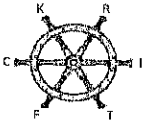


# Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Mike Williams, Sr., Chairman  
Nick Kameroff, Jr., Vice Chairman  
Charlene Erik, Secretary

"Working together to ensure our people and fish  
remain healthy"

Steering Towards a



Better Tomorrow

August 24, 2015

The Honorable Sam Cotten  
Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Commissioner Cotten:

This letter presents some resolvable challenges that Kuskokwim River Drainage Tribes and communities experienced during the 2015 fishing season. We also present some expectations for working with the ADF&G and the BOF.

Effective Kuskokwim Fisheries In-season Management will require collaboration and expedient decision-making between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and the Kuskokwim River Drainage Tribes and rural residents. During the 2015 fishing season, the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) manager established the Kuskokwim Fisheries In-season Management Team (KFIMT) for the purpose of working together to manage our Kuskokwim Fisheries. We also invited the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area manager to participate. Refuge and KRITFC managers agreed upon a conservative plan that sought to achieve or exceed the mid-point of the Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon escapement goal. This plan also authorized cultural harvest permits to distribute the negotiated amount of 7000 Chinook salmon among 32 Kuskokwim River Drainage communities.

The ADF&G Kuskokwim Area manager supported the plan, but he asserted that decisions regarding the allocation of fish must be made by the Alaska Board of Fish (BOF). Because the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area manager lacked the authority and tools necessary to enter into agreements regarding the allocation of fish, several frustrated communities above Aniak in state managed waters were forced to endure unnecessary and unequal harvest restrictions. During the 2015 fishing season, the KRITFC's goal was to begin rebuilding our declining Chinook salmon populations while providing each Tribe and community with an equal opportunity to harvest some Chinook. It was not then and will never be our goal to divide our people. We are a sharing culture.

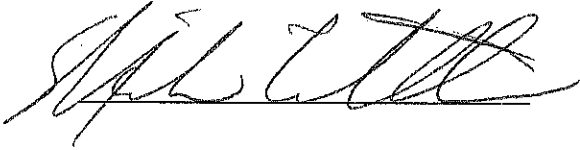
To ensure that that the ADF&G is able to enter into collaborative agreements with Refuge and KRITFC managers regarding the allocation of fish when restrictive allocations are necessary to rebuild the population of any Kuskokwim fish species, we expect the following three actions to occur. First, the KRITFC expects that the ADF&G will work with the USFWS and the KRITFC to draft and enter into a MOU for the purpose of formalizing a collaborative partnership to manage Kuskokwim Fisheries. Second, we expect that the BOF will work with Kuskokwim River Drainage Tribes and communities to ensure the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area manager possesses the authority and tools necessary to allocate fish equally between communities in state managed waters for the purpose of providing subsistence opportunities when restrictive measures are necessary to rebuild fisheries. Finally, we expect that the ADF&G Kuskokwim Area manager will meaningfully engage in negotiations with other KFIMT Partners to reach

an agreement on the total number of any fish species to be distributed among our 32 Kuskokwim River Drainage communities when restrictive allocations are necessary.

We look forward to working together with the ADF&G to ensure our people and fish remain healthy.

Sincerely,

Mike Williams, Sr., KRITFC Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Williams, Sr.", written over a horizontal line.

Nick Kameroff, KRITFC Vice-Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Kameroff", written over a horizontal line.