

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

July 22, 2015

Meeting called to order at 10:00am on Wednesday July 22, 2015 and adjourned at 12:00pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours. Eight full voting members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

People to be Heard:

Old Business Discussion Topics:

- Nomination of Barbara Carlson as an additional Member at Large alternate.

New Business Discussion Topics: N/A

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *There were no action items at the time of meeting.*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. For Barbara Carlson to represent an additional Member at Large alternate seat on the Working Group. *Passed (Unanimous)*
3. Adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous)*

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **ADF&G Management Actions under consideration:** ADF&G was not considering management actions, and was looking for Working Group recommendations for 2015 coho salmon harvest opportunities.
2. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:**
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** Zach Liller (ADF&G) reported that ~98% of the Chinook salmon run had passed Bethel. He commented that Chinook salmon run timing for 2015 was near average but considerably protracted, making inseason projections difficult; however the current run size estimate was within the pre-season forecast range. Mr. Liller reported that the sockeye salmon run was ~99% passed Bethel and had been late but strong. The chum salmon run remained weak and the cumulative CPUE for the BTF was the 5th lowest on record and well below the 5 and 10-year averages. Mr. Liller added that ~91% of the chum salmon run was believed to have passed Bethel by July 22nd. The first coho salmon had been caught at the BTF on July 11, and on average 5% of the coho run had passed Bethel by this time. *(For more information on the BTF, please see the July 22nd Informational Packet).*
 - **Aniak Test Fish:** ATF was completed on August 14. No further reports will be given in 2015.
 - **Weirs:** Zach Liller reported that the Chinook salmon escapement appeared healthy, and that escapement goals had been met on the Kwethluk and George Rivers. Mr. Liller reported that sockeye salmon escapement performance was mixed. While the Kwethluk River weir was reporting the largest sockeye salmon escapement on record, the Kogruklu River escapement was weak and unlikely to meet its goal. Mr. Liller reported that chum salmon escapement was below average at all weir locations except the Kwethluk River. He commented that it was unlikely that the escapement goal at the Kogruklu weir would be met for chum salmon. *(For more information on weirs, please see the July 22nd Informational Packet).*
 - **Radio Tagging Project:** Zach Liller discussed the progression of the Chinook salmon run throughout the season. Tagging efforts in the lower river would end on July 24th. *(For more information on the tagging project, please see the July 22nd Informational Packet).*
 - **Aerial Surveys:** Zach Liller reported that peak spawning abundance aerial surveys for Chinook salmon began on July 20, and that headwater surveys were completed under good survey conditions. He reported that helicopter surveys had been flown on the Kwethluk and Kisaralik Rivers as part of the tagging project. *(For more information on the aerial surveys, please see the July 22nd Informational Packet).*

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.ADF&G.alaska.gov/index.cfm?ADF&G=commercialbyareakuskokwim.kswg#/2013>

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- Inseason Subsistence Harvest Assessment Project: Dave Runfola (ADF&G) thanked the middle and upper river residents for their assistance with the ADF&G inseason subsistence creel survey project. He reported that ~180 household surveys had been conducted in the middle and upper river. Mr. Runfola commented that approximately 10-15% of households reported meeting their subsistence needs, while 50% reported that they had either not started or were just starting to fish. Mr. Runfola commented that some households delayed harvest efforts due to the fishing restrictions. He added that some people found it challenging to stay informed about the changing restrictions.
3. **Subsistence Reports:**
- **ONC Inseason Subsistence Report:** *ONC subsistence surveys had completed for the season. No further reports will be given for 2015.*
 - **Lower River:** John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) commented that the majority of fishing had ended in early July and people were now waiting for coho salmon. He commented on similar reports from downriver residents. Mike Williams Sr. (Lower River Subsistence) reported that the majority of Akiak and Akiachak residents had completed fishing for the time being. People were waiting for silver salmon for salt fish and half-dried jarring. He commented that Tuluksak would be relying heavily on coho salmon to meet their needs.
 - **Middle River:** Dave Cannon (Middle River Subsistence) reported that people in the middle river were waiting for the silver salmon to arrive. Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) reported that Chuathbaluk would be relying heavily on silver salmon due to their inability to harvest during the 2015 season's fires. She commented that the chum salmon meat appeared "whiter" than usual, but not "mushy".
 - **Upriver:** Barb Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate) reported that people had pulled all fishing gear from the river due to the high water level. She commented that prior to the high water, their fishwheel was catching ~40 chum to every 6 sockeye salmon and setnets were catching ~37 sockeye to every 3 chum salmon. She added that most people were 75% done with meeting their needs.
 - **Headwaters:** Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) commented that fishing was slow and the water was high. He reported that people were waiting for silver salmon and were primarily catching Sheefish with hook and line.
4. **Sport Fishing:** LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) commented that there were several sport fishing guides on the Aniak River resulting in fewer subsistence fishers.
5. **Intercept Fishery Report:** LaMont Albertson commented on the number of Chinook salmon harvested during the 2015 Area M June harvest.
- **Discussion of ADF&G Management consideration and discussion of possible alternatives:** Zach Liller reported that the department was looking to begin assessing the coho salmon run and possible harvest opportunities in early August. He added that the first coho salmon commercial opener in 2014 was on August 11, which corresponded with the 60% point of the run. Working Group members were reluctant to make motions pertaining to coho salmon harvest opportunities during this meeting. Members said that they believed it was too early to assess the run strength.
6. **Motion for Discussion and Action:** N/A

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Dan Gillikin (NVN) commented that the Sport Fishing emergency order (EO) for Chinook salmon would end on July 25. Janet Bavilla (ADF&G) clarified that Chinook salmon sport fishing automatically closed every year on July 26.
- Lisa Olson (ADF&G) reported that the BOF was planning a Kuskokwim Subsistence Salmon Panel meeting on August 24-25.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Nomination of Barbara Carlson as an additional Member at Large alternate:** Lisa Feyereisen recommended that Barbara Carlson be considered for an additional Member at Large alternate seat. (*See Motion 2*)

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NEW BUSINESS: N/A

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion 1: To approve the agenda as amended. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 2: For Barbara Carlson to represent an additional Member at Large alternate seat on the Working Group. Passed (Unanimous)

Motion 3: Adjourn. Passed (Unanimous)

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP: N/A

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	John Andrew
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams Sr.
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Dan Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	<i>Absent</i>
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Ray Collins
YK DELTA RAC	Greg Roczicka
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Absent</i>
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	<i>Absent</i>
ADF&G	Zach Liller
CHAIR	Bev Hoffman

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Zach Liller, Chris Shelden, Nick Smith, Dan Bergstrom, Jan Conitz, Jen Peeks,
Sport Fishing:

Subsistence Division: Hiroko Ikuta, Lisa Olson, David Runfola

USFWS: Aaron Webber

OSM:

Doug Molyneux
Lisa Demer (ADN)

Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate)
Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate)

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Orutsarmiut Native Council (ONC), Kuskokwim Native Association (KNA), 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), Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (ITFC)

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