

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

June 10, 2017

Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m. on Saturday June 10, 2017 and adjourned at 11:30 a.m. Meeting time was approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Ten full voting members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Management Actions Under Consideration:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Management Actions:

People to be Heard:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *No Action Items at the time of this meeting.*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. To recommend [that the USFWS provide] an 8-hour fishing opportunity from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday June 12 from Aniak to the mouth of the Kuskokwim. *Passed (9 yeas, 1 nay)*
3. Support a 24-hour fishing opportunity from Aniak to the Holitna River mouth from 12:00 p.m. noon on Monday June 12 to 12:00 p.m. noon on Tuesday June 13. *Passed (Unanimous)*
4. For the Kalskag area to be given special consideration in the USFWS management actions to more closely mirror the management actions in the state managed waters. *Passed (Unanimous)*
5. Adjourn at 12:40 p.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Aaron Tiernan (ADF&G Assistant Area Biologist) reported that for June 12, ADF&G was considering opening the river from the Holitna River mouth to the headwaters for 6" mesh gillnets until further notice and also provide a 24-hour 6" mesh gillnet opportunity from Aniak to the Holitna River mouth.

USFWS MANAGEMENT ACTIONS: Ken Stahlnecker (USFWS) reported that USFWS planned to proceed with the scheduled 12-hour Chinook salmon directed opportunity with 6" mesh or less gillnets for federally qualified users within the boundaries of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge on June 12. (*See Motion 2 & 4*).

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Dan Gillikin from Aniak commented that he was concerned regarding any salmon directed opportunity at this time in the 2017 season. Mr. Gillikin suggested that additional measures by management should be taken to conserve the Chinook salmon headwaters stock.
- Warren Nicolai from Bethel reported that the drying racks in the lower river were empty. He commented that one fisher had caught three king salmon and some whitefish in the Johnson River. Mr. Nicolai commented that the June 12 opportunity would help ease tension among people and that reducing it to an 8-hour opportunity would not provide enough time for him to fish with his current work schedule.
- Gerald Kameroff from Kalskag commented that Kalskag fishers had observed few fish in their area during previous years and that "combat fishing" often occurred due to limited fishing sites. Mr. Kameroff was concerned that the 12-hour opportunity in federally managed waters would not allow enough time for Kalskag residents to harvest fish. LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) encouraged Mr. Kameroff to share his concerns with USFWS and the KRITFC.

Meeting summaries are prepared and distributed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in cooperative agreement with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management (USF&WS OSM). The department is responsible for summary content. Summaries are not comprehensive or considered meeting minutes, and are designed to provide context on meeting proceedings for the convenience of interested parties/participants. Audio recordings of meetings can be found at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.kswg#2017>

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- Zach Liller (ADF&G) reminded people that official fishery management information came directly from ADF&G and USFWS. He encouraged people to contact ADF&G and USFWS directly with questions or concerns.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:** Zach Liller (ADF&G Research Biologist) provided an overview of the inseason assessment projects. *(For more information on the 2017 inseason projects, please see the June 10 Informational Packet).*
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** As of June 9, the Chinook salmon cumulative CPUE was nine. As of June 8, the cumulative CPUE for chum salmon was nine. To date, ~1% of the chum salmon run had passed Bethel based on historical average run timing. Chinook salmon made up 25% and chum salmon 75% of the BTF catches from June 7 to June 9.
 - **Aniak Test Fish:** Dan Gillikin (NVN) reported that the ATF caught two Chinook salmon and one whitefish during the morning of June 10.
 - **Sonar:** The total estimate of Chinook salmon passage through the sonar site was 8,461 fish as of June 9. To date, no chum or sockeye salmon had been caught.
 - **Radio Tagging Project:** The total Chinook salmon caught at the tagging project was 42 fish as of June 9.
2. **Discussion of ADF&G Management Consideration and Discussion of Possible Alternatives:** *(See Motion 3)*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. **Approve the agenda as amended. Passed (Unanimous)**
2. **To recommend [that the USFWS provide] an 8-hour fishing opportunity from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday June 12 from Aniak to the mouth of the Kuskokwim. Passed (9 yeas, 1 nay)**

Some Working Group members commented that the USFWS's early announcement for a June 12 opportunity in the lower river was made too far in advance when considering the low Chinook salmon numbers observed at the inseason assessment projects. Some members discussed that a 12-hour opportunity in the lower river could allow excessive harvest pressure on Chinook salmon considering the current conservation efforts.
3. **Support a 24-hour fishing opportunity from Aniak to the Holitna River mouth from 12:00 p.m. noon on Monday June 12 to 12:00 p.m. noon on Tuesday June 13. Passed (Unanimous)**
4. **For the Kalskag area to be given special consideration in the USFWS management actions to more closely mirror the management actions in the state managed waters. Passed (Unanimous)**

Working Group members discussed the fishing challenges faced by fishers in the Kalskag area and encouraged USFWS to consider those challenges when making management decisions.
5. **Adjourn at 11:30 a.m. Passed (Unanimous)**

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

- Mark Leary commented that he hoped his grandsons would be able to fish in the future.
- Bob Aloysius reported that people were confused regarding the fishing restrictions and opportunities. He commented that it seemed contradictory to allow people to fish when reports indicated few fish were in the river.
- Dan Esai encouraged people along the river to fish conservatively during the June 12 opportunity.
- LaMont Albertson thanked the Working Group participants, USFWS and ADF&G for their discussion and encouraged people to continue participating with the management process.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Vacant</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mary Peltola*
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Daniel Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	Barbara Carlson
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	Bob Aloysius
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Charlie Brown
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	<i>Vacant</i>
KRITFC	Nick Kameroff
ADF&G	Aaron Tiernan
CHAIR	LaMont Albertson

**Mary Peltola joined the meeting at 11:05 a.m.*

Other Participants:		
<u>ADF&G Comm. Fish:</u> Aaron Tiernan, Zach Liller, Nick Smith, Jen Peeks <u>Sport Fishing:</u> John Chythlook <u>Subsistence Division:</u> Lisa Olson, Dave Runfola <u>Commissioner's Office:</u>		
<u>USFWS:</u> Ken Stahlnecker <u>OSM:</u> Frank Harris		
Jim Simon (Independent Consultant) Madeline Jovanovich (ADF&G Intern) Joe Kameroff Jr. (NVN) Dan Gillikin (NVN)	Gerald Kameroff (Kalskag) Warren Nicolai (Bethel) Albert Kawagley (Bethel) Bill Bechtol (KRITFC) <u>Media:</u>	<u>WG Alternates:</u> Lisa Feyereisen Greg Hoffman Jr.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), 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**), Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (**KRITFC**)

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