

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433

July 01, 2015

Meeting called to order at 10:00am on Wednesday July 01, 2015 and adjourned at 12:15pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours and 15 minutes. Seven full voting members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

People to be Heard:

Old Business Discussion Topics:

- Tier II process

New Business Discussion Topics:

- State position on extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *There were no "action items" at the time of meeting.*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. Extend the meeting until 12:15pm to cover agenda items. *Passed (Unanimous)*
3. For federal or state managers, at the earliest opportunity, to provide an additional opening with 6" mesh or less, 25 fathoms, from Tuluksak River to Crow Village. *Passed (Unanimous)*
4. To allow a 24 hour opener for the McGrath area and above from 8am Friday to 8am Saturday. *Passed (Unanimous)*
5. Adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous)*

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **ADF&G Management Actions under consideration:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported that the majority of the Chinook salmon run was believed to have entered the river system and early passage had been observed at the weirs. He noted that Chinook salmon conservation remained in place. Mr. Poetter reported that management would continue with subsistence restrictions due to the weak chum salmon run and overall low volume of fish in the river. Mr. Poetter discussed the July 1st harvest opportunity above Aniak with 6" or less mesh, 10 fathom gillnets and a 24-hour opportunity for hook and line. He commented that commercial opportunity in the river system was not under consideration due to the low chum salmon numbers.
Discussion: Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) commented on his disappointment with the subsistence opportunities near McGrath. He commented that fish were not abundant in that area and a 6-hour opening was not worth the effort. Mr. Collins added that no king salmon had been caught in McGrath. He said that the hook and line opportunity would work for Nikolai residents on the Salmon River.
2. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:**
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** Colton Lipka (ADF&G) reported that the water temperature had set record highs but was dropping back within the historical range, water clarity was near the average, and the water level was below average but within the historical range. Mr. Lipka reviewed the daily CPUEs for Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon at the BTF. He commented that the chum salmon numbers were low at the BTF. There was discussion among Working Group members and ADF&G staff regarding the elevated water temperature. *(For more information on the BTF, please see the July 1st Informational Packet).*
 - **Aniak Test Fish:** Colton Lipka reviewed the daily CPUEs for the ATF. *(For more information on the ATF, please see the July 1st Informational Packet).*

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- **Weirs:** Brittany Blain (ADF&G) reported on the available weir data for Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon. She commented that the Telaquana weir crew had been evacuated due to fires and the weir was not in operation. *(For more information on weirs, please see the July 1st Informational Packet).*
 - **Radio Tagging Project:** Zach Liller (ADF&G) reported that ADF&G was in their 5th week of tagging. He commented that there had been a considerable amount of Chinook salmon conservation during the 2015 season. Mr. Liller reported that, on average, Chinook salmon were swimming 22.5 miles per day. He added that telemetry surveys would be flown on July 1st *(For more information on the tagging project, please see the July 1st Informational Packet).*
 - **Aerial Surveys:** Aaron Poetter (ADF&G) reported that the ADF&G 10-day intensive Chinook salmon surveys would begin on July 18th.
 - **Inseason Subsistence Harvest Assessment Project:** Dave Runfola (ADF&G) reported that the Subsistence Division was collecting fishing effort and harvest data from Napakiak, Nunapitchuk, Aniak, Chuathbaluk and Napaimute volunteer fishers. *(For more information on the project, please see the July 1st Informational Packet).*
3. **Subsistence Reports:**
- **Down River:** James Charles (Downriver Elder) commented that residents were catching sockeye salmon and very few chum salmon. He commented that only a few people went out during the June 30th opening due to the low chum salmon numbers.
 - **ONC Inseason Subsistence Report:** Greg Roczicka (ONC) reported that the ONC crew had been surveying boats at the boat harbor during the previous two openings to gather harvest estimates. He commented that there was less fishing effort during the June 30th opening compared to June 26th. *(For full survey results, please see the July 1st Informational Packet).*
 - **Lower River:** John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) reported that during a 20-minute drift on June 30th he caught 12 sockeye, 11 small Chinook and 1 chum salmon. He commented that the boats he observed had done well during the opener. Mr. Andrew noted concern that there were few chum salmon in the river. He also commented that some families had not harvested any salmon to date. Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing) commented that fewer people were observed fishing during the June 30th opener compared to the June 26th opener.
 - **USFWS Lower River Update:** Lew Coggins (USFWS) reported on the June 30th USFWS aerial survey flown from Fowler Island to Kalskag. They counted 315 boats.
 - **Middle River:** Dave Cannon (Middle River Subsistence) reported that during the June 30th opener three Kalskag families caught 5 chum salmon, 3 sockeye salmon and 1 Sheefish. He added that a dip netter had caught more king salmon than sockeye or chum salmon. Mr. Cannon noted that many people in the middle river had been evacuated due to the fires. Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) commented that Kalskag had only one subsistence opportunity. She noted that the recent fires may have influenced the amount of people who were able to subsistence fish during the opening in the middle and upper river. Mark Leary (Upriver Subsistence) reported that Kalskag residents had not had harvesting success.
 - **Upriver:** Mark Leary reported that two boats in his area fished during the last opener. He commented that the Napaimute fishwheel was providing fish for several families and catching very few kings, a few chum and large sockeye salmon.
 - **Headwaters:** Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) commented that people had not been setting nets. He had not received any reports of people catching salmon.
4. **Discussion of ADF&G Management consideration and discussion of possible alternatives:** Ray Collins suggested an additional 24 hour opener in the headwaters. James Charles suggested another opener down river since many people traveled to fish in that portion of the river.
5. **Motion for Discussion and Action:** *See Motion 2-3 on p.3.*

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PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Dan Gillikin (NVN) reported that he observed 12 boats in front of Aniak during the June 30th opener. He interviewed 7 fishers who made a total of 43 drifts over the 4-hour period and caught a total of 61 Chinook, 26 sockeye and 37 chum salmon. Mr. Gillikin noted that the majority of the Chinook salmon had been caught at the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim Rivers.
- Herman Morgan from Aniak commented that he made two 10-minute drifts and caught 21 king salmon. He suggested moving the ATF near the Aniak River.
- Dan Bergstrom (ADF&G) expressed his appreciation on the feedback regarding the recent openers and that it would assist in future subsistence opportunity decisions.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Tier II Process:** John Linderman (ADF&G) commented that the Tier II process discussion may be appropriate during the Kuskokwim BOF panel meeting near the end of the season. Jim Simon (ADF&G) reminded Working Group members of the Subsistence Priority Overview PowerPoint that had been emailed to all Working Group participants on June 19, 2015.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **State position on extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ):** John Linderman (ADF&G) commented that ETJ did not fit with inseason management discussions or the joint agreement between the state and Working Group.

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion 1: To approve the agenda as amended. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 2: Extend the meeting until 12:15pm to cover agenda items. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 3: For federal or state managers, at the earliest opportunity, to provide an additional opening with 6" mesh or less, 25 fathoms, from Tuluksak River to Crow Village. Passed (Unanimous)

Working Group members were concerned that the area between Tuluksak and Crow Village has had little subsistence harvest opportunity.

Motion 4: To allow a 24 hour opener for the McGrath area and above from 8am Friday to 8am Saturday. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 5: Adjourn. Passed (Unanimous)

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP

- Bev Hoffman (Sport Fishing) questioned the effects Area M was having on the Kuskokwim River chum salmon run.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Greg Roczicka
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE	<i>Absent</i>
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	<i>Absent</i>
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Greg Hoffman Jr.
SPORT FISHING	Bev Hoffman
PROCESSOR	<i>Absent</i>
ADF&G	Aaron Poetter
CHAIR	LaMont Albertson

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Zac Liller, Brittany Blain, Aaron Poetter, Aaron Tiernan, Colton Lipka, John Linderman, Dan Bergstrom, Jan Conitz, Nick Smith, Katie Howard, Jennifer Yuhas, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook

Subsistence Division: Jim Simon, Hiroko Ikuta, David Runfola, Andrew Brenner, Oden Miller

USFWS: Lew Coggins, Ken Harper, Brian McCaffery

OSM: Don Rivard, George Pappas, Pippa Kenner, Jennifer Harden

Dustin Wagner (ONC)

Dan Gillikin (NVN)

Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate)

Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate)

John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate)

Wayne Morgan (Middle River Subsistence alternate)

Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate)

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), Georgetown Traditional Council (**GTC**), 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**, **Working Group**, or **WG**), Sustainable Escapement Goal (**SEG**), Biological Escapement Goal (**BEG**), Management Objective (**MO**), Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence (**ANS**), Emergency Order (**EO**), Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (**BSFA**), Law Enforcement (**LE**),

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