

**Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**  
**1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET) Code: 58756# (KUSKO)**  
**ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433**

**June 8th, 2022**

On Wednesday, June 8th, 2022, the meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. and adjourned at 11:25 a.m. Meeting time was approximately 1 hours and 25 minutes. A quorum was not established with six full voting members in attendance when roll call was taken, however 2 members joined in late and announced themselves establishing quorum with eight voting members. Fritz Charles chaired the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEMS AND SUMMARY INFORMATION:**

**A. USFWS/KRITFC UPDATE:** *Audio for this update begins at 11:50 – Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*

- Aaron Moses (USFWS) gives a brief update on community surveys, smolt trap and the Kwethluk weir.
- Boyd Blihovde (USFWS) adds that they plan to have the Kwethluk weir operational on June 20<sup>th</sup> but will be dependent on water levels. Mr. Blihovde also states that he is uncomfortable making any further announcements or recommendations for openings as of yet because numbers are still low, and it is still early. He is hoping to get more information after the previously announced driftnet openers.
- Terese Schomogyi gave a brief update on projects including the Takotna weir and the community-based harvesting monitor program headed by KRITFC. Ms. Schomogyi also named harvest monitors from 10 villages downriver. *Audio for this update begins at 17:35– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
- Lamont gives a brief statement regarding the surveys being conducted and the high-water levels.

**B. ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:** *Audio for this update begins at 20:10– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*

- Nick Smith (ADF&G) discusses low numbers of salmon reaching upriver and the headwaters in previous years and that it is early in the salmon run. Therefore, Mr. Smith will not be supporting the set and driftnet openers announced by US Fish and Wildlife in sections 1-3. Mr Smith suggests opening sections 4 and 5 on June 12<sup>th</sup>.
- There is some brief discussion from the group clarifying the suggested actions. *Audio for this discussion begins at 23:25– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*

**C. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:** None

**D. CONTINUING BUSINESS:** *Audio for subsistence reports begins 28:00– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*

- Subsistence Reports: Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, ONC In-season Subsistence Report
  - Lower River
    - Fritz Charles (Bethel; 1<sup>st</sup> Member at Large) said his family has put a setnet up near Tuntutuliak. His brother brought him 1 king salmon. Mr. Charles mentioned some posts he had seen about others seeing and catching salmon near the mouth.
    - Mike William Sr. (Akiak; Lower River Subsistence) said he caught 60 sheefish and 20 broad whitefish in late May before the front-end closure with his setnet. The first salmon he caught was a red on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Williams said he believes the average for the first setnet opener was 1 king salmon, but water was high. The second opener was a little better, with bigger Chinook salmon. Mr. Williams stated he is not fishing the setnet opener today, June 8<sup>th</sup>, because he is in Sitka to attend the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting. Mr. Williams stated he feels that this year his catch so far with a setnet is better than last year and spoke to the need to conserve salmon for people upriver and the concern that many have about the warm dry temperatures we have been seeing on the river.

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- Middle River
  - Walter Morgan (Lower Kalskag; Middle River Subsistence) said he didn't fish the last opening but has caught 2 small king salmon and 1 sheefish in a 2-hour period. Water is high and still fairly cool in the main river. Mr. Morgan stated he did not fish the last opener.
  - Lamont Albertson (Aniak; Sport Fishing) said he knows that pike and some sheefish at the Aniak have been caught. Water has been high. Where there is clear water above the sloughs there are some char in the Aniak River. Mr. Albertson was told there was still a lot of trash in the water during the first setnet opener, so there wasn't as many people fishing. He has also heard that downriver by Eek people had trouble tide fluctuations and nets collapsing with the tide.
  - Rebecca Wilmarth (Red Devil, Western Interior RAC) said she had a setnet out since June 3<sup>rd</sup>. There is high water, but it has been dropping fast. She said she had caught two small king salmon, and some sheefish and whitefish. She said she had been driftnetting but had not caught anything so far.
  - Barbara Carlson (Sleetmute, Upriver Subsistence) said she has put out a setnet for four nights in the last two weeks. She has caught some sheefish and a few whitefish. She said she hopes to get the fish wheel running in the next day or two. She said there has not been any gillnet fishing in Sleetmute so far, but there has been rod and reel fishing. She hears the fishermen are catching pike and that the sheefish are starting to bite.
  - Ruby Egrass (Red Devil, Upriver Subsistence) said she does not have anything to report. Barbara Carlson asks Ruby to vote for the Upriver Subsistence seat if she is unable to due to phone troubles; which Ruby agrees.
- ONC Inseason Subsistence Report: *Audio for this update begins at 40:30– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
  - Avery Hoffman (ONC, KRITFC) begins by recognizing and thanking his crew to help gather data; Danielle Lowery, Jamin Crow, Taj Tony and Delen Hooper. Mr. Hoffman goes on to summarize various project that ONC has been involved in and their progress so far. The information that he summarizes can be found on pages 3 and 4 of the informational packet.
- KRITFC Inseason report: *Audio for this update begins at 44:15– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
  - Lamont Albertson states that he has nothing to report at this time other than that the water is high, and fishing is slow.
  - Therese Schomogyi (KRITFC) gives a brief report regarding ongoing projects that KRITFC is involved with. Using information gathered from multiple agencies KRITFC was able to put together harvest estimates between Tuntutuliak and Akiak. Results are posted on KRITFC's website. June 1<sup>st</sup>, twenty-eight interviews were collected and thirty setnets were counted by USFWS. Thirty king salmon were estimated to have been caught with a 0-80 confidence level. June 4<sup>th</sup>, thirty-three surveys were collected and USFWS counted seventy-five setnets. There was an estimated eighty king salmon harvested, with a confidence level of 40-130 fish. No chum or sockeye were reported but forty sheefish and 120 whitefish were harvested.
- Overview of the Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment: *Audio for this report begins at 47:07– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
  - Sean Larson (ADF&G) gives an overview of the Bethel Test Fishery, Sonar and In-season harvest estimates. The details can be found on pages 7-13. There was a cumulative CPUE of 7 as of June 6<sup>th</sup> at the Bethel Test Fishery and has caught only kings so far. Sonar has detected only kings and one sockeye through June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 450

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total salmon. In-season harvest estimates are 110 kings, with no chum or sockeye caught. Aniak Test Fish has not caught any salmon yet. Weir crews are headed upriver to put in weirs.

- Members of the Working Group ask some questions regarding sonar and Bethel Test Fish and water levels. *Audio for this discussion begins at 51:54– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
- NVN Report: *Audio for this report begins at 55:15– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
  - Dan Gilikin gives a brief update. Aniak Test Fish began operating on June 1<sup>st</sup> and will continue until mid-July but has caught only sheefish so far. Salmon River weir is on schedule to be put in July. Water is high but dropping quickly. Mr. Gilikin mentions Bea Kristovich’s passing and that a service will be held for her in Napaimute on Saturday.
- Sport Fish: *Audio for this report begins at 57:35– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
  - Lamont Albertson said that he does not have anything to report but would like to mention that there are fishing guides on the Aniak River, which is the only major tributary in the area. There is a great deal of concern about the Buckstock, the Timber Creek, and Salmon River, and to a lesser degree the East Fork. Mr. Albertson hopes that the state and KRITFC will support closing those tributaries to the Aniak during the king salmon season.
    - John Chythlook (ADF&G) states that an emergency order will be released shortly to close the king salmon fishery to sports fishing for the remainder of the season.
- Intercept Fishery Report: None *Audio for this item begins at 1:00:00– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
  - Lamont Albertson requests that this agenda item be included in future meetings.

**E. OLD BUSINESS:** Postponed

- **Nominate WG representative to serve at KRITFC inseason meetings**
- **Election of Co-Chairs**
  - Please see Motion 4 regarding Old Business

**F. NEW BUSINESS:** None

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

- a. Walter Morgan (Middle River Subsistence) mentions some of the challenges of fishing this year including high water and gas prices. *Audio for this comment begins at 26:15– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*
- b. Walter Morgan makes a comment about beluga whales being seen in the river. *Audio for this comment begins at 1:18:50– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.*

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m. by unanimous vote.**

**WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:**

**Motion 1: Approve the agenda as written.** *Passed (Unanimous).*

- a. The motion was made by Lamont Albertson and seconded by Avery Hoffman.

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## **Motion 2: To accept management recommendations by ADF&G for sections 4 and 5, opening the river upstream of Aniak starting June 12<sup>th</sup>. Passed (Unanimous)**

- a. Audio for this motion and discussion begins at 1:01:00
- b. The motion was made by Lamont Albertson and seconded by Rebecca Wilmarth.
- c. There is some discussion with the group asking for clarification and considering the moral concern and the appearance of fairness to lower river fishery participants. The differences between the river sections is also discussed.

## **Motion 3: To request ADF&G to include management action recommendations in the information packet.**

- a. Audio for this motion begins at 1:13:40– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.
- b. (Withdrawn based on favorable response by ADF&G)

## **Motion 4: To postpone old business, including voting of co-chairs and KRITFC in season representation, to a later time. Passed (Unanimous)**

- a. Audio for this motion begins at 1:16:50– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.
- b. Motion made by Lamont Albertson and seconded by Barbara Carlson

## **Motion 5: To adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:25 a.m. Passed (Unanimous)**

- a. Audio for this motion begins at 1:20:47– Meeting Audio – 06/08/22.

### **WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:**

<b>MEMBER SEAT:</b>	<b>NAME:</b>
DOWNRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Walter Morgan
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
MEMBER AT LARGE SEAT 1	Fritz Charles
MEMBER AT LARGE SEAT 2	<i>Absent</i>
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Rebecca Wilmarth
YK DELTA RAC	<i>Absent</i>
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Absent</i>
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
ADF&G	Nick Smith
CHAIR	Fritz Charles
ADF&G Comm. Fish: Nick Smith, Ross Renick, Sean Larson, Chuck Brazil, Keegan Birchfield, Zach Liller Sport Fish Division: John Chythlook Subsistence Division: Commissioner's Office: John Linderman	
USFWS: Boyd Blihovde, Aaron Moses, Chris Tulik OSM: Brooke McDavid NVN: Dan Gillikin ONC: Jamin Crow, Danielle Lowery, Delen Hooper, Jamin Crow, Taj Tony AVCP: Jennifer Hooper	

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<u>KRITFC:</u> Jim Simon, Terese Schomogyi, Avery Hoffman	
<u>UAF:</u>	
<u>WIRAC:</u> Rebecca Wilmarth	
<u>YK Delta RAC:</u> Alissa Rogers	
<u>WG Alternates:</u> (not already listed above) Alissa Rogers (Lower River Subsistence), Ruby Egrass (Upriver Subsistence),	<u>Media:</u> Olivia Eberts

## **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), 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**), ADF&G Subsistence Division (**SD**), 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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