G Working Group Coordinators shall assist in the process of locating new replacements.

WORKING GROUP VOTING CLARIFICATION:

- Bylaws state that when 7 or less seat members are voting, 2 nays will defeat a motion (i.e. the motion still passes with 1 nay vote). With 8 or more seat members voting, 3 nays will defeat a motion. Reminder that abstention votes always count towards the voting member total.

MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Monday, June 29 at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Observation that the 167 commercial fishermen were dispersed evenly along the river during the June 23 W1-B commercial opening.
- Tenders were delayed in offloading the commercial catches, and boats were stacked up in long lines
- The June 23 District 5 commercial opening total catch and CPUE closely followed both the 10-year and 5-year historical averages
- The June 23 District 4 commercial opening was below average for Chinook salmon.

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- Concern expressed that people were throwing garbage in the river while waiting to sell fish; fishers are reminded they can give garbage to tender. Further comment that all residents of the Kuskokwim Area should assist in keeping the environment clean and safe.
- A bank-owned building near Aniak is eroding into the river.
- Question as to why the Kuskokwim River salmon run remains healthy and many of Alaska’s other tributaries have poor salmon runs. No direct answer could be given
- Comment that the processing plants provide residents with much needed income, as do commercial opening periods
- CONGRATULATIONS Fritz Charles to your new 8 pound baby boy! Stuart noted in fishing terms that the new baby boy was a “keeper”
- USFWS will begin checking and enforcing subsistence net mesh requirements; 8.0” x 35 mesh depth is the maximum legal limit for depth. Residents fishing with 8.0” gear will be issued citations if their mesh depth exceeds 35.
- Kevin Clark is leaving Bethel for a position with ADF&G in Petersburg, the group wishes him well
- Announcement for the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Kwethluk Science Camp from July 19-29. Students will have the opportunity to learn watershed ecology, fish ecology and wildlife ecology. Everything will be provided (even the airfare); chosen applicants will need only warm clothing and a willingness to participate in the outdoors. There will be lots of rafting, so if you know of any interested students they can contact Eva Patton at ONC.

MOTION VOTES:

- 1.) Motion made to have a 4 hour commercial opening June 26, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Motion passed with 5 yeas, 1 nay, and 1 abstention vote.

Sport Fishing	Beverly Hoffman	YEA
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	ABSTENTION
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	YEA
YK Delta RAC	Bob	YEA
Member at Large	Henry	YEA
Processor	Stuart Curry	YEA
Upriver Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	NAY

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

MEMBER SEAT	NAME	OTHER
		Mike Thalhauser-KNA
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Lower R. Subsistence	Greg Roczicka	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	Kevin Clark-ADF&G
Processor	Stuart Curry	John Chythlook-ADF&G
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	Don Rivard-OSM
	Fritz Charles	Dave Cannon-KNA
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	Don Morgan
	Douglas Kernak	Angela Denning Barnes-KYUK
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	Alex Nick-USFWS
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	Robert Sundown-USFWS
	Beverly Hoffman	Carl Jack-OSM
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	Pete Perbasko-OSM
Chair Member	Greg Roczicka	George Oviot-BLM
		Dan Sharp-BLM
		Debra Cooper-NPS
		Maria Clark-OSM
		Gary Edwards-USFWS
		Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
		Eva Patton-ONC
		Jennifer Hooper-AVCP
		Dani Evenson-ADF&G
		Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
		John Linderman-ADF&G
		Justin Crow-ONC
		James Hooch-ONC

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG** or **Working Group**), King or Chinook will be used interchangeably.

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)  
P.O. Box 1467 • Bethel, AK 99559 • 907-543-2433 • 907-543-2021 fax

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June 29, 2009

Called to order at 10:00 a.m. Monday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 11:55 p.m. A quorum was established with seven of thirteen members present.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) ADF&G Nick Bradley will email the Working Group distribution list a link to the Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Releases.
- 2.) ADF&G Jeff Estensen has been in contact with Jim Bales (Kuskokwim Area Habitat Biologist) regarding the bank owned building eroding into the river near Aniak. Jeff will provide the Working Group with updates as they become available.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) commercial opening July 1, from 1pm to 4pm in District W1-B with 6" or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after.
- 2.) Working Group meeting on Thursday, July 2 at 10:00 a.m.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion made to accept ADF&G commercial opening recommendation. Motion passed. (For vote details see below).

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTNUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- A majority of families have completed Chinook salmon harvests, and fish racks are full
- Families are beginning to harvest sockeye and chum salmon, and community members report that there is a 50/50 ratio of chum to sockeye salmon
- Chum salmon abundance is average and run timing is described as below average
- Community members with dog mushing teams have increased fishing efforts

#### **B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

- Primary interview schedule is Thursday through Sunday, new updates available each Monday, next update on July 6
- 36 families were surveyed for the week ending June 28

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- 84% of the families surveyed reported using drift nets and 6% reported using set nets
- 34% of the families surveyed reported Chinook salmon fishing as “very good,” 55% as “normal,” and 6% as “poor”
- 94% of the families surveyed reported the Chinook salmon run timing as “normal”
- 3% of the families surveyed reported chum salmon fishing as “very good,” 77% as “normal,” and 19% as “poor”
- 77% of the families surveyed reported the chum salmon run timing as “normal”
- 6% of the families surveyed reported sockeye salmon fishing as “very good,” 71% as “normal,” and 23% as “poor”
- 65% of the families surveyed reported the sockeye salmon run timing as “normal,” and 35% as “late”

**C. Middle River:**

- Fishing activity and Chinook salmon abundance have both increased recently, as the first pulse of Chinook salmon arrived last week
- Chinook salmon are beginning to blush
- Chinook salmon size is below average
- Residents are concerned about the commercial fishing openings downriver.
- Residents are beginning to switch from King nets to chum and sockeye salmon nets.

**D. Upriver:**

No Updates

**E. Headwaters:**

No Updates

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water level and water temperature remain average, water clarity remains below average.
- Comparable water level years for Chinook salmon include 2000, 2002, and 2003 to 2005, and 2007 to 2009
- Comparable water level years may change for the sockeye and chum salmon runs as the water level at Crooked Creek continues to decrease
- Chinook salmon CPUE for June 28 is 575
- Sockeye salmon CPUE for June 28 is 629
- Chum salmon CPUE for June 28 is 1028
- Based on these CPUE values, there are not red flags to indicate poor runs at this time
- BTF crew has contacted the Bethel Senior Center and scheduled future salmon deliveries
- BTF catches are being dropped in a tote at the Tundra Center where area residents can pick them up, and salmon are being dropped off to the homes of elderly residents

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- There are six operational ground-based assessment projects (5 weirs and 1 Sonar site) in the Kuskokwim River drainage

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- Tuluksak weir became operational on June 26, as of June 28 no Chinook salmon have passed the weir site
- Kwethluk weir is scheduled to become operational on June 29
- George weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 28 through June 28, escapement goal range for Chinook is 3100 to 7900; chum salmon cumulative passage is 68 through June 28, currently the lowest on record
- Tatlawiksuk weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 11 through June 28, no escapement goal range for Tatlawiksuk weir; chum salmon cumulative passage is 98 through June 28, lowest on record
- Takotna weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 3 through June 28; chum salmon cumulative passage is 84 through June 28, which is average
- Kogrukluk weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 5 through June 28; chum salmon cumulative passage is 58 through June 28
- Lower river indications have been good, 2009 does not appear to be a year of great above average or great below average Chinook salmon escapement; however 2009 appears to be a year of lower abundance for chum salmon
- Aniak River Sonar has been in operation for 3 days, chum salmon cumulative passage is 1,454 through June 28

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The following catches were recorded for the June 26 W1-B commercial opening: 3,149 Chinook salmon, 14,802 chum salmon, and 6,697 sockeye salmon
- Commercial cumulative catches for 2009 (2 openers) are 6,360 Chinook salmon, 23,746 chum salmon, and 14,812 sockeye salmon
- Combined CPUE's of the June 23 and June 26 commercial openings for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon are 4.6, 21.6, and 10.2 respectively
- 172 Permit holders fished the June 26 W1-B commercial opener
- ADF&G sampled 230 Chinook salmon from the June 23 commercial opener, preliminary estimates indicate that 87% were males, 41% were age 4 salmon
- ADF&G sampled 250 Chinook salmon from the June 26 commercial opener, preliminary estimates indicate that 75% were males, 25% were age 4 salmon

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Processing salmon from the June 26 commercial opener in W1-B took longer than anticipated, and CVS requested that future openings are shorter in duration so that the quantity of fish being caught doesn't exceed processing capacity

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

- Aniak Air Guides and other guiding outfits near Aniak had clients arriving as early as last week

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through June 25 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one (2008)

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- Total sockeye salmon harvest through June 25 is above all years except one (2007) for all years since 2004
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through June 25 is above all years since 2004

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Thursday, July 2 at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Concerns about possible low escapement numbers and current salmon passage numbers at weir sites
- Comment that traditional knowledge and scientific methods are being incorporated together in a positive manner to assist in monitoring and regulating the Kuskokwim salmon populations
- Comment that there may be 3 Chinook salmon runs; Kings that run under the ice, the regular king run, and the Sandpiper run.
- Comment that it is very informative to receive District 4 and 5 bay reports
- Clarification that catcher/seller information is confidential. ADF&G can discuss the harvest numbers but not the value of the catches, there are currently 3 catcher/sellers registered to participate in the catcher/seller openings.
- Comment that Chinook salmon exploitation rates have historically been over 40%, with new subsistence studies in effect that number could change
- Comment that a significant indicator of salmon abundance is the commercial harvests
- Comment that sport fishing rafters should provide the right-of-the way to boats on the river, it was further added that boats have a legal obligation to provide rafters with the right-of-way on the river.
- Again noted that Working Group members should stay in contact with their alternates so that there can be a quorum at each meeting
- Reminder that Kuskokwim Area residents should work together to ensure that salmon spawning grounds are left alone

MOTION VOTES:

- 1.) Motion to have a 3 hour commercial opening July 2, from 1pm to 4pm in District W1-B with 6” or less mesh size restriction (with no 2-hour extension), with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after,.

MEMBER SEAT	NAME	VOTE
Downriver Elder	James Charles	YEA
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	YEA
Processor	Stuart Curry	YEA
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	YEA
YK Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	YEA
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	NAY
Sport Fishing	Beverly Hoffman	ABSTENTION

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Dani Evenson-ADF&G
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
Processor	Stuart Curry	Jennifer Hooper-AVCP
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
YK Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Sport Fishing	Beverly Hoffman	Doug Bue-ADF&G
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	Robert Sundown-USFWS
Chair Member	Beverly Hoffman	Chris Sheldon-ADF&G
		Pippa Coiley-Kenner-OSM
		Shane Iverson-KYUK
		James Hooch-ONC
		Eva Patton-ONC
		Mike Thalhauser-KNA
		Dan Gillikin-USFWS
		John Chythlook-ADF&G
		John Linderman-ADF&G

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG or Working Group**), King and Chinook are used interchangeably

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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July 2, 2009

Called to order at 10:05 a.m. Thursday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 11:40 p.m. No quorum was established with only six of thirteen members present. A Working Group session was conducted.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) ADF&G will include a weather forecasts section in the KRSWMG agenda packets.
- 2.) Terry Reeves will provide ADF&G with catcher/seller information to include in the agenda packets.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Working Group meeting on Monday, July 6 at 10:00 a.m.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

None

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

Community Elder Peter Jacobs Sr. inquired as to why Yukon River Chinook salmon abundance has significantly decreased from 2008, and further asked why the Kuskokwim River has had a more abundant run of salmon than the Yukon River in 2009. No direct answer could be given, however, several Working Group members noted that multiple factors should be taken into consideration when discussing the increase or decline of a species abundance. The Working Group would like to thank Fritz Charles for translating English to Yupik for Mr. Jacobs.

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTNUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

Families have completed their Chinook salmon harvests and are now using smaller mesh fishing gear to catch sockeye and chum salmon

#### **B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

No Updates

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**C. Middle River:**

- A majority of families have completed Chinook salmon harvests, approximately five families are still harvesting Kings
- Some people are still fishing with salmon nets to harvest fish for dogs
- Water level has decreased and water clarity has increased
- Community residents feel that salmon have decreased from 2008 and on average families had to put in more effort to complete Chinook salmon harvests
- Many residents feel that salmon abundance is low and escapement goals will not be achieved
- Large female Chinook salmon have recently arrived in moderate abundance
- Majority of subsistence fishing is occurring on the far side of the Aniak River, the South Shore

**D. Upriver:**

No Updates

**E. Headwaters:**

No Updates

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water level is below average, water clarity and water temperature remain average
- Chinook salmon CPUE through July 1 is 626, a majority of Chinook salmon have passed the BTF fishing location
- Sockeye salmon CPUE through July 1 is 818, abundance is above 2000 and 2002, but below all other years with comparable water level
- Chum salmon CPUE through July 1 is 1959, abundance is below all years with comparable water level with the exception of 2000
- Run timing for all salmon species is later than all years of comparable water levels

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- Kwethluk weir became operational late on June 29, Chinook salmon cumulative passage through July 1 is 34; cumulative passage for chum salmon through July 1 is 204, (no escapement goal)
- Tuluksak cumulative passage for Chinook salmon through July 1 is one, (escapement goal is 1,000 to 2,100); cumulative passage for chum salmon through July 1 is 9
- George weir cumulative passage for Chinook salmon through July 1 is 194, (escapement goal is 3,100 to 7,900), count to date remains fourth lowest on record; cumulative passage for chum salmon through July 1 is 191, lowest to date
- Kogruklu weir cumulative passage for Chinook salmon through July 1 is 28, Chinook passage is second lowest on record of years shown; cumulative passage for chum salmon through July 1 is 223, (escapement goal is 15,000 to 49,000), of years shown, chum passage is third lowest on record

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- Tatlawiksuk weir cumulative passage for Chinook salmon through July 1 is 22, (no escapement goal); remains second lowest to date; cumulative passage for chum salmon through July 1 is 165, lowest on record for project
- Takotna weir cumulative passage for Chinook salmon through June 30 is 5, fourth lowest to date; cumulative passage for chum salmon through June 30 is 123
- Aniak Sonar cumulative passage for chum salmon through July 1 is 7,783, second lowest of years shown (escapement goal is 220,000 to 480,000)
- Chinook and Chum salmon passage at ground-based assessment project sites are below average, suggesting 2009 will have low escapements for both species.

### **3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The following catches were recorded for the July 1 W1-B commercial opening (verbal report): 769 Chinook salmon, 7,765 sockeye salmon, and 18,461 chum salmon
- Cumulative catches for 2009 (3 openers in W1-B) are 7,129 Chinook salmon, 22,577 sockeye salmon, and 42,207 chum salmon
- Combined CPUE of all 3 openers for Chinook, sockeye, and chum are 6.1, 25.3, and 57.6 respectively
- 171 Permit holders fished the July 1 W1-B commercial opener
- There was no 2 hour downriver extension

### **DISTRICTS 4 & 5:**

- Preliminary verbal reports from the commercial period on June 30 in District 4 indicate a harvest of 1,356 Chinook salmon, 10,600 sockeye salmon, and 7,610 chum salmon.
- Approximately 127 permit holders fished in the District 4 opening
- Cumulative harvests through June 30 are 11,955 Chinook salmon, 17,684 sockeye salmon, and 13,298 chum salmon
- Preliminary verbal reports from the commercial period on June 30 in District 5 indicate a harvest of 221 Chinook salmon, 3,207 sockeye salmon, and 1,196 chum salmon
- Approximately 24 permit holders fished in the District 5 opening
- Cumulative harvests through June 30 are 1,093 Chinook salmon, 6,166 sockeye salmon, and 4,030 chum salmon
- Chinook salmon harvest and catch rate in Districts 4 and 5 were below average for both the June 25 and June 30 openings, as a result, there will be no commercial periods on Friday, July 3 to allow more Chinook salmon escapement into the Goodnews and Kanektok Rivers

### **4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Total value of the July 1 W1-B commercial catch was \$55,866, \$326.70 per permit holder
- Tender leaving Quinhagak beached on a sandbar and arrived late to Eek location where long lines of fishermen were waiting with their catches
- CVS is taking into consideration both low abundance of salmon and weather concerns in scheduling future commercial openings

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**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

Middle river guiding activity continues to increase; rod and reel fishing has also increased along the Aniak River

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through June 25 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one (2008)
- Total sockeye salmon harvest through June 25 is above all years except one (2007) since 2004
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through June 25 is above all years since 2004

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Monday, July 6 at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- subsistence, commercial and sport fishing groups should all work together so that our natural resources do not deplete
- BTF, downriver subsistence and ONC reports reflect a healthy Chinook salmon abundance
- there are still long lines of commercial fishermen waiting to offload their catches due to tender delays
- Several comments concerning and comparing subsistence and commercial salmon catches
- Several questions inquiring about the cause of poor salmon returns in 2009. No direct answers were provided, it was noted that multiple factors should be taken into consideration when discussing the increase or decline of a species abundance
- fishing closures should be applied to sport fishing as well as subsistence and commercial, it was added that sport fishing has been closed in many areas of the state for Chinook salmon; furthermore, regulation states that sport fishing must be closed before subsistence fishing

MOTION VOTES:

None

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Terry Reeves-Marine Advisory Program
Middle R. Subsistence Processor	Calvin Simeon	Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
Member at Large	Stuart Curry	Jennifer Hooper-AVCP
Commercial Fisher	Fritz Charles	Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
Sport Fishing	Charlie Brown	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
ADF&G	Beverly Hoffman	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Chair Member	Jeff Estensen	Doug Bue-ADF&G
	Lamont Albertson	Melissa Smith-KNA
		Chris Sheldon-ADF&G
		Lucinda Alexie-OCS
		Shane Iverson-KYUK
		Peter Jacob Sr.-Elder
		Eva Patton-ONC
		Dave Cannon-KNA
		Dan Gillikin-USFWS
		John Chythlook-ADF&G
		John Linderman-ADF&G

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# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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July 6, 2009

Called to order at 10:10 a.m. Thursday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 11:55 a.m. A quorum was established with seven of thirteen members present.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) ADF&G will provide information about Kuskokwim-bound salmon caught in the Districts 4 and 5 commercial fisheries (based on stock of origin genetics information, if available)

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Commercial opening July 7, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B stat area 11 with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after.
- 2.) Working Group meeting on Friday, July 10 at 10:00 a.m.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion to accept commercial opening recommendation. Motion failed (for vote details see below).
- 2.) Motion made to meet July 8 to discuss salmon run assessment information. No second, motion failed.
- 3.) Motion made to meet July 10 to discuss salmon run assessment information. Motion passed (for vote details see below).

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTNUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- No Updates

#### **B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

- 36 families were surveyed for the week ending July 5
- 14% of the families surveyed reported fishing, 100% reported using driftnets only
- 60% of the families fishing with gillnets are using greater than 6” mesh, 20% are using gillnets with 6” mesh or less, 20% are using both

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- 86% of the families surveyed reported being finished with Chinook, chum and sockeye harvests for the season
- 100% of the families surveyed reported Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon fishing as “normal”
- Those families that fished with Chinook drift gear reported fewer chums as bycatch compared to previous years, but most families didn’t have to switch their gear to smaller mesh because they caught the sockeye they needed when fishing with Chinook gear.

**C. Middle River:**

- Majority of residents have completed Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon harvests, and fish racks are full
- Water levels are low and decreasing, Aniak River and its tributaries observed as lowest in recent years, low water may be preventing fish passage
- Greatest abundance of salmon reported to be below the Aniak Sonar site
- Salmon passage up the Aniak River may have decreased due to low abundance or late run timing
- Target date for Salmon River weir installation is July 15

**D. Upriver:**

- Residents are catching salmon in McGrath and Nikolai, abundance is low
- Majority of residents are fishing with drift net gear, no set nets due to snags and debris

**E. Headwaters:**

No Updates

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water levels at Crooked Creek remain below average and continue to decrease, water levels similar to 2000 and 2005; water temperature fluctuating above and below average, within historical range; water clarity below average, within historical range
- Comparable water level years for sockeye and chum salmon include 1998, 2000, 2002 to 2003, 2005 to 2006, 2007, and 2009
- Chinook salmon CPUE through July 5 is 659
- Sockeye salmon CPUE through July 5 is 1,136
- Chum salmon CPUE through July 5 is 3,000
- Based on these CPUE values, all salmon species catches to date in the BTF are similar to catches for this date in year in which escapement goals were achieved at the Kogrukluk River weir
- BTF catches continue to be distributed to residents at the dock, directly to social services agencies, and through placement in a fish tote at the Tundra Center in Bethel; as abundance of chum salmon increases, fish will be distributed to dog mushing teams
- Majority of Chinook salmon have passed the BTF site, sockeye and chum salmon catches continue to increase

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- BTF continues to fish two times per day (1 hour after each high tide), each tide consists of four 20-minute drifts using 8.0” mesh for two drifts and 5.4” mesh for two drifts
- Run timing for all salmon species at the BTF site is average

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- Kwethluk weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 800 through July 5, looks promising to achieve escapement goal; chum salmon cumulative passage is 1,170 through July 5, second lowest on record; sockeye salmon cumulative passage is 1,288 through July 5
- Tuluksak weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 6 through July 5, second lowest on record; chum salmon cumulative passage is 43 through July 5, lowest on record
- George weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 686 through July 5, based on past patterns it is unknown whether escapement goal will be achieved; chum salmon cumulative passage is 817 through July 5, second lowest on record
- Tatlawiksuk weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 225 through July 5, doesn’t look promising for escapement goal to be achieved; chum salmon cumulative passage is 770 through July 5, second lowest on record
- Kogrukluks weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 313 through July 5; chum salmon cumulative passage is 791 through July 5; sockeye salmon cumulative passage is 72 through July 5, third lowest on record
- Takotna weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 19 through July 5, one of the lowest escapements based on historical records; chum salmon cumulative passage is 250 through July 5, second lowest on record
- Aniak River sonar chum salmon cumulative passage is 23,887 through July 5
- Kuskokwim River tributary aerial surveys will begin around July 20

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The following catches were recorded for the July 1 W1-B commercial opening: 769 Chinook salmon, 18,461 chum salmon, and 7,765 sockeye salmon
- Commercial cumulative catches for 2009 (3 openers) are 7,129 Chinook salmon, 42,207 chum salmon, and 22,577 sockeye salmon
- Combined CPUE’s of the June 23, June 26, and July 1 commercial openings for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon are 1.5, 36, and 15.1 respectively
- 171 Permit holders fished the July 1 W1-B commercial opener
- 79% of total 2009 commercial Chinook salmon catch has been male

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- All salmon from the July 1 W1-B commercial opener have been processed by CVS
- CVS has no concerns with tender capacity or processing capabilities, and can accommodate commercial openings in Districts 1, 4, and 5 up to five days per week
- CVS reported that 2009 chum prices have increased ten cents due to better market conditions, and that the newly constructed Platinum plant eliminates the need to fly salmon to Kenai for processing, thus saving additional costs
- Commercial openings will focus primarily on chum salmon as the majority of Chinook and sockeye salmon runs have passed through District 1

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**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

Rod and Reel fishing for salmon on the Kisaralik River in early July 2009 was poor

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through July 4 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one (2008)
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through July 4 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except 2006 and 2008
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through June 28 is above all years since 2004

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Friday, July 10 at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Question about salmon runs in small tributaries being affected more by water level conditions than large tributaries
- clean water and a healthy habitat allow Kuskokwim River salmon to successfully rebound following years of poor salmon returns
- Concerns that escapement goals continue to decrease, examples were provided of both increasing and decreasing escapement goals at various weir project assessment sites
- Donlin Creek mine operation may have an effect on water quality
- Several concerns regarding assurance of Kuskokwim salmon rebounding following years of poor returns at weir sites
- large abundance of salmon at weir sites can constitute volatile and variable returns
- Several comments, concerns and clarifications regarding the proportions of salmon catches from subsistence, commercial and sport fishing
- ADF&G Division of Sport Fish should be more active in applying rules and regulations during years of poor salmon returns
- Several comments were made regarding whether or not the Working Group should make decisions based on the economics or value of any commercial fishery, but members felt that they wanted to include economics in their discussions
- Concerns about the increase in subsistence harvests along the Kuskokwim River in recent years
- salmon passage at weir sites in years of low water levels may not reflect true escapement due to fish spawning further downriver before reaching the weir sites
- good diversity and distribution of spawning salmon at all weir sites is important for healthy and sustainable returns.
- catchability has increased with low water levels
- traditional knowledge and scientific methods are equally important for monitoring and managing the Kuskokwim River salmon populations

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- in past years subsistence fishermen loaded up their boats with salmon in one trip, and in 2009 similar harvests involved three or more trips
- during low abundance years the salmon are more valuable to the ecosystem than commercial fishermen
- the Working Group is a wonderful learning experience for all members

MOTIONS VOTES:

- 1.) Motion to have a 4-hour commercial opening July 7, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B stat area 11 with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after.

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>VOTE</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	NAY
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	NAY
Processor	Stuart Curry	YEA
Member at Large	Fritz Charles	NAY
YK Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	NAY
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	ABSTENTION
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	NAY

- 2.) Motion to made to meet July 10 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss salmon run assessment information.

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>VOTE</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	YEA
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	YEA
Processor	Stuart Curry	YEA
Member at Large	Fritz Charles	YEA
YK Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	YEA
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	YEA
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	YEA

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Processor	Stuart Curry	Mike Thalhauser-KNA
Member at Large	Fritz Charles	Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
YK Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	Doug Bue-ADF&G
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	Tom Taube-ADF&G
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	Chris Sheldon-ADF&G
Chair Member	Beverly Hoffman	Eva Patton-ONC
		James Hooch-ONC
		Justin Crow-ONC
		Don Rivard-ONC
		Carl Berger-LKEC
		Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
		Lucilla Alexie-OCS
		Shane Iverson-KYUK

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsarmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG or Working Group**)

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

**1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)**

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

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July 10, 2009

Called to order at 10:06 a.m. Friday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 11:34 a.m. No quorum was established with only five of thirteen members present. A Working Group session was conducted.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) Old Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) ADF&G will provide additional information on Area M coho salmon escapement when available.
- 2.) Working Group members will contact residents of Kwethluk and inform them of Monday's meeting.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Commercial opening July 11, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B stat area 11 with 6" or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the downriver end of Johnson River downstream to a line between Apokak slough and the southernmost tip of Eek Island.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion to accept commercial opening recommendation. No quorum (for vote details see below).
- 2.) Motion made to meet July 13 to discuss salmon run assessment information. No quorum, opposition, or role call vote).

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTNUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

75-90% of families have completed subsistence salmon fishing, fish racks are full

#### **B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

Majority of families have completed subsistence salmon fishing

#### **C. Middle River:**

- Majority of families have completed subsistence salmon fishing

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- Dog mushing team owners continue to harvest chum salmon in preparation for winter
- Water temperature and clarity continue to increase, water levels continue to decrease
- High abundance of salmon continue to be observed as “holding” below the Aniak sonar site

**D. Upriver:**

No Updates

**E. Headwaters:**

No Updates

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water levels at Crooked Creek have begun to increase due to water run-off from glacial melts, water temperature and water clarity are above average, but within historical range
- Current comparable water level years include 2000, 2002, 2004 to 2005, and 2007 (these changes are not reflected in the agenda packet due to 50% or more of Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon having already passed the BTF site;
- Chinook salmon cumulative CPUE through July 9 is 676
- Sockeye salmon cumulative CPUE through July 9 is 1,277; tracking above low abundance years of 2002, tracking similar to average abundance years of 1998 and 2007, tracking below average and record high abundance years of 2003, 2005 and 2006
- Chum salmon cumulative CPUE through July 9 is 4,256; tracking above low abundance years of 1998, 2000 and 2003, tracking similar to average abundance years of 2002 and 2007, tracking well below the record high abundance years of 2005 and 2006
- Run timing for all species appears to be average
- Salmon catches on the morning tides have have been better than those on evening tides

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- Kwethluk River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 1,470 through July 9, (escapement goal is 6,000 to 11,000), passage to date higher than 2000 when goal was reached and lower than 2008 when goal was not reached; chum salmon cumulative passage is 2,853 through July 9, (no escapement goal), current passage lower than 2 recorded years of generally low escapements; sockeye salmon cumulative passage is 2,216 through July 9, (no escapement goal), passage higher than seven of the ten years of recorded data
- Tuluksak River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 25 through July 9, lowest on record (escapement goal is 1,000 to 2,100); chum salmon cumulative passage is 175 through July 9, lowest on record (no escapement goal).
- George River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 1,637 through July 9, (escapement goal is 3,100 to 7,900), passage to date is higher than all three years of generally low escapements; chum salmon cumulative passage is 1,612 through July 9, (no escapement goal), passage to-date higher than one of two years with recorded generally low escapements

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- Kogruklu River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 1,020 through July 9, (escapement goal is 5,300 to 14,000), passage is greater than both years of generally low escapements; chum salmon cumulative passage is 2,730 through July 9, (escapement goal is 15,000 to 49,000), passage higher than two of the three years when escapement goal was not achieved; sockeye salmon cumulative passage is 532 through July 9, (proposed escapement goal 4,400 to 17,000), passage lower than 11 of 13 recorded years of data,
- Tatlawiksuk River weir (no escapement goals) Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 543 through July 9, passage to date is higher than two of three years of generally low escapements; chum salmon cumulative passage is 2,300 through July 9, passage higher than one of two recorded years of generally low escapements
- Takotna River weir (no escapement goals) Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 92 through July 9, current passage is in between both recorded years with generally low escapements; chum salmon cumulative passage is 393 through July 9, passage lower than both recorded years of generally low escapements
- Aniak River Sonar chum salmon cumulative passage is 59,285 through July 9, (escapement goal 220,000 to 480,000), passage is higher than two of three recorded years with generally low escapements
- Low water level conditions may be delaying the run timing of all salmon species at all assessment projects

### **3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

No Update for W1-B

### **DISTRICTS 4 & 5:**

- Due to high abundance of commercial catches Districts 4 and 5 are now in Sockeye directed management, fishing schedule is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday until further notice from the department
- District 4 sockeye salmon harvests are above average, District 5 harvests are average
- Districts 4 and 5 chum salmon harvests are above average
- No escapement goal concerns at Kanektok or Goodnews Bay weirs

### **4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Due to high abundance of salmon being caught and processed in Districts 4 and 5, CVS will have limited tender capacity for any commercial openings in W1-B, CVS will only provide tender service to W1-B stat area 11
- One CVS tender was removed from the Kuskokwim fleet to resupply commercial halibut fishermen near Nunivak Island
- All CVS processed salmon has been marketed and sold, the market allows for more salmon than CVS is receiving and processing at this time
- CVS is making a long-term investment with the direct purpose of supporting and sustaining employment for Kuskokwim area residents

### **5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

Papa Bear Ptarmigan Air guiding service reported low numbers of salmon moving up the tributaries

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**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through July 7 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one (2008)
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through July 7 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except 2006 and 2008
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through July 7 is above all years since 2004

**7. WEATHER FORECAST:**

- SOUTHWEST ALASKA WATERS CAPE NEWENHAM TO DALL POINT
- TODAY...NE WIND 10 KT. SEAS 2 FT. PATCHY FG.
- TONIGHT...VARIABLE WIND 10 KT. SEAS 2 FT. PATCHY FG.
- SATURDAY...S WIND 10 KT. SEAS 2 FT. PATCHY FG
- SATURDAY NIGHT...S WIND 15 KT. SEAS 2 FT.
- SUNDAY...SE WINDS 20 KT. SEAS 5 FT.
- MONDAY...SW WIND 25 KT. SEAS 8 FT.
- TUESDAY...S WIND 20 KT. SEAS 8 FT.

AGENDA ITEMS: OLD BUSINESS:

**1. DISTRICT 4 SALMON INTERCEPTIONS**

In 2006 the Office of Subsistence Management funded a genetic study aimed at identifying abundance of district 4-caught Chinook salmon that migrate up the Kuskokwim River. Upper Kuskokwim Chinook salmon can be genetically identified from District 4 catches.

Preliminary results of this study show that the percentage of District 4 Chinook salmon that migrate up the Kuskokwim River is very small, however, results are still being reviewed and the department will present its findings at the 2010 interagency meeting.

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Monday, July 13 at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Question asking how escapement goals are established, answer provided that Standard Escapement Goals (SEG's) take into consideration recorded historic abundance averages and recorded historic levels of harvest, and that having average abundances of salmon at the spawning grounds assists in sustainability
- Multiple comments that years of low escapements often generate high abundance returns, years of high escapements often generate low abundance returns
- Several continuing concerns that several weir escapement goals may not be reached in 2009
- Large abundance of salmon reaching the spawning grounds has indirect benefits to the ecosystem other than just producing eggs
- Comment that it is important to provide area residents with economic opportunities if available
- Comment that "resources to the people" is an equally important concept as "resources to the river"

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- A big “Thank You” to Bethel Employers for allowing employees time off to attend Working Group meetings
- USFWS does not agree with ADF&G recommendation to have a commercial opening

**MOTIONS VOTES:**

1.) Motion to have a 4-hour commercial opening July 11, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B stat area 11 with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the downriver end of Johnson River downstream to a line between Apokak slough and the southernmost tip of Eek Island.

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>VOTE</b>
Lower R. Subsistence	Greg Roczicka	YEA
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	YEA
Processor	Stuart Curry	YEA
Member at Large	Fritz Charles	YEA
Sport Fishing	Beverly Hoffman	NAY

**WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE**

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Lower R. Subsistence	Greg Roczicka	Dan Gillikin-USFWS
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	Mike Thalhauser-KNA
Processor	Stuart Curry	Shane Iverson-KYUK
Member at Large	Fritz Charles	Don Rivard-USFWS
Sport Fishing	Beverly Hoffman	Steve Miller-USFWS
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	Ken Harper-USFWS
Chair Member	Lamont Albertson	Lucinda Alexie-OCS
		Peter Green
		Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
		Nick Bradley-ADF&G
		Holly Carroll-ADF&G
		Dani Evenson-ADF&G
		Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
		Chris Sheldon-ADF&G
		Doug Bue-ADF&G
		John Chythlook-ADF&G
		Amy Broderson-ADF&G
		Ashley Fairbanks-ADF&G

**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG** or **Working Group**)

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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

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July 13, 2009

Called to order at 10:00 a.m. Friday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 11:00 a.m. No quorum was established with only six of thirteen members present. A Working Group session was conducted.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) Old Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) ADF&G will continue to distribute informational packets on a weekly basis
- 2.) ADF&G will provide updates on Area M coho salmon abundance as information becomes available

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Commercial opening July 14, from 1pm to 5pm in the Lower Section of Subdistrict 1-B with 6" or less mesh size restriction. with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the area from the downriver end of Johnson River downstream to a line between Apokak slough and the southernmost tip of Eek Island. Based on the chum and sockeye salmon escapement a commercial opening will not negatively impact subsistence harvests or escapement.
- 2.) Suggest the next Working Group meeting be at the call of the Chairs. If we continue to see the promising chum salmon escapement at all the escapement projects Subdistrict 1-B will likely go on a Tuesday and Saturday commercial opening schedule, which has been recommended by the buyer, ADF&G will continue to provide packets to the Working Group members on a weekly basis and if there is any concern by the Working Group members they should call a meeting.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion to accept commercial opening recommendation. No quorum (for vote details see below).

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

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AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

**1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

**A. Lower River:**

- Chum salmon abundance increased last week, majority of families have completed chum salmon harvests
- Recent pulse of chum salmon indicates run timing may be late

**B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

- 36 families were surveyed for the week ending July 13, of these, only two families reported fishing
- 2 families reported using driftnets, 0 families reported using setnets, 1 family reported using rod and reel
- 1 family reported using gillnets with 6” or mesh or greater, 1 family smaller than 6” mesh
- 100% of families surveyed reported completion of Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon harvests for 2009
- Families that started late reported it was easy to achieve their goal even with the late start
- One family plans to go rod and reeling next week, and reported that conditions were excellent for drying fish this year
- Zero families reported Chinook salmon fishing as “very good,” 2 families as “normal”
- A majority of families reported the Chinook salmon run to be “average” in 2009
- Zero families reported chum salmon fishing as “very good,” 2 families as “normal”
- Two families reported chum are beginning to show color, an indication that the run is ending
- Zero families reported the sockeye salmon fishing as “very good,” 2 families as “normal”

**C. Middle River:**

- Majority of families have completed subsistence salmon fishing
- Majority of families reported 2009 subsistence salmon fishing as “poor”
- Fishermen reported catching enough fish for their families through increased efforts
- Approximately 20 to 40 sport fishermen were observed rod and reeling at the mouth of Aniak River
- Water clarity continues to increase

**D. Upriver:**

No updates

**E. Headwaters:**

Chinook salmon have arrived at Salmon River

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

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- Water levels at Crooked Creek are increasing but remain below average, water temperature is above average and increasing, water clarity is above average and increasing; water level, temperature, and clarity all within average historical range
- Comparable water level years for sockeye and chum salmon include 2000 to 2007, and 2009
- Although majority of Chinook salmon have passed the BTF site, 3 Kings have been caught in 4 days
- Chum salmon cumulative CPUE is 4,937 through July 12, on historical average 76% of chum salmon have passed the BTF site by July 12. Cumulative CPUE for 2009 is tracking most closely to 2002 and still increasing
- Sockeye salmon cumulative CPUE is 1,414 through July 12, cumulative CPUE continues to increase somewhat
- BTF caught its first coho salmon on Saturday, cumulative CPUE is 8 through July 12

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- Kwethluk River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 2,928 through July 12, passage to date ahead of both years when escapement goals were not achieved; chum salmon cumulative passage is 8,505 through July 12, passage to date above both years of generally low escapements; sockeye salmon cumulative passage is 3,197 through July 12, passage to date above 8 of 10 years of recorded data
- Tuluksak River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 145 through July 12, passage to date above two years and below two years of the four years when escapement goals were not achieved; chum salmon cumulative passage is 1,342 through July 12, passage to date above both years of generally low escapements
- George River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 2,320 through July 12, passage to date is above all 3 years when escapement goals were not achieved; chum salmon cumulative passage is 2,772 through July 12, passage to date is above 2 of 3 years of generally low escapements
- Kogrukuk River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 2,189 through July 12, passage to date above all years of generally low escapements and the one year shown in which the escapement goal was not achieved; chum salmon cumulative passage is 7,912 through July 12, passage to date is above all 3 years when escapement goals were not achieved, projections based on run timing models indicate escapement goal of 15,000 to 49,000 will likely be reached; sockeye salmon cumulative passage is 3,271 through July 12, passage to date above 1 year and below 1 year in which escapement goals were not reached
- Tatlawiksuk River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 792 through July 12, which is above all years of generally low escapements; chum salmon cumulative passage is 4,176 through July 12, passage to date above both years of generally low escapements
- Takotna River weir Chinook salmon cumulative passage is 128 through July 12, passage to date is above one year and below one year of generally low escapements; chum salmon cumulative passage is 600 through July 12, passage to date is above 1 year and below 1 year of recorded generally low escapements
- Aniak River sonar chum cumulative passage is 101,959 through July 12, passage to date is above both years that escapement goals were not achieved, projections based on run timing models indicate that escapement goal of 250,000 to 400,000 will be reached

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- Overall abundance of salmon arriving at weir and sonar assessment project sites increased this past week, easing concerns of escapement goals not being reached

### **3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The following catches were recorded for the July 11 Subdistrict 1-B Lower Section commercial opening: 101 Chinook salmon, 7,528 chum salmon, and 1,156 sockeye salmon
- Commercial cumulative catches for 2009 (4 openers) are 7,230 Chinook salmon, 49,735 chum salmon, and 23,733 sockeye salmon  
CPUE's for July 11 commercial opening for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon are 0.3, 25.8, and 4.0 respectively
- 73 Permit holders fished the July 11 W1-B Lower Section commercial opener
- July 11 commercial catch results are preliminary and subject to change

### **4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Total value of July 11 W1-B Lower Section commercial opening was \$12,455, \$170 per permit holder
- Difficulty transporting water to the Quinhagak processing plant, tenders are being redirected to transport salmon to Platinum processing plant, until further notice CVS will only be able to process fish from Subdistrict W1-B Lower Section commercial openings

### **5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

Fishing activity on the Aniak River has increased, 20 to 30 anglers observed rod and reeling at the mouth

### **6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total Chinook salmon harvest through July 11 remains below all years dating back to 2004 except one (2008)
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through July 11 is above all years dating back to 2004
- Total chum salmon harvest through July 11 is above all years since 2004

### **7. WEATHER FORCAST:**

- SOUTHWEST ALASKA WATERS CAPE NEWENHAM TO DALL POINT
- TODAY...SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY. SE WIND 30 KT. SEAS 9 FT. RAIN.
- TONIGHT...S WIND 20 KT. SW 10 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. SEAS 7 FT.
- TUESDAY AND TUESDAY NIGHT...SW WIND 15 KT. SEAS 6 FT.
- WEDNESDAY...S 15 KT. SEAS 6 FT.
- THURSDAY...SE WIND 30 KT. SEAS 9 FT.
- FRIDAY...SE WIND 20 KT. SEAS 8 FT.

## AGENDA ITEMS: OLD BUSINESS:

### **1. AREA M COHO ABUNDANCE:**

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Several Working Group members have inquired about the low abundance of coho salmon recorded in the Area M report. ADF&G will provide information as it becomes available

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSMWG meeting will be held at the request of the Chairs

COMMENTS/ DISCUSSIONS:

- Comment that a few coho salmon were caught during July 11 W1-B Lower Section commercial opening
- Question regarding 2009 coho salmon prices, CVS will pay \$0.35 cents per pound
- Several comments that abundance of salmon arriving at weir assessment project sites has increased, easing concerns of escapement goals not being reached
- USFWS noted that escapement numbers increased from the previous week and therefore supported a commercial opener
- Chair commented that ADF&G would be managing the commercial fishery and agreed that the next working group meeting would be at the call of the chairs

MOTIONS VOTES:

1.) Motion to have a 4-hour commercial opening July 14, from 1pm to 5pm in Subdistrict 1-B Lower Section with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the downriver end of Johnson River downstream to a line between Apokak slough and the southernmost tip of Eek Island. (No quorum was established for a vote, but members were asked for their comments on the recommended opening). Processor Stuart Curry stated that the escapement numbers looked promising for having a commercial opening and that CVS would supply fishermen will all available tenders. No other Working Group members had any comments.

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Headwaters Subsistence	Nick Petruska	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	Chris Shelden-ADF&G
Processor	Stuart Currie	Doug Bue-ADF&G
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	Janet Bavilla-ADF&G
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	John Chythlook-ADF&G
Chair Member	Lamont Albertson	Steve Miller-USFWS
		Dan Gillikin-USFWS
		Ken Harper-USFWS
		Don Rivard-USFWS
		James Hooch-ONC
		Justin Crow-ONC
		Nate Collin-Aquatic Edge

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG or Working Group**)

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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

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July 27, 2009

Called to order at 10:06 a.m. Thursday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 12:33 p.m. A quorum was established with nine of thirteen members present.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) New Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) The implementation of an annual conservation leadership fisheries award will be an agenda item at the 2010 interagency meetings in Anchorage.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Commercial opening July 28, from 1pm to 5pm in Subdistrict 1-B (Bethel downriver to the southernmost tip of Eek Island), with 6" or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after, and a 2-hour extension in Lower Section Stat Area 11. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the most upper part of Straight Slough downstream to the southernmost tip of Eek Island. Based on coho passage at the BTF assessment project site, a commercial opening will not negatively impact subsistence harvests or escapement.
- 2.) *Working Group Recommendation:* Commercial opening August 1, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Subdistrict 1-B (Bethel downriver to the southernmost tip of Eek Island), with 6" or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the most upper part of Straight Slough downstream to the southernmost tip of Eek Island. Friendly amendment made and accepted for a 2-hour Lower Section extension in Stat Area 11 to be determined by processor.
- 3.) Next Working Group meeting to be held on Friday, July 31 at 10:00 a.m.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

- 1.) Motion to accept first commercial opening recommendation. Motion Failed, four to four. (For vote details see below).
- 2.) Motion to accept second commercial opening recommendation. Motion Passed, ADF&G Area manager vetoed the Working Groups recommendation to have the next opening on August 1 and will proceed with the original recommendation to have an opening on July 28.

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- 3.) Motion to present Robert Nick with a conservation leadership fisheries award at a date to be determined. Motion Passed (no roll call vote, no opposition).

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

**1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

**A. Lower River:**

- Residents are beginning to catch more coho than other salmon species
- Fishers are warned to use caution (use short drifts) when using drift nets as a high abundance of coho salmon are reported being caught
- Resident reported catching 41 coho salmon in two short drifts
- A majority of families have completed subsistence fishing and have caught enough salmon for winter
- A majority of observed setnets are reported as being 4” or less for catching whitefish
- Many families are salting and canning coho salmon
- Water levels are low and water clarity is high
- “It’s been a great summer for all species, all the species seem to be healthy”

**B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

Inseason Subsistence project concluded the week ending July 13, no update.

**C. Middle River:**

A majority of residents have completed subsistence salmon harvests

**D. Upriver:**

Comment from Upriver subsistence primary member: “We’re pretty much done, had a pretty good year, as far as a few salmon went. Seemed to be less red salmon, but we got a few, chums were ok, were just waiting now for the silvers to come in so that we can put up some for canning. But I did want to mention that I haven’t been on the Working Group meetings for a while. I have been very upset, it’s about the subsistence issue. Everybody says you know there’s 200 people fishing down here that’s why upriver doesn’t get too much fish. It’s been my experience as an old Grandma in Crooked Creek that even though there’s subsistence fishing in the Lower Kuskokwim we continue to catch our fish up here. But you have a commercial opening we don’t get any. I feel that this Working Group sometimes is just something that we get on the phone and we say something and then were totally ignored. I realize that we don’t pay a big pile of money for permits or licensing or anything, however, I have been upset about that. Subsistence fishing is not a racial issue, it is a human right to feed your family, and before any other use is done we should have the right to feed our families. This is an issue that is a pet peeve of mine, I don’t feel that we should be yelled at about it, that people should be able to catch their fish without becoming criminals, and to feed their families. And I’ve been very angry so I have stayed off of this because I was afraid I was going to say too much. Because it seems like no matter what we feel or think we will be overridden and there will be the use of our resource will be to those who can pay for it. To me, one fish being

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thrown over the side is too many. When you have a Pollock fishery that can throw forty some thousand fish over the side and call it bycatch or whatever, that to me is criminal. That's who should be picked up, not the subsistence users, grandmas and grandpas that are out there trying to feed their families. This is the reason why I haven't been on here because I feel that we are on this teleconference for nothing. We're going to be ignored. Thank you for your time."

**E. Headwaters:**

- Nicolai residents report catching salmon, harvests numbers are described as not abundant but adequate
- Nicolai residents report recent fishing on the Salmon River as "good," subsistence needs were met
- Blackwater resident reported Chinook salmon abundance as "good" this year

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Water level at Crooked Creek remains below average but within historical range, second lowest water level on record in 26 years for the BTF assessment project, water temperature remains average and within historical range, water clarity remains below average and within historical range
- Coho salmon cumulative CPUE through July 26 is 593, cumulative CPUE above three of four comparable water level years (2002, 2004 to 2006), cumulative CPUE fourth highest on record over 25 years of BTF assessment project
- Chum salmon cumulative CPUE through July 26 is 7,571, CPUE 4<sup>th</sup> highest on record over 25 years of BTF assessment project, chum salmon continue to pass the BTF fishing site in pretty good abundance
- No verbal or graph BTF information presented on Chinook or sockeye salmon

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- It appears that the lower end of the escapement goal range for Chinook salmon at Kwethluk weir will be met, 200 to 300 salmon may have been missed due to late assessment project start date; lower suggested escapement goal range for chum salmon has been reached
- Tuluksak weir Chinook salmon escapement abundance is low; chum salmon escapement goal range may not be met
- Lower end of suggested escapement goal range for Chinook salmon at George weir has been reached; chum salmon appear to have reached the lower end of suggested escapement goal range
- Middle of escapement goal range for Chinook salmon at Kogruklu weir has been reached; chum salmon have exceeded the upper end of the formal escapement goal range
- It appears that the lower end of the suggested escapement goal range for Chinook salmon at Tatlawiksuk weir will be met; chum salmon have reached the lower end of the suggested escapement goal range

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- It appears that the lower end of the suggested escapement goal range for Chinook salmon at Takotna weir will be met, 40 to 50 Chinook salmon observed holding below the weir site; chum salmon have reached the lower end of the suggested escapement goal range
- Aniak River Sonar chum salmon may reach the upper end of the escapement goal range
- Coho salmon have arrived at all weir assessment project sites except for Kogrukluk weir
- Chum salmon escapement at the assessment project sites appears to be adequate, looking pretty good for chum salmon overall
- Aerial surveys for Chinook salmon have been conducted at the following locations: Holokuk and Oskawalik (located in Middle Kuskokwim River between Napiamute and Crooked Creek), Cheeneetuk River and Gagaryah River (located in Swift River drainage), and Bear Creek, Upper Pitka Fork, and Salmon River (located in Middle Fork Big River system, upstream of McGrath), forecasted weather conditions may prevent additional Chinook salmon aerial surveys from being conducted
- Aerial observers along Holokuk river reports Chinook salmon in “good numbers, one of the better years on record”
- Aerial observer on the Oskawalik reports seeing a good number of Chinook salmon
- Aerial observer on Cheeneetuk River reported “three fish shy of the formal escapement goal range”
- Aerial observer on Gagaryah River reported “three fish over the lower end of the escapement goal range”
- Aerial observations of Chinook salmon along Bear Creek, Upper Pitka Fork, and Salmon River are reportedly good for all three systems
- Overall, Chinook salmon escapement in upriver and middle river tributaries appears to be adequate

### **3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The following catches were recorded for the July 18 Subdistrict 1-B commercial opening: 83 Chinook salmon, 13,393 chum salmon, 721 sockeye salmon, and 1,558 coho salmon
- Commercial cumulative catches for 2009 (6 openers) are 6,514 Chinook salmon, 67,978 chum salmon, 25,609 sockeye salmon, and 1,581 coho salmon
- CPUE’s for July 18 commercial opening for Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon are 0.1, 19.7, 1.1, and 2.3 respectively
- 113 Permit holders fished the July 18 W1-B commercial opener
- July 18 commercial catch results are preliminary and subject to change
- District W4 has set a record for commercial catch harvest of chum salmon, commercial catch harvest of sockeye salmon will soon exceed the historic record

### **4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- CVS has tenders available and ready to purchase fish in upcoming W1-B commercial openings, a single buying station will be located at the Bethel dock, all fish will be transported to Quinhagak and Platinum
- Coho salmon have enzymes in their bellies that expedite spoilage and deterioration processes after being harvested, CVS is looking into additional methods to ensure the salmon stay fresh while being transported to Quinhagak and Platinum processing plants

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- Tender used to transport halibut has been reassigned and will be stationed near Eek for the remainder of the commercial fishing season

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

- Continued low water levels have prevented outboard boats from traveling long distances up the tributaries
- High abundance of fish being caught below the banks in Aniak
- Coho salmon are reported being caught at the mouth of the Kasigluk
- Sport fishermen are doing fairly well right now with the low water conditions

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- No verbal report was given, informational reported in packet with opportunity for questions. Information from packet summarized below:
- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through July 25 remains below all years except 2008
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through July 25 is below the harvests in 2004, 2005, and 2007
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through July 25 is above all years except 2006
- Total 2009 pink salmon harvest through July 25 is above all years except 2005 and 2008
- Total 2009 coho salmon harvest through July 25 is above harvests in 2005, 2006, and 2007

**7. WEATHER FORCAST:**

- SOUTHWEST ALASKA WATERS CAPE NEWENHAM TO DALL POINT
- TODAY...SE WIND 20 KT. SEAS 4 FT. PATCHY FOG AND RAIN
- TONIGHT...S WIND 25 KT. SEAS 5 FT. PATCHY FOG. SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY
- TUESDAY...S WIND 20 KT. SEAS 4 FT. PATCHY FOG
- TUESDAY NIGHT...N WIND 25 KT. SEAS 7 FT
- WEDNSDAY...W WIND 30 KT. SEAS 8 FT
- THURSDAY...S WIND 30 KT. SEAS 7 FT
- FRIDAY...S WIND 15 KT. SEAS 4 FT

**AGENDA ITEMS: NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. CONSERVATION FISHERIES AWARD FOR ROBERT NICK:**

USFWS discussed an idea to present Robert Nick with a conservation leadership fisheries award for his involvement and commitment to Kuskokwim Area fisheries. Working Group members would like to implement an annual award for conservation leadership in fisheries, the topic will be placed on the agenda at the 2010 interagency meetings. A list of criteria and a name for the award will be discussed.

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSWGM meeting will be held on Friday, July 31 at 10:00 am at ADF&G conference room in Bethel.

COMMENTS/ DISCUSSIONS:

- (ADF&G) Clarification that there were no subsistence restrictions in the Kuskokwim Area this year
  - (ADF&G) Comment that large abundance of salmon at spawning grounds does not guarantee large returns in subsequent years
  - (ADF&G) Comment that aerial surveys are not as precise a measuring instrument as weir assessment projects, however, they assist in providing salmon abundance data over a wider geographic area than weirs alone can provide
  - (Upriver representative) Question regarding the amount of bycatch in Districts 4 and 5 commercial fisheries, answer given that there is no bycatch, all salmon harvested are sold to CVS and processed for retail, other fish species caught during the commercial openings are distributed and consumed by the fishermen
  - (Commercial Fisher) Concern that Eek continues to have no tender service for commercial fishing periods
  - (ADF&G) In comparison with historic start dates, since 1991 there has been one recorded coho salmon commercial fishing period in District W1 before July 29, average start date for coho salmon commercial fishing each year is during the first week of August, in past years commercial fishing periods for coho salmon have been in August due to buyers being unable to process and market high abundances of chum salmon in July
  - (Working Group members) Several concerns about ADF&G having an early coho salmon commercial fishing period included the first pulse failing to reach the spawning grounds, subsistence fishermen not being able to harvest adequate amounts of salmon for the upcoming winter, poor return in subsequent years,
  - (ADF&G) Historic records of early coho salmon commercial openings include Aug. 1,1990; July 29, 1991; August 3, 1992; July 31, 1993; July 29,1994; August 4, 1995; July 29,1996
  - (Commercial Fisher) Comment that the river channel near Eek has changed over time, middle of river is estimated 60 to 70 feet in depth
  - (Middle R. Subsistence) “I’m thinking about the future in the long term, when we had the alternative W1-A and W1-B Districts, I think that limited the amount of permit holders to go out, and I think that kind of worked out well but the amount of permit holders going out in full force in the lower river. I’m concerned for the health of the fishery in the long term, but in the short term it kind of looks OK. Our management in the past few years has worked out very well but if it’s open to all of the permit holders tomorrow from Bethel on down I’m a little concerned about the escapement for future purposes”
  - (ADF&G) Noted that 2009 returning coho salmon will be primarily 4-year-olds
- (Chair) “I think the department could make a good faith gesture here and hold off for a day or two or three in having an opening. To address Stuart’s concerns earlier about those digestive track enzymes which make silvers heat up a little bit and they have to be processed quicker, the later we have an opener Stuart the less you have to worry about that, that might help you a little bit and your planning over there, I think in all seriousness that it wouldn’t hurt to wait a day or two and let more fish get up in the system, once they get up in the system then I think go ahead and have an opening, and do like we’ve done in the past and have meetings at the call of the chair based on the information that we get from the commercial fishery. I hesitate to start calling commercial openings “test openings” for fear that that’s what they’ll become, because I think that’s what they used

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- to be in the past. I don't think it would hurt anything at all to let the fish get upriver, the upriver use of the fish is primarily and virtually all for subsistence purposes, I think silvers are becoming more and more an important subsistence fish. Thinking about upriver interests and subsistence interests it would be better to hold off a day or two or three on this one opening here and let a few more fish get up the river."
- (Processor): "In my experience I've never seen a decline in the enzyme effect over the course of a season. Fish entering in and out of the ocean are all feeders and it's an unfortunate fact that where the fresh fish are is also where the enzyme activity is. I can't do anything about that fact of nature, and I also can't do anything about the fact of nature that we're looking at a storm here in a couple of days were it will be gale warnings and that'll pretty much keep us from fishing until the first of August, and I think that what were looking at based on Bethel Test Fishery is probably an early good run of fish here, and so we're potentially losing the economic impact that everybody in this region needs"
- (Processor) It takes CVS tenders 15 to 18 hours to travel from Bethel to Quinhagak and Platinum
- (Processor) "Point of order, lets just keep to the topics and not cheerlead ok, we should conduct ourselves as a group that's professional"
- (Western Interior RAC) Question about how many coho salmon commercial fishing openings ADF&G plans on having during the 2009 season, no answer was provided
- (Middle R. Subsistence) Question regarding the economic loss of forgoing a possible July 28 commercial fishing opportunity "it does hurt somebody. If we have an opportunity to fish tomorrow because abundance looks adequate and we don't that means that every fisherman that was going to go out and commercial fish is going to be denied that opportunity to get whatever money they would make from those fish." The following response "I wasn't going to say nothing but I'm the one that made that point. I'm taking a long-term perspective, that short term perspective that Doug mentioned that somebody was going to get hurt, that's simply untrue. In the long run if you look at it, historically we waited a little longer, so this just a matter of perspective. What I'm trying to do is protect these fishermen over the long run. I'm doing them a favor, slowing them down a little, taking it easy, I've never met commercial fishermen that didn't catch a lot of fish. I'm trying to help all of them up and down the river, I know they need money, I know they need to go fishing, but somebody's got to speak up for the fish, and I'm speaking up for the fish for everyone, for the commercial fishermen that in their hurry to make a little money that they won't damage this resource. Let's not forget all the subsistence people that are going to get hurt by having a commercial opening."
- (Processor) Statement that the processor representative has voted against commercial openings in past years due to abundance concerns
- Several concerns that ADF&G can and continues to overrule Working Group motions that are passed through member voting, "If you look at this process and we keep getting overridden it's not good for the group, not good for the long term health of the group"
- ADF&G would like to thank all Working Group members for their involvement and commitment to Kuskokwim Fisheries management, most members volunteer their time and it is very much appreciated
- (ADF&G) There have been two occasions in 2009 where the ADF&G Area manager has changed his recommendations after hearing Working Group discussion and motion votes

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- (Chair) “Having dealt with this whole process over time and dealing with some of the frustrations people have with the perceived focus of the department, leaning more towards the commercial side of things and then hearing right now the department saying there is no biological reason to justify not having an opening, and seeing where science goes sometimes I mean you can justify just about anything you want, however you want to do it, and I’m thinking of other arenas as well, and I’m sure it applies to commercial fisheries that if you happen to agree with the decision it’s good science and if you don’t it’s bad science. I do not think the department will stretch themselves to do anything to cause harm. I do feel it extremely disappointing and discomfoting that elusive balance that we always try to find, essentially doesn’t seem to be an option this time. I prefer to err on that side of conservation concerns and very real biological concerns of letting that first large group of fish go through. It was pointed out that we could have fished more aggressively in years past, but didn’t because of the processing concerns due to chum abundance, you may just as easily look at that same situation and say because we didn’t fish on those early runs that we have the good returns and have healthy coho populations that we do have and continue to have. I share the disappointment, I wish it wasn’t driven so much by the processing concerns”
- (Downriver ) Comment that many downriver fishermen believe there should be an early opening when there is an indication of a strong coho salmon run
- Commercial and subsistence fishing management perspectives differ among everyone, all Working Group members can agree to disagree on any topic of discussion, the involvement of so many unique individuals assists in strengthening the Working Group process
- ADF&G noted that all recommendations have to be scientifically defensible, to not fish on July 28 does not have as strong a scientific defense
- Middle R. Subsistence: Comment that the State of Alaska should manage the Kuskokwim Area fisheries and that Federal involvement should be limited
- USFWS noted that federal oversight is to ensure a subsistence priority, but the goal is to have the state manage the fishery

**MOTIONS VOTES:**

- 1.) Motion to have commercial opening July 28, from 1pm to 5pm in Subdistrict 1-B (Bethel downriver to the southernmost tip of Eek Island), with 6 ” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after, and 2-hour extension in Lower Section Stat Area 11. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the most upper part of Straight Slough downstream to the southernmost tip of Eek Island.

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>VOTE</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	YEA
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	NAY
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	NAY
Processor	Stuart Currie	YEA
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	YEA
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	YEA
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	NAY
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	NAY

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- 1.) Motion to have commercial opening August 1, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Subdistrict 1-B (Bethel downriver to the southernmost tip of Eek Island), with 6” or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the most upper part of Straight Slough downstream to the southernmost tip of Eek Island. Friendly amendment made and accepted for the 2-hour Lower Section extension in Stat Area 11 to be determined by processor.

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>VOTE</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	YEA
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	YEA
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	YEA
Processor	Stuart Currie	YEA
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	YEA
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	YEA
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	YEA
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	YEA

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Lower R. Subsistence	Mike Williams	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Middle R. Subsistence	Calvin Simeon	John Linderman-ADF&G
Upriver Subsistence	Evelyn Thomas	Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
Processor	Stuart Currie	Doug Bue-ADF&G
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	Chris Shelden-ADF&G
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	Dani Evenson-ADF&G
Western Interior RAC	Ray Collins	Robert Sundown-USFWS
Sport Fishing	Lamont Albertson	Steve Miller-USFWS
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	Don Rivard-USFWS
Chair	Greg Roczicka`	Rod Campbell-USFWS
		Pippa Kenner-USFWS
		Mike Thalhauser-KNA
		Nate Collin-Aquatic Edge
		Jennifer Hooper-AVCP
		Eva Patton-ONC
		Lawson Kalistook-ONC

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G

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# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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

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July 31, 2009

Called to order at 10:06 a.m. Friday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 10:38 a.m. No chair members were present, and a quorum was not established with only four of thirteen members present. A Working Group informational session was conducted.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

None

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Commercial opening August 1, from 1pm to 5pm in District W1-B, 2-hour extension in Lower Section (11am to 5pm), with 6" or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after. Subsistence fishing closure area includes the upper most part of Straight Slough downstream to the southernmost tip of Eek Island. Performance of August 1 commercial opening in terms of harvest, catch rates (average to above average), BTF data, subsistence reports, and escapement information will be taken into consideration for any commercial openings to be announced following the August 1 opening.
- 2.) Working Group meetings will be held at the call of the chair

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

None

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- Coho salmon catchability increases with the incoming tide and decreases with the outgoing tide, fisherman reported catching 50 silvers all day and then an additional 50 in one short drift as tide changed
- Two residents thanked the Working Group for getting the opportunity to commercial fish
- Coho salmon migrate up the Kuskokwim River faster when there are poor weather conditions and strong southerly winds

Commercial fishermen reported catching a high abundance of coho salmon during the July 28 opener, reported catches ranged from 20 to over 200 coho salmon

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- “People up here in Bethel Area did a lot better than downriver, probably due to it’s a lot narrower up here and you catch a lot better fish up here or a lot more fish up here than downriver”

**B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

Inseason Subsistence project concluded the week ending July 13, no updates

**C. Middle River:**

- There are reports of coho salmon arriving near Kalskag
- Majority of families have completed Chinook, sockeye and chum salmon harvests, majority of drying also completed

**D. Upriver:**

No update

**E. Headwaters:**

No update

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Crooked Creek water level remains low, but may increase with current rain
- July 28 and July 29 coho salmon cumulative CPUE indices are estimated, two of four tides were missed due to weather conditions
- Despite only having one tidal drift from this morning, the index was 174, so we are estimating today’s index to be around 130
- Coho salmon cumulative CPUE is 4<sup>th</sup> highest on record
- currently there are no concerns for coho salmon run so far in the Bethel Test Fishery
- Last presentation of chum salmon information for BTF, majority of chum salmon have passed the BTF assessment project site

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- Pages 5 and 6 of the agenda are updated versions of graphs that were presented in the July 27 Working Group agenda packet
- Kuskokwim Area is showing good escapements for sockeye salmon, the upriver projects usually get sockeye later so it’s looking pretty good there
- Kwethluk River weir coho salmon cumulative passage is 352 through July 30, above all years of generally low escapements in the Kuskokwim Area
- George River weir coho salmon cumulative passage is 14 through July 30, above most years of generally low escapements in the Kuskokwim Area
- Coho salmon have arrived at all assessment project sites except Kogrukluk River weir, (which is disabled due to high water conditions), however it is still early in the season for Coho salmon at the upriver weir projects
- Kogrukluk is one of only two sockeye producing rivers that we monitor and escapements are looking good there.

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**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The following catches were recorded for the July 28 Subdistrict 1-B commercial opening: 59 Chinook salmon, 4,978 chum salmon, 78 sockeye salmon, and 14,537 coho salmon (July 28 commercial catch results are preliminary and subject to change )
- cumulative commercial catches for 2009 (7 openers) are 6,573 Chinook salmon, 72,956 chum salmon, 25,687 sockeye salmon, and 16,118 coho salmon
- CPUE's for July 28 commercial opening for Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon are 0.01, 6.8, 0.1, and 19.8 respectively
- 183 Permit holders fished the July 28 Subdistrict W1-B commercial opener
- Observed high contrast in catch per unit effort between the two stat areas. In the Lower Section the CPUE for coho was 8.7 whereas it was 22.8 in stat area 12 which is the Upper Section of W1-B. The high contrast could be because of bad weather in concert with a low tide in the lower section,
- The last District W4 and W5 commercial opening was July 29, poor weather conditions may have been a factor in the recorded low effort and harvest
- In general, District W4 and W5 sockeye salmon abundance decreases this time of year and coho salmon abundance increases

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- CVS has both tender and processing capability to handle a commercial opening within the next couple of days
- CVS preference to tender and process salmon will be below Bethel in Subdistrict W1-B
- July 28 W1-B commercial opening value was \$200 per permit holder

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

No Update

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through July 28 is below the total harvest in all years dating back to 2004 except for 2008
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through July 28 is below harvest in all years dating back to 2004 except 2006 and 2008
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through July 28 is above harvest in all years
- Total pink salmon harvest through July 28 is above all years except 2005 and 2008
- Total 2009 coho salmon harvest through July 28 is above all years except 2004

**7. WEATHER FORECAST:**

- SOUTHWEST ALASKA WATERS CAPE NEWENHAM TO DALL POINT
- TODAY...S WIND 20 KT. SEAS 5 FT. AREAS OF FOG
- TONIGHT AND SATURDAY...S WIND 15 KT. SEAS 5 FT.
- SATURDAY NIGHT...SE WIND 20 KT. SEAS 5 FT.
- SUNDAY...E WIND 25 KT. SEAS 8 FT.
- MONDAY...E WIND 30 KT. SEAS 9 FT.
- TUESDAY...SE WIND 20 KT. SEAS 8 FT.

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**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSMWG meeting will be held at the request of the Chairs

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Question “In regards to reporting Bethel Test Fish information, on your graphs you report W1-A for the harvest numbers for both cohos and chums, so I wondered why just W1-A as opposed to also including harvest information from W1-B?” Answer “We use Bethel Test Fish as an index of the run abundance and it only really gives you run abundance at Bethel, and we needed to take into consideration after it passes Bethel how much fish have we taken out of that index, so that’s why we put W1-A in there”
- as daylight decreases commercial fishing hours may change to take into consideration safety issues
- After reviewing all available information USFWS concurs that a commercial opener in W1-B is warranted

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Dan Gillikin-USFWS
Processor	Stuart Currie	Rod Campbell-USFWS
Member at Large	Fritz Charles	Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
YK Delta RAC	Bob Aloysius	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Chair Member	Jeff Estensen	Doug Bue-ADF&G
		Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
		Chris Shelden-ADF&G
		Janet Bavilla-ADF&G
		Kelly-KYUK

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG or Working Group**)

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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

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August 7, 2009

Called to order at 10:08 a.m. Friday, at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 10:38 a.m. No chair members were present, and a quorum was not established with only three of thirteen members present. A Working Group information session was held.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) ADF&G will continue to distribute informational packets on a weekly basis.

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.) Commercial opening August 8, from 1pm to 5pm in Subdistrict W1-B, with 6" or less mesh size restriction, with subsistence fishing closed 6 hours before, 6 hours during, and 3 hours after, with 2-hour extension in Lower Section (stat area 11). Subsistence fishing closure area includes the most upper part of Straight Slough downstream to the southernmost tip of Eek Island.

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

None

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

None

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

Subsistence fishing efforts have decreased, subsistence needs have been met, fishermen using short drifts to catch small abundance of coho salmon for dinners and freezers

#### **B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

Inseason Subsistence project concluded the week ending July 13, no update

#### **C. Middle River:**

No Update

#### **D. Upriver:**

No Update

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**E. Headwaters:**

No Update

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF)**

- Crooked Creek water level has increased since July 31, currently below average but above historic lows, water clarity and temperature average
- Coho salmon cumulative CPUE through August 5 is 2,405 which is tracking above 2005-2007 ( years with similar water levels). CPUEs indicate good abundance.

**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- Because it's still early in the run, most assessment projects are at 1 or 2 percent of passage for coho for this date and time
- Kwethluk weir cumulative passage for coho salmon through August 6 is 1,424, above all years of poor escapement, 4 % of passage on average
- Tuluksak weir cumulative passage for coho salmon through August 6 is 110, 2% passage on average, "not looking gangbuster there"
- George weir cumulative passage for coho salmon through August 6 is 92, 1% passage on average, "looks a little on the lower side right now"
- Water levels are low and continue to decrease at Kwethluk, George, and Tuluksak weir assessment project sites
- Kogruklu weir cumulative passage for coho salmon through August 5 is 268, above all years of generally poor escapements, 0-3% passage on average, weir not operational from August 6 to 7 due to high water conditions
- Tatlawiksuk weir cumulative passage for coho salmon through August 6 is 474, 5% passage on average, water level is low and continues to decrease
- Takotna weir cumulative passage for coho salmon is 13 through August 6, 0-1% passage on average
- "No red flags at any of the weir project sites except for Tuluksak. Still very very early and conditions aren't such to promote fish passage at the weirs."

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:**

- The following catches were recorded for the August 4 Subdistrict W1-B commercial opening: 26 Chinook salmon, 1,736 chum salmon, 70 sockeye salmon, and 19,444 coho salmon
- Commercial cumulative catches for 2009 (9 openers) are 6,623 Chinook salmon, 76,297 chum salmon, 25,837 sockeye salmon, and 52,354 coho salmon
- CPUE's for August 4 commercial opening for Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon are 0.04, 2.4, 0.1, and 27.0 respectively
- 178 permit holders fished the August 4 W1-B commercial opener
- August 4 commercial catch results are preliminary and subject to change
- Correction on bottom table of page 6 Commercial Catch Report: 8-4-09 W1-B commercial opening was 6 hours and incorrectly states 4 hours

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**DISTRICTS 4 & 5:**

- W5 remains in sockeye salmon directed management, harvest and catch rates continue to fall within average to above average range
- W4 is in coho salmon management (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday's), harvest and catch rates have been on the higher end of average

**4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- Estimated value of August 4 W1-B commercial opening was approximately \$45,000
- Estimated average value per permit holder was \$250 for the August 4 W1-B commercial opening
- CVS has tender and processing capacity for W1-B commercial openings on August 8 or 9

**5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

No update

**6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 Chinook salmon harvest through August 5 is below all years except 2008
- Total 2009 sockeye salmon harvest through August 5 is below all years except 2006 and 2008
- Total 2009 chum salmon harvest through August 5 is above all years

**7. WEATHER FORECAST:**

No update

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSMWG meeting will be held at the request of the Chairs

**COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:**

- Comment that lower river subsistence fishermen are using set and drift nets 29 mesh deep to catch coho salmon, large abundance of salmon are swimming under the nets during high water conditions
- Unlike other species, coho salmon travel multiple migration routes up the Kuskokwim River during high water conditions
- Comment that fishermen missed the opportunity to commercial fish during the catcher/seller openings, ADF&G clarified that there are several openings for commercial fishermen and there are no opportunities missed; furthermore, all fishermen are provided the opportunity to become registered as catcher/sellers and create a market for the salmon
- Noted that there are 2 registered catcher/seller commercial fishermen in the Kuskokwim Area, fishermen participating in the catcher/seller program assist in creating name recognition and establishing a market for Kuskokwim River salmon
- Catcher/seller commercial fishing periods are held on Thursdays to assist the fishermen with establishing consistent markets, and to allow for the opportunity to transport fish in an appropriate time manner out of Bethel
- Terry Reeve from UAF Marine Advisory Program held a catcher/seller training class in 2008

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- Salmon run timing in District 5 is later than salmon run timing in the Kuskokwim River

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

<b>MEMBER SEAT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Processor	Stuart Currie	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Commercial Fisher	Charlie Brown	Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
Chair Member	Jeff Estensen	Jennifer Hooper-AVCP`
		Rod Campbell-USFWS
		Pippa Kenner-USFWS

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsarmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG or Working Group**)

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

1(800) 315-6338 ( MEET), Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

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

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September 28, 2009

Called to order at 1:04 p.m. at ADF&G in Bethel, and adjourned at 3:42 p.m. No quorum was established with only five of thirteen members present. A Working Group session was conducted.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.) Continuing Business
- 2.) Old Business
- 3.) New Business

## WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) USFWS would appreciate hearing a more formalized subsistence report from middle river representatives throughout the season.
- 2.) ADF&G will provide a Working Group members attendance summary sheet to the Chairs
- 3.) A special Working Group meeting will be scheduled around the time of the Spring interagency meeting to discuss Working Group member attendance and member seats, Bylaws, meeting times, and member compensation

## ADF&G RECOMMENDATIONS:

None

## WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

None

## PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

Announcement by USFWS that a conservation award will be presented to Robert Nick on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, summarized in the New Business section.

## AGENDA ITEMS: CONTINUING BUSINESS:

### **1. SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**

#### **A. Lower River:**

- Whitefish (both humpback and broad) and pike fishing activity has increased
- Community members appear to be happy with their 2009 subsistence salmon season harvests

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**B. ONC Inseason Subsistence:**

- Inseason Subsistence project concluded the week ending July 13, no update
- ONC Season summary chart was mistakenly omitted from the agenda packet distributed on 9-25-09

**C. Middle River:**

No member present, no update

**D. Upriver:**

No member present, no update

**E. Headwaters:**

No member present, no update

**2. OVERVIEW OF 2009 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:**

**A. Bethel Test Fish (BTF) overall season summary**

- BTF water clarity graph in agenda packet is from 2008 and NOT 2009
- 2009 water level was below average throughout most of the season, near historic lows were observed during the first week of July, towards the end of July, and during the middle of August
- Water temperature was average during late July, below average during early and middle August, highly variable during late August
- Water clarity increased during the middle of July, remained average for the remainder of the fishing season
- For recent years with comparable water levels, CPUE for **Chinook** salmon tracked above poor abundance years of 2000, above average and above average abundance years of 2002-03, and 2006, tracked below the higher abundance years of 2004-05. Chinook CPUE tracked above all years that resulted in poor escapements at assessment project sites, and midpoint of run passed by the BTF site on June 27 (one day later than average).
- For recent years with comparable water levels **chum** salmon tracked above the average to low abundance years of 2000-04, tracked below the average to above average year of 2007, tracked below the record abundance years of 2005-06. CPUE tracked above all years that resulted in poor escapements, and midpoint of run passed by the BTF site on July 8 (four days later than average).
- For recent years with comparable water levels **sockeye** salmon CPUE tracked above the average to low abundance years of 2000-02, and tracked below the average to higher abundance years of 2005-07, and the midpoint of run passed by the BTF site on June 30 (two days later than average).
- For recent years with comparable water levels **coho** salmon CPUE tracked above the lower abundance years of 2002 and 2006, tracked above the average and above average abundance years of 2005 and 2007, tracked below the average and above average years of 2004 and 2008. Coho CPUE tracked above all years that resulted in poor escapements, and the midpoint of the run passed by the BTF site on August 5 (three days later than average)

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**B. Weirs/Sonar/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:**

- **Chinook** salmon aerial surveys were conducted at Holokuk, Oskawalik, Cheeneetnuk, Gagaryah, Bear Creek, Upper Pitka Fork, and Salmon River. Poor weather conditions affected aerial surveys in late July, preventing Kwethluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and 3 Aniak River tributaries from being surveyed
- Holokuk was above high end of suggested escapement goal range of 60-200 **Chinook** salmon, Oskawalik exceeded upper end of suggested escapement goal range, Cheeneetnuk River escapement goal range of 340-1300 fell short with a count of 323, Gagaryah River escapement goal range of 300-800 was reached with 305 counted, Bear Creek suggested escapement range of 170-400 was reached with 209 counted, Upper Pitka Fork suggested escapement range of 150-300 was reached with 187 counted, and Salmon River escapement goal range of 470-1600 was reached with 632 counted. Six of seven aerial assessment projects were within or above escapement goal ranges
- Kwethluk weir fell short of escapement goal range for **Chinook** salmon, Tuluksak weir was below the escapement goal range (2<sup>nd</sup> lowest on record), George weir achieved the lower end of the escapement goal range, Kogrukluks weir achieved midpoint of the escapement goal range, Tatlawiksuk was below suggested escapement goal range, and Takotna weir was below suggested escapement goal range
- An unknown quantity of **Chinook** salmon were not counted due to late installation of Kwethluk River weir
- All weir assessment projects for **chum** salmon reached their suggested escapement ranges or escapement goals; these included Kwethluk, Tuluksak, Aniak Sonar, George, Kogrukluks, Tatlawiksuk, and Takotna River
- Five of six weir assessment project sites had healthy escapements of **sockeye** salmon (Kwethluk, Tuluksak, George, Kogrukluks, Tatlawiksuk), however, escapement was low at Takotna River weir
- All six weir assessment project sites for **coho** salmon reached their suggested escapement ranges or escapement goals; these included Kwethluk, Tuluksak, George, Kogrukluks, Tatlawiksuk, and Takotna River

**3. COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT:** (Summary of commercial salmon harvests in district W-1 is preliminary and subject to change)

- There were 16 commercial opening periods in district W-1 in 2009, two of which were directed towards the catcher/seller market (August 6 & August 16)
- 342 permit holders participated in the 2009 district W-1 commercial fishing season, average per commercial opening was 142 permit holders, which is below the historical and most recent 10-year average, but is the highest permit holder per opening average since 2002
- Total harvest for **Chinook** salmon was 6,651, below historical average and above most recent 10-year average, second highest harvest since 1998, “catch rate for Chinook salmon was characterized as average”
- Total harvest for **chum** salmon was 263,984, below historical average, above most recent 10-year average, second highest harvest since 1998

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- Total harvest for **sockeye** salmon was 25,798, below historical average, above most recent 10-year average, second highest harvest since 1998
- Total harvest for **coho** salmon was 104,445, below most recent 10-year average, second lowest harvest since 1998
- District 1 ex-vessel value was \$503,029 for the 342 permit holders that fished, average per permit holder was \$1,470
- Ex-vessel value of entire Kuskokwim Area salmon sold was \$1,442,697 for the 560 permit holders that fished, average per permit holder was \$2,576, third highest average since 1998
- Ex-vessel values are preliminary and subject to change. These values do not include bonuses paid to commercial fishermen after the season ends.

#### **4. PROCESSOR REPORT:**

- CVS is generating plans to improve tender capacity for the 2010 season, fish processing plants do not appear to have any capacity problems heading into next season
- Production at the new Platinum fish plant went very well for CVS in 2009, adding a second fillet line will be an option explored during the offseason for 2010
- Both Quinhagak and Platinum fish plant crews all did an awesome job this season!
- At peak capacity CVS employs approximately 128 employees in Platinum and approximately 110 in Quinhagak
- Currently, approximately 50% of CVS salmon is either sold or committed for sale
- CVS is looking into providing fishermen with bags so that fish can be presorted prior to being loaded on the tenders, in addition CVS is looking into having a tender stationed near Tuntutuliak with two cranes to expedite offloading

#### **5. SPORT FISH REPORT:**

- Email sent out with attachment describing past year sport fish projects, updates include the Kuskokwim Sheefish project (behavior exhibited and migration patterns), and Rainbow Trout radio telemetry project on the Aniak and Kanektok Rivers,
- Planned Sport Fish projects include Rainbow Trout tagging on the Kisaralik River and a radio telemetry for Kanektok River Chinook salmon (focus on quantities of Chinook salmon spawning below the weir)

#### **6. AREA M REPORT:**

- Total 2009 **Chinook** salmon harvest through September 14 is below total annual harvest for all years since 2004, except 2008
- Total 2009 **sockeye** salmon harvest through September 14 is slightly below total annual harvest in all years since 2004
- Total 2009 **chum** salmon harvest through September 14 is above the total annual harvest of all years since 2004
- Total 2009 pink salmon harvest through September 14 is above the total annual harvest in all years since 2004, except 2005 and 2008
- Total 2009 **coho** salmon harvest through September 14 is above the total annual harvest of all years since 2004, except 2008

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**7. WEATHER FORECAST:**

No update

**MEETING ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The next KRSMWG meeting will be held at the request of the Chairs.

AGENDA ITEMS: OLD BUSINESS:

**A. Greg Roczicka (ONC) status update on Holitna Basin Hunt/Fish/Trapping Reserve**

Greg Roczicka was unavailable, information on this house bill topic included in the agenda packet

AGENDA ITEMS: NEW BUSINESS:

**A. Discussion on Robert Nick Award**

This summer the Working Group discussed and passed a motion to start an annual award made for wildlife conservation efforts. An article was written in last week's local paper thanking Robert Nick for his conservation efforts. Robert Nick's hard work and dedication to conservation efforts is admired by all throughout the Kuskokwim Area. Mr. Nick will be the first recipient of this award, which is to be presented at the upcoming AVCP convention.

**B. Working Group Member Attendance**

Discussion regarding attendance records of Working Group members, and options for generating a higher level of participation for the upcoming 2010 season, updates and implementation of Bylaws, Working Group member compensation, and meeting times. These issues will be placed on the agenda and discussed in further detail at the spring interagency meeting, or a separate Working Group meeting, to be determined by the chairs.

**C. ADF&G Subsistence presentation on Kuskokwim ethnographic project**

ADF&G Subsistence division conducted a subsistence salmon fishing ethnography project on the Kuskokwim River this summer. Communities involved in the project included Tuntutuliak, Kwethluk, Upper Kalskag, Sleetmute, and Nikolai. Main objective was to learn about the practice of subsistence fishing today and how it has changed over peoples lifetimes. Data collection was gathered through in-depth structured interviews with community residents both within the communities and at fish camps. The project is currently in the data analysis stage. The results will be presented to the Working Group next year.

**D. ADF&G, KNA, ONC Post Season Subsistence Presentation**

ADF&G presentation on the post season subsistence salmon surveying project, a cooperative project with ONC in Bethel and KNA in Aniak. Project has been conducted by the subsistence division since the late 1960's; in 2008 commercial fisheries division took over the project. ADF&G surveys Kuskokwim area communities from the coast upriver to Nikolai, ONC surveys Bethel, and KNA surveys Aniak. The project surveys community residents and generates estimates of the number of salmon being used for subsistence purposes for all households in the Kuskokwim Area. The project assists with the effective management of Kuskokwim River salmon populations. In addition to door-to-door surveys, calendars are mailed to residents for recording subsistence salmon catch

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information. For more information contact ADF&G project leader Holly Carroll at 267-2166.

**E. Upcoming Meetings**

International Arctic Fisheries Symposium (October 19-21)

AFS AK Chapter (November 3-5)

AYK BOF Fairbanks (January 26-31)

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Comment that KRSMWG participation may increase through scheduling meetings in the evenings, as more volunteers may be available during that time
- Several concerns regarding out-of-pocket expenses among members attending the meetings
- Suggested escapement ranges assist in providing context for assessment project sites without formal escapement goals
- ADF&G stated “We’re in a period of lower salmon abundance right now, they’re seeing it on the Yukon, we’re seeing it here on the Kuskokwim”
- Comment and concern that Tuluksak River had a low abundance of Chinook salmon
- USFWS stated that their main concern is the quality of subsistence harvest, “every indication about how people did subsistence-wise was pretty decent”
- Noted that years of comparability for all salmon species changes as water levels fluctuate during the season, years of comparability include all comparable years with similar water levels when the majority of each salmon species pass the BTF fishing site
- Comment that coho salmon abundance was low and increased fishing effort was needed to reach subsistence harvest goals
- The two-year coho salmon run reconstruction project is now in the second year, cooperative project operated by ADF&G and KNA at the Kalskag tagging site, objectives include formulating total abundance estimates and observing distribution of coho salmon throughout the drainage, a genetic component of the coho salmon run reconstruction project allows for mixed-stock studies
- Megan McFee, with the University of Montana, is in the second of a two year sockeye salmon investigation project, main focus last year was the Holitna and this year is the upper Stony River drainage, differences in lake vs. river sockeye salmon is a main focus
- Multiple genetic studies include WASSIP (Western Alaska Salmon Stock Identification Program, main focus on chum and sockeye salmon ), and a coho salmon project headed by USFWS Penny Crane that focuses on mixed stock analysis through getting better genetic profiles of coho salmon at spawning grounds
- ADF&G will assist a University of Michigan study on Long Nose Suckers
- Federal Office of Subsistence Management has undergone an initiative to get consistent climate data, Kuskokwim River weir assessment projects (ADF&G and USFWS) have been involved in collecting water and air temperature climate data
- Question regarding subsistence harvests being affected by salmon running deep in the river channels and swimming under nets, Yupik tradition that sinking last years fish bones deep into the river channel will bring the fish up near the surface to increase catchability

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- It is estimated that there are actually about 1.5 people per commercial fishing permit holder vessel, since approximately half of the vessels have helpers
- Question regarding the recent drop in commercial fishing permit holders over the past few years, ADF&G responded that the number of permit holders have decreased along with the decreasing value of the fishery
- Question regarding coho salmon sales distribution, CVS responded that silvers went to three main markets which includes the fresh market (Seattle to Boston), Japan, and Canada
- Over the past 10 years there has been a decrease in the amount of coho salmon returning to the Kuskokwim River
- Several comments that CVS should be commended for the remarkable job they did providing employment and services to residents of the Kuskokwim Area, and a big “Thank You” for the retro pay on the sockeye salmon from all the commercial fishermen. It was also commented that they should be commended for improving the market for salmon, providing ice to fishermen and improving the quality of the salmon handling.
- Suggestion to open a fish processing plant in Bethel
- Comment that sport fishermen using motorized boats should be cautious and courteous of rafters on the river, and vice versa
- Question regarding comparison between post season subsistence surveys and calendar data, ADF&G responded that the calendars are primary used for run timing estimates and are for helping people to keep track of their catches. The door to door surveys are the main data for calculating the harvest estimates
- Comment that USFWS Tuluksak subsistence study on Chinook salmon should be compared to ADF&G post season subsistence

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

MEMBER SEAT	NAME	OTHER
Downriver Elder	James Charles	Nick Bradley-ADF&G
Processor	Stuart Currie	Holly Carroll-ADF&G
Member at Large	Henry Lupie	John Linderman-ADF&G
	Fritz Charles	Chris Shelden-ADF&G
ADF&G	Jeff Estensen	Doug Molyneaux-ADF&G
Chair	Beverly Hoffman	Dani Evenson-ADF&G
		Lilly Ray-ADF&G
		John Chythlook-ADF&G
		Nathan Collin-Aquatic Edge
		Carl Berger-LKEDC
		Rod Campbell-USFWS
		Robert Sundown-USFWS
		Don Rivard-USFWS
		Pippa Kenner-USFWS