

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working group

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

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

June 15, 2020

Five full voting members were present, and a quorum was not established. A work session was called to order at 6:01 p.m. on Monday June 15, 2020 and adjourned at 7:21 p.m. The work session time was approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. Barbara Carlson chaired the work session.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

### **A. USFWS/KRITFC UPDATE:**

### **B. ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:**

### **C. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: *Non-Working Group Members***

### **D. CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

- Subsistence Reports: Lowest River, ONC Inseason Subsistence Report, Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, Headwaters
- Overview of Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment:
  - a. Test Fisheries (Bethel and Aniak):
  - b. Sonar/Weirs/Aerial Surveys/Other:
  - c. Subsistence Division Project Update:
  - d. NVN Report:
- Commercial Catch Report: N/A
- Processor Report: N/A
- Sport Fish Report:
- Intercept Fishery Report: *optional*
- Weather Forecast:
- Discussion of ADF&G Management considerations and discussion of possible alternatives (recommendations from the Working Group):
- Motion for Discussion and Action:

### **E. OLD BUSINESS:**

- Meeting attendance and vacant seats

### **F. NEW BUSINESS:**

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

**WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:** *There were no action items during this work session.*

**WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:** *A quorum was not established; this was a work session and there were no motions.*

**A. KRITFC/ USFWS UPDATE:** Gary Decossas (USFWS, Fisheries Biologist) gave a brief overview of the harvest estimates from the June 12 opening. Mr. Decossas reported that 480 drift nets and 20 set nets were observed. He reported that an estimated 3,100 Chinook salmon were harvested. Ray Born (USFWS; Acting Refuge Manager) announced that on June 18 subsistence fishing with 6” mesh or less drift gillnets would be allowed for 12 hours in federal waters.

**B. ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:** Nick Smith (ADF&G, Area Management Biologist) reported that Section 4 and Section 5 are open to subsistence fishing with the use of 6” or less mesh gill nets, 25 fathoms in length, and 45 meshes in depth until further notice. Mr. Smith added that ADF&G is going to maintain the closed waters’ box in front of Aniak to protect Aniak River bound Chinook salmon. He continued that ADF&G recommended opening Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3 for a 12-hour period (6:00 am to 6:00 pm) on June 18 to the use of 6” or less mesh gill nets, 45

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meshes in depth, 50 fathoms in length below the Johnson River and 25 fathoms in length above the Johnson River. By announcing this opener and thereby mirroring the USFWS opener taking place at the same time and area, the state is ensuring that there will be a law enforcement presence because there is currently no federal law enforcement within the Yukon Delta NWR. John Chythlook (ADF&G, Area Sportfish Management Biologist) reported that the sportfishing for Chinook salmon was closed until further notice.

C. **PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:** *There were no people to be heard for this work session.*

## D. **CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

### SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

- **ONC Subsistence Report:** Janessa Esquible (ONC) provided an overview of the ONC inseason harvest monitoring project. *(For more information on the ONC subsistence survey report, please see the June 15, 2020 Informational Packet, Pages 3-6)*
- **Lower River:** James Charles (Downriver Elder) reported that people caught more Chinook salmon during the June 15 opener than during the June 12 opener. Mr. Charles commented that the salmon run is picking up.
- **Middle River:** By email, Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) reported that few people are fishing and there is consensus that it is a late run.
- **Upriver:** Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence) reported that the Aniak fishwheel caught its first Chinook salmon. Kevin Whitworth (KRITFC) reported that a few Chinook salmon were being caught around the McGrath area.
- There were some general comments made by subsistence users throughout the drainage about fish condition (e.g., mushy flesh and parasites).

### • **OVERVIEW OF KUSKOKWUM RIVER SALMON RUN ASSESMENTS:**

- Sean Larson (ADF&G, Kuskokwim Research Biologist) gave a brief report of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Assessment Update. He remarked that about half of the years since 2008 fell below/above the current CPUE values seen at the Bethel Test Fishery as of June 14 and that the Aniak Test Fishery had caught their first Chinook salmon. Bethel Sonar began making estimates for fish passage on June 5. Mr. Larson stated that so far it looks as though the Chinook salmon run is coming in later than anticipated. Mr. Larson went on to explain that it is still early and that no major concern is warranted at this time. This year's Chinook salmon run is tracking that of 2018 and that run provided a level of harvest opportunity similar to what is being provided this year. As of June 15, weir crews have made it to their respective camps and will be in the process of installing the weirs over the next few days. *(For more information on the ONC subsistence survey report, please see the June 15, 2020 Informational Packet, Pages 7-19)*
- David Runfola (ADF&G Subsistence Division): Mr. Runfola told the Working Group that he did not have much to report due to the AKSSF project being delayed until 2021.

## E. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Meeting attendance and vacant seats
  - This topic was tabled but will be discussed at a future meeting when more voting members are in attendance.

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**F. NEW BUSINESS:** *There was no new business discussed at this work session.*

**WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:** *A quorum was not established; this was a work session and there were no motions.*

**G. COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:** *No additional comments were provided from the Working Group members.*

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## WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	Absent
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mary Peltola
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Absent
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Absent
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Vacant
YK DELTA RAC	Absent
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Absent
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	Vacant
KRITFC	Absent
ADF&G	Nick Smith
CHAIR	Barbara Carlson

Other Participants:		
<u>ADF&amp;G Comm. Fish:</u> Ben Gray, Sean Larson, Lily Reichard <u>Sport Fish:</u> John Chythlook <u>Subsistence Division:</u> Dave Runfola, Lisa Wilson		
<u>USFWS:</u> Aaron Webber, Aaron Moses, Gary Decossas, Ray Born <u>OSM:</u> Eva Patton		
Janessa Esquible (ONC) Bill Bechtol (KRITFC) Kevin Whitworth (KRITFC) Jen Peeks (Bethel)	Amanda Hoeldt (NVM) Katie Holt (NVM) Mackenzie Smith (NVM) Brianna Shere (NVM) Cameron Lingnau (NVM)	<u>Media:</u> Anna Rose MacArthur (KYUK)  <u>WG Alternates:</u> Mary Peltola (Lower River Sub. Alt.)

## 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**), University of Alaska Fairbanks (**UAF**)

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