

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

May 30, 2018

Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m. on Wednesday May 30, 2018 and adjourned at 11:22 a.m. Meeting time was approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. Eight full voting members were present and a quorum was established. Alissa Rogers chaired the May 30 meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS:

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

KRITFC Update:

People to be Heard:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

Old Business Discussion Topics:

- Working Group By-Law Sub-Committee:
- Upriver Elder and Middle River Subsistence seats update:

New Business Discussion Topics: N/A

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

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. Elections for the Middle River Subsistence seat and Upriver Elder seat will be held during the next scheduled Working Group meeting where a quorum is established. *Passed (Unanimous)*
3. For the next Working Group meeting to be scheduled for Thursday June 7, 2018 beginning at 10:00 a.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*
4. Adjourn at 11:22 a.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Aaron Tiernan (ADF&G Area Management Biologist) reported that there were no new management actions under consideration to date. Mr. Tiernan commented that there was a 12-hour 4" mesh or less, setnet subsistence period scheduled from 11:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. on May 30 for sections 1–3 of the Kuskokwim River and on June 6, 2018 for sections 1–4. These openings were to target non-salmon species. (*Please see Emergency Order #3-S-WR-02-18 and #3-S-WR-03-18 for details.*)

KRITFC UPDATE: *No KRITFC updates were provided at the time of the May 30 meeting.*

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Albert Kawagley (Bethel) requested clarification on the May 30, 2018 setnet opening and on the king salmon harvest permits. He commented that increased water in the river was good for the fish.
- Robert Lekander (OTNC) commented that the river water was high making fishing difficult. Mr. Lekander discussed the importance of conservation along the entire river.
- Walter Morgan (Lower Kalskag) commented that the water level remained high in his area of the river with a high level of debris, which made using setnets difficult. Mr. Morgan reported that smelts had passed by Kalskag on May 29.
- Gerald Kameroff (Kalskag) reported that he caught a small red salmon on May 27 in a 4" set gillnet. He commented that during a 12-hour period he caught one sheefish, one "red," and one whitefish in his set gillnet.

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- Nick Zaukar (Chuathbaluk) commented that he was concerned about fish waste and fuel being dumped from boats into the coastal waters.

SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

- **Lowest River:** James Charles (Downriver Elder) commented that people had not been fishing for salmon, but that people were setting nets in the lakes.
- **OTNC Subsistence Report:** Mary Mathias (OTNC) reported that few people were at their fish camps to date. Ms. Mathias commented that OTNC expected to begin conducting fish camp surveys the week of May 27 and were recruiting fisherman for the Age-Sex-Length (ASL) project. OTNC planned to distribute BTF fish throughout the Bethel area.
- **Lower River:** Mike Williams Sr. (Lower River Subsistence) reported that prior to May 25 people had been catching whitefish and sheefish; a few people caught “red” salmon. He commented that people expressed concerns that the closures would affect Tuluksak, Kisaralik and Kwethluk river stocks. Mr. Williams also reported that people had questions about the king salmon permit system. Alissa Rogers (Middle River Subsistence alternate) reported that she harvested smelt and was transitioning toward catching whitefish.
- **Middle River:** Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) commented that a few setnets were near the mouth of the Aniak River. Her family caught approximately two sheefish.
- **Upriver:** Mark Leary (Upriver Subsistence) reported that a large amount of wood debris remained in the river. Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate) commented that she had operated her 5 ¼” setnet twice since May 20 and caught sheefish and broad whitefish. A few people were catching sheefish with driftnets in her area and some people caught a large abundance of pike in their setnets. Ms. Carlson added that the river crested around May 28 and debris was clearing out.
- **Headwaters:** Dan Esai (Headwaters Subsistence) commented that the majority of people in his area had not fished with nets to date during the 2018 season. He reported that the water level was increasing and he observed snow in the Alaska Range. Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) commented on the importance of the early closure for protecting headwaters’ stocks. He reported that the debris had cleared out from his area of the river.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:**

- **Bethel Test Fish:** Aaron Tiernan reported that the BTF had caught sheefish and smelt to date. BTF operations began on May 25, 2018.
- **Aniak Test Fish:** Dan Gillikin (NVN) reported that the ATF began operations on June 1, 2018. He commented that the crew would conduct sampling of Chinook salmon caught during the 2018 season. Fish that were unable to be live released would be distributed to nearby communities.
- **Sonar:** Mr. Tiernan reported that the sonar project was scheduled to be operational on June 1, 2018.
- **Weirs:** Mr. Tiernan reported that weir projects were scheduled for installment in mid-June. Mr. Gillikin reported that the Salmon River weir was expected to begin operations on July 1, 2018.
- **Subsistence Division project update:** Jen Peeks (ADF&G) provided a summary submitted by ADF&G Subsistence Division on upriver and lower river projects. Dan Gillikin commented that NVN would be collaborating with ADF&G to conduct inseason harvest surveys. Working Group participants discussed the king salmon harvest permit system.

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2. **Discussion of ADF&G Management Consideration and Discussion of Possible Alternatives:** *There was no additional discussion on management considerations at the May 30 meeting under this item.*

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Working Group By-Law Sub-Committee:** Jen Peeks announced that Bob Aloysius (YK Delta RAC) and Lisa Feyereisen had volunteered to serve on the sub-committee. The sub-committee would begin reviewing the by-laws later in the 2018 season.
- **Upriver Elder and Middle River Subsistence Seats Update:** Jen Peeks reported that nominations would be accepted until June 5, 2018. The Working Group discussed dates to hold elections.

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. **Approve the agenda. Passed (Unanimous)**
2. **Elections for the Middle River Subsistence seat and Upriver Elder seat will be held during the next scheduled Working Group meeting where a quorum is established. Passed (Unanimous)**
3. **For the next Working Group meeting to be scheduled for Thursday June 7, 2018 beginning at 10:00 a.m. Passed (Unanimous)**
Working Group members supported having a meeting on June 7 due to the fishing period scheduled on June 6, 2018.
4. **Adjourn at 11:22 a.m. Passed (Unanimous)**

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

- John Andrew (Upriver Elder alternate) recommended, via text, that if the federal waters continued to be closed to fishing then the state waters should be closed for fishing in July and August. He commented that upriver and down river closures should not be “lopsided.”
- Dan Esai reported that he would be traveling June 6–8, 2018.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles (<i>Excused at 11:00 a.m.</i>)
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Vacant</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams Sr. (<i>Excused at 10:35 a.m.</i>)/ Mary Peltola
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Lisa Feyereisen
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Daniel Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	Absent
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Greg Hoffman Jr.
SPORT FISHING	Absent
PROCESSOR	<i>Vacant</i>
KRITFC	Absent
ADF&G	Aaron Tiernan
CHAIR	Alissa Rogers

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Nick Smith, Colton Lipka, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing: John Chythlook

Subsistence Division:

Commissioner's Office: Jill Klein

USFWS: Ken Stahlnecker, Lew Coggins, David Phillips

OSM:

Jennifer Hooper (AVCP)

Robert Lekander (OTNC)

Mary Mathias (OTNC)

Taylor Rogers (OTNC)

Brent Gibbons (AST)

Dan Gillikin (NVN)

Eddy Hoeldt (NVN)

Megan Leary (Kuskokwim Corp.)

Albert Kawagley (Bethel)

Nick Zaukar (Chuathbaluk)

Gerald Kameroff (Kalskag)

Jonathan Samuelson (GTC)

Walter Morgan (Lower Kalskag)

Kevin Whitworth (MTNT)

Lucy Simeon (Chuathbaluk)

Rebecca Wilmarth (Red Devil)

WG Alternates:

Barbara Carlson

Media:

Anna Rose MacArthur (KYUK)

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsararmiut Traditional Native Council (**OTNC**), 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**), Native Village of Napaimute (**NVN**), Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (**YKHC**), Alaska State Troopers (**AST**)

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