

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Finfish
January 12 – 19, 2004
Fairbanks, Alaska

DESIGNATED REPORTERS: Justin Crawford and Charlie Gregg

This summary of actions is for information purposes only and is not intended to detail, reflect or fully interpret the reasons for the board's actions.

SPORT FISH RESIDENT SPECIES

PROPOSAL NO. 101

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Reduce bag limit in Quartz Lake.

DISCUSSION: The board recognized that the management of Quartz Lake is addressed in the Regional Stocked Waters Management Plan, proposal 107. Under the plan, Quartz Lake is now classified as a high-yield lake, with a bag and possession limit of ten fish. Board members believe it unnecessary to further reduce bag limits.

PROPOSAL NO. 102

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify hook size restrictions.

DISCUSSION: Board members agreed that regulations are already restrictive and there is currently no identified biological or conservation concern in these systems. Barbless hooks and knotless nets have not been shown to reduce mortality, nor have barbless hooks been proven to reduce mouth damage. Enforcement difficulties were addressed because rod-and-reel is legal subsistence fishing gear in this area and the restrictions would not pertain to the subsistence fishery.

PROPOSAL NO. 103

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Designate fly fishing only waters.

DISCUSSION: This proposal conflicts with the Wild Rainbow Trout Management Plan. Noting a lack of conservation concerns, the board considered these restrictions unnecessary and saw no pertinent reason to eliminate opportunity.

PROPOSAL NO. 104

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify resident species bag and possession limits for Aniak River.

AMENDMENTS: Aligns Aniak River sport fish bag and possession limits with the Holitna River drainage: Arctic char/Dolly Varden (inflowing waters) daily bag limit, three; Lake trout, four; Rainbow trout, catch and release only; Arctic grayling, two; Sheefish, two; Northern pike, five, one over 30 inches; Burbot, 15.

DISCUSSION: The department described current regulations as some of the most restrictive bag limits in any rural fishery in the state. Board members recognized that the Aniak River receives the highest sport fishing effort in the Kuskokwim River drainage, yet sustains low harvest rates, demonstrating no conservation concern.

PROPOSAL NO. 104B

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify salmon bag and possession limits for Aniak River.

DISCUSSION: The board considered current regulations effective in addressing chinook and chum salmon yield concerns. Bag and possession limits are covered under the Kuskokwim salmon rebuilding plan.

PROPOSAL NO. 105

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Modify gear and area restrictions on Kanektok River.

DISCUSSION: The board honored the author's desire to withdraw the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 106

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify gear and area restrictions on Kanektok River.

DISCUSSION: Enforcement difficulties were addressed because rod-and-reel is legal subsistence fishing gear in this area and the restrictions would not pertain to the subsistence fishery. Board members recognized that there is no biological concern with this fishery and that the proposal would offer no apparent benefit to fish stocks. The majority of gillnetting for king salmon is over by the time most of the sport fishing begins.

PROPOSAL NO. 107

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Create a regional stocked waters management plan.

AMENDMENT: Include the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna regions with the A-Y-K Stocked Waters Management Plan.

DISCUSSION: This management plan provides a framework designed to meet public demand and provide diversity of opportunity in all stocked waters. The board recognized the importance of establishing region wide regulations for stocked waters and two categories of exceptions, conservative yield, and special management. Simplification of the regulations is intended to maintain the characteristics of each fishery category.

PROPOSAL NO. 108

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify bag limit for lake trout and Arctic char.

DISCUSSION: High latitude/altitude lakes containing lake trout and Arctic char are generally unproductive and warrant conservative management practices. A reduction in allowable harvests alleviates potential conservation concerns. Board members supported eliminating the need for anglers to differentiate between lake trout and Arctic char/Dolly Varden.

PROPOSAL NO. 109

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Create a regional Arctic grayling management plan.

AMENDMENTS: Include the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna regions with the A-Y-K Arctic Grayling Management Plan. The Holitna River, Kanektok River, and Goodnews River will be considered under the criteria of conservative harvest management.

DISCUSSION: This management plan builds criteria such that the board and public can give guidance to the department on how Arctic grayling are managed. Recognizing that current regulations are complex, the board supported simplifying and standardizing regulations while providing a framework for diversity of opportunity. Board members understood the plan to be consistent with department bag limit analyses of Arctic grayling fisheries, which demonstrated that in areas where harvest is allowed, five fish per day, most anglers already keep less than five fish.

PROPOSAL NO. 110

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify wild trout regulations.

DISCUSSION: Aligning bag, possession, and size limits for wild rainbow trout on the Kasigluk, Arolik, lower sections of the Kisaralik and Kwethluk rivers with the Statewide Wild Trout Fishery Management Plan will provide consistency and reduce confusion in regulations while providing for conservation. Enforcement of annual bag limits will require that fish be recorded on a license or harvest ticket.

PROPOSAL NO. 111

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify Arctic grayling bag, possession and size limits in the Dalton Highway Corridor/ Yukon River portion.

DISCUSSION: Board members supported the intent to simplify and align regulations with the Arctic grayling Management Plan. By removing length limits that are currently unnecessary for conservation, the board intends to provide more opportunity to harvest Arctic grayling in an area where effort is too low to result in overharvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 112

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify Arctic grayling bag, possession and size limits in the Dalton Highway Corridor/North Slope portion.

DISCUSSION: Board members referenced discussion and justification on proposal 111 as this change in regulation concerns an identical fishery on separate segment of the Dalton Highway Corridor.

PROPOSAL NO. 113

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify Arctic grayling bag, possession and size limits in the Delta Clearwater River drainage.

DISCUSSION: Barbless hooks have not been shown to reduce mortality, nor have barbless hooks been proven to reduce mouth damage. The board stated that this change in gear is not likely to decrease mortality or biologically benefit the fishery. Enforcement difficulties could arise from interpreting the definition of "barbless."

PROPOSAL NO. 114

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Modify the bag and possession limit in Quartz Lake.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action based on the action taken on proposal 107.

PROPOSAL NO. 115

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify bag and possession limit of stocked waters on Bray Lakes and Beaver Lake.

DISCUSSION: Increasing bag limits on Bray Lakes and Beaver Lake was deemed excessive for systems with low productivity and efficient access.

PROPOSAL NO. 116

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Change season, bag and possession limit in Tok River area.

DISCUSSION: The board expressed concern over eliminating spawning closure dates, potentially causing overharvest of spawning and/or overwintering fish concentrated in a small geographic area. This proposal is inconsistent with the Arctic grayling Management Plan.

PROPOSAL NO. 117

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Change Arctic grayling bag, possession and size limit in Chena River area.

DISCUSSION: No action taken based on the desire of the proposer to withdraw the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 118**ACTION: No Action****DESCRIPTION:** Align sport fishing regulations of Goodnews River with the Kanektok River.**DISCUSSION:** No action taken based on the action taken on proposal 102.**PROPOSAL NO. 119****ACTION: Carried as Amended****DESCRIPTION:** Modify ice house identification in the Tanana River drainage.**AMENDMENTS:** A registered ice house must have its permit numbers displayed on its side and on its roof in plainly visible numbers at least 12 inches high. Ice houses must be removed from the ice by April 30 except that the department may designate time, area, and other conditions on the permit.**DISCUSSION:** The board supported aligning ice house regulations in the Upper Tanana drainage with those in the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna drainage by clarifying the department's permitting authority. Use of permit numbers will allow enforcement easier access to registration information, helping to make individuals responsible for their personal items.**KUSKOKWIM AREA SALMON AND HERRING****Subsistence****PROPOSAL NO. 130****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Repeal subsistence fishing schedule above District W-1.**DISCUSSION:** Allowing subsistence fishing seven days per week stands contrary to the objectives of the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Rebuilding Plan. The board agreed that the burden of conservation toward rebuilding of the Kuskokwim River king and chum salmon fisheries should be shared among all users.**PROPOSAL NO. 131****ACTION: No Action****DESCRIPTION:** Repeal subsistence fishing schedule above District W-1.**DISCUSSION:** No action based on the action taken on proposal 130**PROPOSAL NO. 132****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Review subsistence fishing schedule in Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers.**DISCUSSION:** Board members saw no reason to remove the department's flexibility in managing these fisheries. The schedules are in place for conservation purposes, and the burden should be shared among all users. When run strength is great enough to meet escapement goals, the amounts necessary for subsistence and fisheries other than subsistence; the department does have the authority to lift the subsistence-fishing schedule.**PROPOSAL NO. 132A****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Review subsistence fishing schedule in Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers.**DISCUSSION:** Applying this change in regulation to the Kuskokwim River, board members referenced discussion and justification on proposal 132. The board believes it is very important to provide flexibility in the windows fishing schedule.**PROPOSAL NO. 133****ACTION: Carried as Amended****DESCRIPTION:** Relax subsistence fishing schedule in the Kuskokwim River.**AMENDMENTS:** Fishing periods may be altered, through emergency order, based on run strength and achieving escapement goals.

DISCUSSION: Board members recognized that the department needs flexibility under the Kuskokwim River Salmon Rebuilding Management Plan to direct this fishery. When there is sufficient abundance of chinook and chum salmon to meet escapement goals, amounts necessary for subsistence, and for other uses; the board supports providing subsistence fishing seven days per week without necessarily implementing a commercial salmon fishery.

PROPOSAL NO. 134

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Review subsistence fishing periods in the Kuskokwim River.

DISCUSSION: No action based on action taken on board proposal "I."

PROPOSAL NO. 135

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Allow use of any-colored buoy in the Calista-AVCP region.

AMENDMENTS: Any-colored buoy may be used throughout the entire Kuskokwim River drainage.

DISCUSSION: The current regulation is outdated as subsistence and commercial fishing no longer occurs simultaneously. Board members further noted the likely reduction in cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL NO. 136

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Increase allowable gillnet gear depth in the Kuskokwim area.

DISCUSSION: The board recognized that increasing gillnet depth would make subsistence fishers more efficient, which could lead to an increase in the harvest of king salmon. This increased efficiency is contrary to the objectives set for the Kuskokwim River Rebuilding Management Plan and may reward fishers who are currently using illegal gear.

PROPOSAL NO. 137

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Reduce gear, bag, season, etc. limits on rod and reel subsistence fishing in the Aniak River.

DISCUSSION: Due to the relatively easy access and high use of the Aniak River, board members expressed concern over the potential to overharvest if subsistence rod and reel limitations were eliminated. All Alaska residents are eligible to participate in Kuskokwim area subsistence fisheries, including hook and line subsistence fisheries.

Commercial

PROPOSAL NO. 138

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Consider boundary line changes in District W-4.

DISCUSSION: Changing this boundary line is likely to increase the number of tidal guts available to be fished at low water when fishing area is extremely limited, relieving congestion. The resulting increase in potential harvest may increase value to the fishery, attracting fishers back to the fishery. The board was convinced that interception of Kuskokwim stocks will not increase as a result of this change.

PROPOSAL NO. 139

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Change Goodnews Bay District W-5 boundary line.

DISCUSSION: Algal blooms have caused difficult for fishermen by clogging the nets within the bay. Tidal current adjacent to the entrance is free of algae, which may attract more fishers to participate in the fishery. Board members supported providing more area and opportunity for fishers where significant harvests of salmon bound for other areas were unlikely.

PROPOSAL NO. 140**ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Close commercial fishing until June 16 in District W-4.**DISCUSSION:** The value of fish from the first opening is often higher than later in the season and income generated from the fishery is important to the local economy. The board understood that in recent years, a harvestable surplus of salmon have been available in the district prior to June 16. When a conservation concern exists, the department can delay the opening.**PROPOSAL NO. 141****ACTION: Carried as Amended****DESCRIPTION:** Increase aggregate length of gillnets in districts W-4 and W-5.**AMENDMENTS:** The commissioner may, by emergency order, increase the length of set gillnet and drift gillnet to 100 fathoms when there is a harvestable surplus of salmon.**DISCUSSION:** In the event a harvestable surplus of salmon exists, board members supported increasing the amount of allowable gear to provide an opportunity for those fishers that participate to increase their catch and therefore, the value of their harvest.**PROPOSAL NO. 142****ACTION: Carried****DESCRIPTION:** Rescind Goodnews Bay herring superexclusive use area.**DISCUSSION:** Lifting the superexclusive designation will increase opportunity and participation. The board further stated that the resulting increase in harvest would be sufficient to attract a processor to the area, improving the local economy.**Sport****PROPOSAL NO. 143****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Restrict outboard motor use in the Kwethluk area.**DISCUSSION:** There is no information that indicates a biological concern exists or that habitat degradation is occurring from outboard or jet boat use in the Kwethluk River drainage. The board does not have authority to regulate solely on public safety issues.**PROPOSAL NO. 144****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Prohibit sport fishing in the Kwethluk River**DISCUSSION:** There is currently no biological concern for fishery resource in the Kwethluk River drainage. Board members explained their responsibility to provide for fishing opportunity when a harvestable surplus exists.**PROPOSAL NO. 145****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Align sport fish management with subsistence openings in Kuskokwim River.**DISCUSSION:** This concept would be detrimental to the sport fishing industry by significantly disrupting fisher's ability to schedule fishing opportunity. Recognizing that subsistence fishing has priority by virtue of first access to the fish in time and area, the board considered this is an issue of value systems.**PROPOSAL NO. 146****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Allow use of bait in the Kanektok River.**DISCUSSION:** Allowing the use of bait would be inconsistent with the Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan. The board further indicated that bait was eliminated in order to protect resident species from incidental catch.

PROPOSAL NO. 147**ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Institute Goodnews Bay controlled use area.**DISCUSSION:** There is no evidence of significant habitat damage and/or negative biological impacts to fish resulting from outboard or jet boat use in the Goodnews River drainage. The board does not have authority to regulate solely on public safety issues.**PROPOSAL NO. 148****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Adopt annual limit for chinook salmon in A-Y-K region.**DISCUSSION:** There is currently no conservation concern for king salmon stocks of the Kanektok, Goodnews, or Arolik rivers. The board indicated its intent to maximize angler opportunity in those fisheries that have the potential to fully utilize the available surplus.**PROPOSAL NO. 149****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Reduce bag limits for salmon in A-Y-K region.**DISCUSSION:** The board saw no reason remove these rivers from regulatory alignment with proximate river systems. There is currently no conservation concern for salmon stocks of the Kanektok, Goodnews, or Arolik rivers. The board members further stated its intent to maximize angler opportunity in those fisheries that have the potential to fully utilize the available surplus.**YUKON AREA SALMON****Subsistence****PROPOSAL NO. 150****ACTION: No Action****DESCRIPTION:** Update Toklat and Yukon River fall chum management plans in relation to new BEG analysis.**DISCUSSION:** No action based on the action taken on the Yukon River Fall Chum Action Plan, proposal D.**PROPOSAL NO. 151****ACTION: No Action****DESCRIPTION:** Modify Toklat escapement goal for chum salmon.**DISCUSSION:** No action based on the action taken on the Yukon River Fall Chum Action Plan, proposal D.**PROPOSAL NO. 152****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Relax subsistence salmon fishing schedule in the Yukon River.**DISCUSSION:** The board recognizes that management priorities are mandated to reach escapement and provide for subsistence fishers before other users. The language contained in this proposal, as written, would have no effect on management.**PROPOSAL NO. 153****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Craft subsistence management plans for sections of Yukon River.**DISCUSSION:** Time would be necessary to develop new plans where major management plans already exist. Multiple plans along the river would be difficult to use in different times and run strengths. The board recognized that the Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association would be a better forum to discuss these issues.**PROPOSAL NO. 154****ACTION: Failed**

DESCRIPTION: Reduce subsistence salmon fishing periods in districts 1-3.

DISCUSSION: The fishing schedules are in place for conservation purposes, and the burden should be shared among all users. This proposal was asked to be withdrawn but due to procedure it remained for deliberation.

PROPOSAL NO. 155

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Change subsistence salmon fishing periods in districts 3 and 4.

AMENDMENTS: In District 4, excluding the Koyukuk River drainage, in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C from June 15 through September 30, salmon may be taken for two 48-hour periods per week, established by emergency order; in District 4, excluding the Koyukuk River drainage, salmon may not be taken from 6:00 p.m. Sunday until 6:00 p.m. Tuesday; in Subdistrict 4-A, king salmon may be taken during the commercial fishing season, with drift gillnet gear only, for two 48-hour periods per week, established by emergency order.

DISCUSSION: Allowing subsistence fishing on weekends to accommodate those District 4 residents who work with limited seasonal employment provides subsistence fishers a reasonable opportunity to fish. Emergency openings are considered efficient in providing local fishermen greater opportunity to gain access to the fishing grounds.

PROPOSAL NO. 156

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Increase subsistence fishing periods in districts 6 and 5A.

AMENDMENTS: Established two 48-hour fishing periods per week in Subdistrict 5A. District 6 remains two 42-hour fishing periods per week.

DISCUSSION: Board members decided that allowing consistent subsistence fishing time on both sides of the Yukon River would simplify regulations and foster equity among users. Recognizing potential increased harvests in the Tanana River below the community of Nenana, board members spoke in favor of conservative management practices in areas near road access and decided not to alter the fishing periods in District 6.

PROPOSAL NO. 157

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Increase subsistence fishing periods in the Tanana River.

AMENDMENTS: Fishing periods established through September 30, unless modified by emergency order.

DISCUSSION: The board supported allowing additional subsistence fishing opportunity in times of harvestable surplus. The department reported that the bulk of the coho run had passed this fishery by September 30.

PROPOSAL NO. 158

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Change subsistence salmon fishing periods.

DISCUSSION: No action based on lack of legal authority of board.

PROPOSAL NO. 159

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify gillnet gear restrictions for Birch Creek.

DISCUSSION: Recognizing that the department does not have a thorough stock assessment of fish in Birch Creek, board members expressed concern over the potential to harvest large numbers of salmon and large, long-lived resident species.

PROPOSAL NO. 160

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Relax gear restrictions for subsistence fishing in the Koyukuk River drainage.

DISCUSSION: Fishers on the Koyukuk River are allowed to utilize four inch or smaller mesh size gillnets during salmon fishing closures to conserve salmon. The board considered the five salmon per day restriction unenforceable, as well as compromising to measures intended to conserve the salmon resource.

PROPOSAL NO. 161

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Allow drift gillnets in districts 4-B and 4-C.

DISCUSSION: Allowing the use of drift gillnets would change harvest trends as deeper nets may affect the stock composition of the run. The department stated implementing this proposal would be similar to establishing a new fishery because fisheries for each gear types are fully allocated; changing the gear type will change harvest composition and may change allocation throughout the river. Board members described drift nets as a highly effective non-traditional gear type that will likely displace traditional fisheries. Restricting the mesh size to seven inches was discussed by the board as a way to reduce selection of female salmon and improving the size and age class of escaping salmon. The board determined that gillnet use would potentially result in overharvest and recommended that additional studies of mesh size on the river be performed.

PROPOSAL NO. 162

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Allow drift gillnets in districts 4-B and 4-C.

DISCUSSION: The board determined that gillnet use would potentially result in overharvest based on the same arguments made in deliberation of proposal 161.

PROPOSAL NO. 163

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Allow drift gillnets in districts 4-B and 4-C.

DISCUSSION: No action taken based on the action taken on proposal 162.

PROPOSAL NO. 164

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Allow subsistence fishing in upper Koyukuk River.

AMENDMENTS: Defined fishing area upstream from the mouth of the North Fork of the Koyukuk River and added a permit requirement.

DISCUSSION: Board members recognized that opportunity could be extended to those fishers on the upper Koyukuk River who subsistence fish for whitefish, grayling, and suckers. Requiring a subsistence permit to participate in this fishery is intended minimize pressure from fishermen outside of the Koyukuk River, which could potentially lead to an increased harvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 165

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Close spawning streams to all fishing in the A-Y-K region.

DISCUSSION: This proposed fishing closure unnecessarily restricts fishing opportunity for subsistence and sport fishers without any biological or conservation reason cited. The board further recognized that the department does not have the resources to develop and monitor escapement goals on all tributary streams.

Commercial

PROPOSAL NO. 166

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Close the Yukon River to commercial salmon fishing until 2011.

DISCUSSION: This proposal would have a significant effect on the economy of the Yukon River. If there is an identifiable surplus above escapement requirement and subsistence needs, the state is

obligated to provide for other consumptive uses, including personal use, sport and commercial fishing opportunity.

PROPOSAL NO. 167**ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Develop management planning committees.**DISCUSSION:** Recognizing that development of individual plans would be complex for management, board members mentioned that groups such as advisory committees already exist to aid in facilitating conservation. The state is obligated to provide for other consumptive uses when an identifiable surplus above escapement requirements and subsistence needs are met.**PROPOSAL NO. 168****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Reallocate commercial harvests on the Yukon River.**DISCUSSION:** Board members expressed concern over limiting the commercially harvestable surplus and potentially reducing income from commercial fishing in the lower Yukon. Creating an inflexible harvest cap would undermine the board and department's obligation to provide opportunity if a harvestable surplus exists.**PROPOSAL NO. 169****ACTION: Carried as Amended****DESCRIPTION:** Modify restrictions on gear use in District 4-A.**AMENDMENTS:** Allow fishwheel permit holders to use either fishwheel or set gillnet gear, not concurrently.**DISCUSSION:** The board was concerned that drift fishing in channels would potentially shift the stock composition of the commercial harvest and allow fishers to target stocks traveling in areas of the river that are not normally susceptible to the gear types that are currently legal in Subdistrict 4A. By allowing more opportunity through the use of set gillnets, board members understand that fishers will be slightly more selective in the salmon harvested.**PROPOSAL NO. 170****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Prohibit roe stripping on the Yukon River.**DISCUSSION:** Board members established that a prohibition on the wanton waste of salmon currently exists. When there is a commercially harvestable surplus, there is potential for a targeted roe fishery, allowing for the carcass to be used or sold. Roe stripping is an important financial part of the commercial and subsistence fishery on the lower Yukon River.**PROPOSAL NO. 171****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Decrease mesh size in districts Y1 and Y2.**DISCUSSION:** Commercial gillnet gear restricted to a mesh size of six inches or smaller in Districts 1 and 2 would reduce the ability of managers to target king salmon, and likely result in an unacceptable high harvest of summer chum. The board expressed concern over this proposals anticipated affect on subsistence fishers up and down the river because it could impact conservation of summer chum salmon.**PROPOSAL NO. 172****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION:** Modify gillnet and fishwheel gear restrictions.**DISCUSSION:** Board members saw no reason to restrict fishwheel gear, noting that in order for a fishwheel to successfully catch fish, leads have to be engineered specific to the site, leads are changed depending on the target species, and leads have to hit the bottom. Enforcement of this regulation would be difficult to standardize.

Sport

PROPOSAL NO. 173

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Open Goodpaster River to Chinook salmon fishing.

DISCUSSION: Concerns were raised about the mortality associated with a catch and release fishery on a stock of concern. The board further indicated its concern over the potential large influx of fishers participating in this fishery as a result of newly available access to the Pogo mine.

PROPOSAL NO. 174

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Align sport fishery management with subsistence openings in Yukon River.

DISCUSSION: Board members agreed that this proposal would unnecessarily eliminate sport fishing opportunity. The subsistence schedule was designed to spread harvest and increase the quality of escapements, and was not intended to decrease subsistence harvests. Sport harvest levels of king salmon in the Yukon River are insignificant. When subsistence needs are not being met in an area, the department could close sport fishing in that area.

PROPOSAL NO. 255

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Create an Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Regional Stocked Waters Management Plan.

DISCUSSION: No action taken based on the action taken on proposal 107.

PROPOSAL NO. 256

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Create an Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Regional Arctic Grayling Management Plan.

DISCUSSION: No action taken based on the action taken on proposal 109.

PROPOSAL NO. A

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Expand area open to commercial fishing in the cape Romanzof Herring District.

DISCUSSION: By opening the entire Cape Romanzof herring district to commercial fishing, fishers will be allowed to actively fish throughout the area aiding the fishers in harvesting the allowable harvest.

STOCKS OF CONCERN

Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers

PROPOSAL NO. B

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Yukon River Chinook Salmon Action Plan

DISCUSSION: The Yukon River chinook salmon stock continues to meet the definition of a yield concern based on low harvest levels for the years of 1998 through 2002. Although the subsistence harvest continues to remain relatively stable, conservative management actions have considerably reduced commercial harvests to meet escapement and subsistence needs. The board heard considerable opposition to the lowering of escapement goals but determined that the department's recommended sustainable escapement goals would not negatively affect the chinook fishery nor affect subsistence fishing harvest and opportunity. The department plans to engage in a structured dialogue with interested parties, regarding the methods and data used in establishing escapement goals in the A-Y-K region.

PROPOSAL NO. C**ACTION: Carried****DESCRIPTION:** Yukon River Summer Chum Action Plan

DISCUSSION: The Yukon River summer chum salmon stock continues to meet the definition of a management concern based upon escapement goals generally not being met during the past five years, despite specific management actions taken to provide for escapement. Subsistence and commercial harvests from 1999 through 2003 were significantly below recent averages. The department reported that analysis of the Anvik River spawner-recruit data suggested that the goal should range from 350,000 to 700,000. These recommended escapement goal changes will not have a negative influence on the subsistence fisher to meet needs or opportunity to harvest. The board noted that many of the proposals deliberated were considered river-wide or across salmon species. Proposals considered under the chinook salmon action plan were believed to have also addressed summer chum salmon issues.

PROPOSAL NO. D**ACTION: Carried****DESCRIPTION:** Yukon River Fall Chum Action Plan

DISCUSSION: The board agreed to modify the Yukon River Fall Chum Management Plan to incorporate elements of the Toklat River Fall Chum Plan and to align the management triggers with the department's biological escapement goals for Toklat fall chum salmon (15,000-33,000) and drainage-wide fall chum salmon (300,000-600,000). This will provide for subsistence fishing opportunity at a lower run size. Commercial fishing drainage-wide will not be allowed until the run is projected to be greater than 600,000 fish. The Toklat River Fall Chum Salmon Rebuilding Management Plan was repealed. The Tanana River Salmon Management Plan was altered to remove restrictions requiring no more than 42-hours of commercial fishing per week after August 15, allowing for increased commercial opportunity and management flexibility. The Yukon River fall salmon stock continues to meet the definition of a yield concern based on low harvest levels for the years of 1998 through 2002. Combined commercial and subsistence harvests show a substantial decrease in fall chum salmon yield from the ten-year period of 1989 to 1998 to the recent five-year average. The department further recommended that the Toklat and Fishing Branch River stocks be removed from the additional designation of management concerns, but keep within the Yukon River chinook action plan. Additional portions of this plan were covered under the chinook and summer chum salmon action plans.

PROPOSAL NO. H**ACTION: Carried as Amended****DESCRIPTION:** Kuskokwim River Chinook and Chum Action Plan**AMENDMENT:** Provide a guideline harvest level for sockeye salmon of 0-50,000.

DISCUSSION: The department recommended continuation of the stock of concern classification for the Kuskokwim River chinook and chum salmon stocks as yield concerns. The 2002 and 2003 chinook and chum salmon runs provided the opportunity for all Kuskokwim River subsistence fishers to achieve amounts necessary for subsistence. However, there was no identified surplus of chinook salmon and there were very low numbers of chum salmon available for commercial harvest from 1999 to 2001. The department has undertaken a review of escapement goals for several Kuskokwim River chinook and chum salmon stocks where long-term escapement data exist that enable the development of SEGs based on analysis consistent with the escapement goal policy. Board members supported providing a guideline harvest level of 0-50,000 sockeye salmon during prosecution of the Kuskokwim River June and July commercial salmon fishery. These recommended escapement goal changes are not expected to have a negative influence on the subsistence fisher to meet needs or opportunity to harvest.

PROPOSAL NO. I**ACTION: Carried**

DESCRIPTION: Provide commissioner emergency order authority to establish subsistence fishing closures.

DISCUSSION: Board members recognized that a means was available to provide additional subsistence fishing opportunity on the lower Kuskokwim River. The board has provided the commissioner emergency order authority to establish subsistence fishing closures around commercial fishing periods in the District 1 subdistrict, in portions of waters adjacent to the subdistrict open to commercial fishing.

PROPOSAL NO. J**ACTION: Carried**

DESCRIPTION: Customary and traditional subsistence uses and amounts necessary for subsistence uses for Yukon River fall chum.

DISCUSSION: The board considered this a housekeeping proposal that corrected an error in the codified Yukon fall chum finding, changing 167,100 fall chum to 167,900 fall chum.

**KOTZEBUE AND NORTON SOUND-PORT CLARENCE AREAS, SALMON AND HERRING
Subsistence****PROPOSAL NO. 120****Action: Carried as amended**

DESCRIPTION: Expand area requiring a subsistence fishing permit in the Port Clarence and Norton Sound districts.

AMENDMENTS: A subsistence salmon fishing permit is required as follows: In the Port Clarence District: Residents of communities in this district where the department has approved a harvest assessment project by April 15 of each year will be exempt from the permit requirements in this subsection for that year...In the Norton Sound District: all waters from Rocky Point to Bald Point. Residents of communities where the department has approved a harvest assessment project by April 15 of each year will be exempt from the permit requirement in this subsection for that year...In the Port Clarence District, the annual harvest limit for the Pilgram River drainage including Salmon Lake is 50 salmon of which no more can be 40 sockeye salmon, and no more than 10 can be chinook or coho salmon.

DISCUSSION: The board committee supported the proposal as amended. The department reminded the board that starting a subsistence fishing permit for the Nome Subdistrict would help count chum salmon in the various rivers throughout the Nome Subdistrict more accurately. One concern of residents and organizations in the Nome Subdistrict is the accuracy of the count of chum salmon by the department because of the current steady decline of chum salmon. The board and committee participants all agreed that Kawerak and the department need to work together to get a more accurate count of chum salmon.

PROPOSAL NO. 121**ACTION: No Action**

DESCRIPTION: Require a subsistence permit in Niukluk River.

DISCUSSION: No action was taken due to action taken on the Norton Sound Subdistricts 2 and 3 Action Plan and proposal 120.

PROPOSAL NO. 122**ACTION: Failed**

DESCRIPTION: Limit length of set nets to 150 feet in the Port Clarence District.

DISCUSSION: Department stated that the residents of Teller object to having residents who are not from Teller coming in with longer nets and fishing in the same area they fish.

Commercial

PROPOSAL NO. 123

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Allow herring bait fishery during CDQ crab fishery.

AMENDMENTS: In the Norton Sound District, herring may be taken only as follows: In subdistricts 1 - 6 from July 1 through November 15 (food and bait season); in subdistrict 7 from June 15 through November 15 (food and bait season).

DISCUSSION: The board stated that the herring fishery would benefit the crab fishery as it would provide the crab fishery with fresh bait. The board noted support from the Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee.

Sport

PROPOSAL NO. 124

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Close all sport fishing when subsistence fishing is closed in Norton Sound.

DISCUSSION: The department informed the board that they oppose the proposal because there is no biological reason to close sport fishing for species of salmon or resident fish that are not affected by a subsistence closure. The department stated that as written the proposal would close sport fishing for all species whenever there was any subsistence closure in the area or time period. The department of law informed the board enforcing the proposed regulations would be difficult because it would be hard to prove what species sport fishermen are targeting. Kawerak, on the other hand, was concerned about the catch of non-target species by sport fishers targeting species other than those affected by a subsistence closure. Kawerak suggested amending the proposal so that when there was a subsistence closure for salmon, sport fishing would be closed for all salmon species, but remain open for resident species.

PROPOSAL NO. 125

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Require harvest records for sport fishing in Norton Sound.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that the correction on accurate count of fish need to be done. The accuracy is in the record keeping and that sport fish harvest are documented by the statewide harvest survey and they believe it is adequate for management purposes in the Nome Subdistrict.

PROPOSAL NO. 126

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Reduce bag and possession limit for salmon in Unalakleet River drainage.

AMENDMENTS: In the Unalakleet River drainage, the bag and possession limit for salmon, other than king salmon, is ten fish per day, of which only four, in combination, may be coho, chum, or sockeye salmon.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that a combined daily limit of four salmon (other than king) would not restrict fishermen. The Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee support this amended proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 127

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Reduce bag limit for chinook salmon in the Unalakleet River drainage.

AMENDMENTS: The bag and possession limit for king salmon is two fish, of which only one may be greater than 20 inches.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that keeping the catch for king salmon low would help increase the stock for future and that the current limit will have no biological impact on the population.

PROPOSAL NO. 128

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Restrict time when guides can operate in the Unalakleet River drainage.

AMENDMENTS: In the Unalakleet River drainage, guided sport fishing is permitted only from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays during June 1 to June 30, and August 1 through September 30.

DISCUSSION: The residents of Unalakleet believe that having the sport fishermen fish 24 hours, seven days a week was too much. A local lodge and the Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee came to an agreement that the time, day and month of sport fishing would work for all. The board stated that this proposal would possibly eliminate guides and economic opportunities in that region.

PROPOSAL NO. 129

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Institute annual limit for chinook salmon in the Unalakleet River drainage.

AMENDMENTS: In the Unalakleet River drainage, the annual limit is four king salmon greater than 20 inches in length, of which only two may be taken in the North River. A nontransferable harvest record is required and must be in the possession of each person taking a king salmon while sport fishing in the Unalakleet River drainage; for each licensed angler a harvest record appears on the back of the of the anglers sports fishing license; for nonresidents anglers under the age of 16 that are not required to possess a sport fishing license a harvest record may be obtained from the local area offices and license vendors in the Unalakleet area. In addition, as a means to actively manage the sport fishery to obtain escapement goals the commissioner may, by emergency order modify the bag and possession limits and methods and means with any one or a combination of the following restrictions: A) reduce the bag and possession limits; B) designate the fishery as catch-and-release; C) reduce the annual limit; and D) modify other methods and means.

DISCUSSION: The proposed annual limit will only reduce harvest by approximately 4 percent. The department stated that there is no need for a different annual limit in North River than the rest of the drainage. The board noted that the Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee supports the proposal. See also Proposal G, Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6 Chinook Salmon Action Plan.

STOCKS OF CONCERN

Norton Sound—Port Clarence Area

PROPOSAL E

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Norton Sound Subdistrict 1 Chum Salmon Action Plan

DISCUSSION: During the board committee meeting the escapement plan was discussed at great length. The department and representatives from Kawerak agreed that working together they would get a more accurate count of chinook and chum salmon escapements. The department recommended that the existing escapement plan continue to be used; this decision was also supported by the committee and full board. The board would like to see the escapement plan continued as is to see if the chum salmon will increase to a sustainable level.

Action Plan Option 1: Require subsistence permits in Subdistrict 1

AMENDMENT: A subsistence salmon fishing permit is required in the Norton Sound District: all waters from Cape Douglas to Rocky Point.

DISCUSSION: The board committee and department support option 1. The department stated that once the permitting process is started and continued a more accurate count of the salmon in the various rivers in the Nome Subdistrict will be done. The department also stated that the subsistence permit will help document the salmon harvest as no documentation is presently done.

Action Plan Option 2: Repeal 5 AAC 01.190(2)(c) specifying that pink salmon may only be taken with gillnets with a mesh size of 4.5 inches or less

DISCUSSION: The board and department support option 2. The department stated that management measures have fishing available to all fishers and the reduced net size will not harm the chinook and chum salmon as they would not be caught in the small mesh nets. The department also stated that this eliminates confusion because pink salmon can be taken with other gillnets and beach seines.

PROPOSAL F

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Norton Sound Subdistricts 2 and 3 Chum Salmon Action Plan

Chum salmon yield concerns are from the existing escapement for the Fish River, Niukluk River, Boston Creek, Kwiniuk River, and Tubutulik River.

DISCUSSION: The board committee and department support designating chum salmon in this area as a yield concern. The department stated that three rivers are counted through use of a weir and counting towers and the counts are of high concern because of the low fish counts for these rivers. The board asked if the counts are accurate even with the high waters, muddy waters and amount of debris on the river. The department noted that even with poor conditions for stock assessments, counting is more accurate than aerial surveys. The department informed the board that it is confident that escapement goals would be met using current enumeration methods. The department also stated that when the residents of Nome leave their district and go to other districts to fish, their fish catches are not counted or recorded. When the subsistence fishing permit starts then they will be counted and a more accurate counting system will be in place.

Action Plan Option 1: Require subsistence permits in Subdistrict 2 and 3

AMENDMENT: A subsistence salmon fishing permit is required as follows: in the Norton Sound District: all waters from Rocky Point to Bald Point.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that the subsistence permit will help document the salmon harvest.

PROPOSAL G

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6 Chinook Salmon Action Plan

DISCUSSION: This is a new designation of a stock of concern at the yield level. Discussion included poor returns, historical run strength, and management options for the department.

Action Plan Option 1: Provide EO authority to restrict subsistence gillnet mesh size and to close fishing with gillnets while allowing beach seines.

DISCUSSION: This action was seen as allowing subsistence opportunity on more abundant species while giving the department options to respond to low chinook abundance.

Action Plan Option 2: Coordinate commercial and sport fish restrictions to conserve chinook salmon.

AMENDMENT: As a means to actively manage the sport fishery to obtain escapement goals the commissioner may, by emergency order modify the bag and possession limits and methods and means with any one or a combination of the following restrictions: A) reduce the bag and possession limits; B) designate the fishery as catch-and-release; C) reduce the annual limit; and D) modify other methods and means.

DISCUSSION: By providing additional tools to restrict the sport fishery, the department will be able to continue to conserve chinook salmon. See also proposal 129.