

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

July 11, 2018

Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m. on Wednesday July 11, 2018 and concluded at 11:46 a.m. Meeting time was approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. Ten full voting members were present and a quorum was established. LaMont Albertson chaired the meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS:

USFWS/KRITFC Update:

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

People to be Heard:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

Old Business Discussion Topics:

- Discussion of the FACA group and future collaborative efforts.

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 (9 yeas, 1 nay)*
2. For the next Working Group meeting to be scheduled for Wednesday July 18, 2018 beginning at 10:00 a.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*

The July 11, 2018 Working Group meeting concluded at 11:46 a.m. without a formal motion for adjournment.

USFWS/KRITFC UPDATE: Ken Stahlnecker (USFWS) reported that on July 6, 2018 USFWS relinquished federal restrictions on the Kuskokwim River reverting management of the Kuskokwim River drainage back to ADF&G.

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Nick Smith (ADF&G Research Biologist) reported that the full Kuskokwim River drainage came back under state management on July 6, 2018. On July 6, ADF&G opened the entire Kuskokwim River mainstem until further notice with gear restrictions in place. No additional management actions were under consideration at the time of the July 11 meeting.

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Robert Lekander (Bethel) reported that he fished on July 6 with a 4" mesh gillnet and caught 11 Bering cisco and 9 sockeye salmon.
- Petra Harpak (Bethel) commented that during the 2018 season she had eaten dry fish from upriver that tasted like it contained less fat than normal.

SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

- **Lowest River:** James Charles (Downriver Elder) reported that people in the Tuntutuliak area were only fishing for "fresh fish" due to the wet weather.
- **ONC Subsistence Report:** Matthew Kapsner (ONC) summarized the ONC fish camp surveys conducted between July 5 and July 9, 2018. ONC had received ASL samples from 16 individuals in the Bethel area. Avery Hoffman (ONC) provided an overview of the harvest reports from Bethel area fishers. *(For more information on the ONC summary, please see the July 11, 2018 Informational Packet.)*

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- **Lower River:** John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) reported that earlier in the week he harvested 40 chum and sockeye salmon, and 3 sheefish. John Andrew commented that not many people were fishing by the mainstem; people had been putting away their fish and larger mesh gear. No silver salmon had been caught to date in his area. Mary Peltola (Lower River Subsistence alternate) reported that on July 9 she harvested 14 sockeye salmon and 3 chum salmon. She commented that her family used fans and smoke to assist in the drying process during the wet weather. Bob Aloysius (YK Delta RAC) commented that in late June and early July his family had harvested salmon to freeze. He commented that the *Big Chief* smoker produced dry fish quickly.
- **Middle River:** Darren Deacon (Middle River Subsistence alternate) commented that he planned to continue fishing for chum salmon and “reds.” Mike Savage (Middle River Subsistence) reported that his family had suspended fishing on July 4 until the silver salmon arrived. Mr. Savage commented that the 2018 season was the “best season” they have had in the last five years. Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) reported that her family continued to harvest and process fish. Ms. Feyereisen commented that, overall, fishing effort had slowed; people she spoke with in Chuathbaluk were done fishing. She added that several people had suspended their fishing until silver salmon arrived.
- **Upriver:** Barb Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate) reported that the operation of the Sleetmute fish wheel had been suspended due to high water. At the time of the meeting setnets in her area were catching equal numbers of sockeye salmon and chum salmon; very few king salmon were being caught. Ms. Carlson observed that the Chinook salmon oil content was noticeably lower than in previous years. To date, people in Sleetmute had not “put up” as many salmon as in previous years.
- **Headwaters:** Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) observed that, as of July 11, the majority of the 2018 king salmon run had passed the McGrath area and people were waiting for silver salmon. Dan Esai (Headwaters Subsistence) reported that a family member had caught a total of 70 Chinook salmon.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:** Nick Smith (ADF&G Research Biologist) provided an overview of the ADF&G assessment projects. Mr. Smith reported that, to date, the water temperature was near the historical average, water clarity was below the historical average; and the water level was higher than average. *(For more information on the 2018 inseason assessment projects, please see the July 11 Informational Packet).*
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** As of July 11, ~93% of the Chinook salmon run, ~95% of the sockeye salmon run, and ~68% of the chum salmon run had passed through Bethel based on historical run timing
 - **Sonar:** As of July 11, Chinook salmon continued to be caught at the sonar project site; chum and sockeye salmon numbers were increasing at the site.
 - **Weirs:** As of July 10, the cumulative Chinook salmon escapement at the George River weir was 1,012 and 188 for the Salmon River (Pitka Fork) weir. All other 2018 weir projects had experienced operational difficulties due to high water.
 - **NVN Projects:** Rebecca Wilmarth (NVN) commented that harvest surveys conducted in Crooked Creek and Red Devil indicated that people were catching primarily sockeye salmon and a small number of king salmon in that region.
2. **Sport Fish:** Barb Carlson commented that a Holitna River sport fish guide had reported that sport fishing for pike and sheefish was going well and that water level was high, but had been dropping.
 3. **Discussion of ADF&G Management Consideration and Discussion of Possible Alternatives:** *There were no management motions made at the time of this meeting.*

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OLD BUSINESS:

- **Discussion of the FACA group and future collaborative efforts.** Jill Klein (ADF&G) summarized the history of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) group that had been referred to as the Kuskokwim Partnership. She reported that these partnership meetings had ended in the fall of 2017. To date, the only formal agreement that ADF&G had with the Working Group. Ken Stahlnecker (USFWS) reported that the federal government was interested in moving forward in the process. Several Working Group members commented that they were concerned that additional management groups could increase confusion for stakeholders. Bob Aloysius commented that as a local Elder, he felt “left out” of the process and added that Elders had “firsthand” knowledge of salmon and the salmon fishery. Barb Carlson suggested that the Working Group further discuss what people expected from a “unified management” and what was realistically possible with the state and federal management systems.

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. **Approve the agenda. Passed (9 yeas, 1 nay)**
2. **For the next Working Group meeting to be scheduled for Wednesday July 18, 2018 beginning at 10:00 a.m. Passed (Unanimous)**

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

- Bob Aloysius commented that the non-salmon spawning tributaries were a “haven” for salmon and it was not “fair” that people living close to those tributaries were allowed to fish there at any time.
- Barb Carlson suggested that the Working Group discuss the non-salmon spawning tributaries and generate a unified motion for both state and federal management systems regarding these tributaries.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	Mishka Andreanoff
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mary Peltola, <i>Excused at 10:43 a.m.</i>
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Savage
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson/ Mark Leary, <i>Arrived at 10:23 a.m.</i>
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Daniel Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	Bob Aloysius
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Absent</i>
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	<i>Vacant</i>
KRITFC	<i>Absent</i>
ADF&G	Nick Smith
CHAIR	LaMont Albertson

Other Participants:		
ADF&G Comm. Fish: John Linderman, Zach Liller, Bobette Dickerson, Jen Peeks		
Subsistence Division: Lisa Olson		
Commissioner's Office: Jill Klein		
USFWS: Ken Stahlnecker, David Phillips		
QSM: Christine Bremmer		
Bill Bechtol (KRITFC)	Jennifer Hooper (AVCP)	<u>WG Alternates:</u> John Andrew
Avery Hoffman (ONC)	Orie Reich (BSFA)	
Janessa Esquible (ONC)	Ben Agimuk (Bethel)	Lisa Feyereisen
Rebecca Wilmarth (Red Devil)	Sarah Inman (University of Wash.)	Darren Deacon
Robert Lekander (ONC/ KRITFC)	Mike Jones	Alissa Rogers
Janelle Carl (ONC)	Clarissa Zeller (ONC)	<u>Media:</u>
Matthew Kapsner (ONC)	Destiny Ropati (ONC)	Anna Rose MacArthur (KYUK)

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsarmiut 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, 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**); Age-Sex-Length (**ASL**)

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