



Bristol Bay Science And Research Institute

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 12, 2020

To: Alaska Board of Fisheries members
Glenn Haight, Executive Director, Alaska Board of Fisheries

From: Michael Link, Executive Director, BBSRI, and Project Manager, Stakeholder-led study team
Jeff Regnart, Policy Analyst and Senior Technical Advisor, BBSRI
Tom Brookover, Senior Technical Advisor, BBSRI

Re: Update on the Special Committee to Examine the Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Fishery Management Plan

This letter is to update the Board on progress and schedule for the committee work to address the Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan. We represent the leadership of a stakeholder-led study team committed to work with the fishery's stakeholders to identify options for a comprehensive solution to modifying the Plan.

Origins of the Committee

At the December 2018 Bristol Bay Finfish meeting the Board, in response to two proposals to modify the Nushagak-Mulchatna Chinook Salmon Management plan (5AAC 06.361), took the following actions:

- removed several triggers in the Plan that affect the sport fishery, which would provide managers greater flexibility in dealing with sometimes inaccurate escapement information,
- tabled #41 and #42 (paired closures of sport and commercial fisheries),
- created a special Board committee to develop a comprehensive solution to the Plan through RC 84 (Ruffner) and the charge statement (2018-291-FB), and
- charged the committee with reporting back to the full board at its statewide meeting in March 2020 (15 months).

Stakeholder-led Study Team

Also, at the 2018 Bristol Bay meeting the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute (BBSRI)¹ committed to supporting the committee's work through a stakeholder-led technical analysis of options the committee was expected to consider (RC80; Link).

¹ *The Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute (BBSRI) is a regional non-profit research organization founded in 1998. Our mission is to conduct applied research and monitoring to improve the well-being of residents of Bristol Bay, Alaska with an emphasis on the Bay's fish stocks and fisheries.*

Vision for the Process and Schedule

At first, it was envisioned that a consensus-based comprehensive solution would emerge from the committee and study team in time for consideration at the Board's state-wide meeting in March 2020.

Concerns from the public relayed to committee members about insufficient time for public vetting of any proposals coming from the committee work (expected in Jan-Feb 2020) ultimately led to the work schedule and product deliverables sliding by ~1 year. The original author of proposals 41 and 42 (Dec. 2019), who is on the committee concurred with this change in schedule. With this change, the committee's work products would now be released prior to an April 2021 proposal deadline and be considered at the next in-cycle Bristol Bay meeting (Dec. 2021).

Committee Meetings

The full committee (minus departed Ruffner) met in Anchorage on October 21, 2019 (October 15-16, 2020 Work Session Board packet item #4 and 5) to get underway and present preliminary analyses of the fishery's history and technical challenges associate with monitoring and managing the fishery. Break-out groups of subsets of the full committee met with the study team in December 2019 (Anchorage; sport/commercial) and February 2020 (Dillingham; commercial, subsistence, sport). COVID-19 precluded an in-person meeting for the entire group scheduled for April 2020 (King Salmon). These committee meetings provided much for the study team to examine.

Disbanding of the Formal Committee, February 2020

At the Board's Upper Cook Inlet meeting in February 2020, the Board disbanded the formal committee and made it clear that they encouraged stakeholders on the committee to continue to work together in preparation for the next in-cycle Bristol Bay Board meeting in 2021.

In addition, BBSRI reasserted its commitment to serving the committee and moving toward its original mission outlined in the charge statement – a comprehensive solution to the Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan.

Toward that end, the we refer to the committee hereafter as all those who were selected by the Board in February 2019, minus the two Board members. We have not added nor subtracted any of the public from this committee.

Committee Work Products Prior to April 2021

The study team is drafting components of a comprehensive report for the remains of the committee in draft form January 2021. Subsequently, the committee will meet one or more times in preparation of possible producing one or more proposals for the next in-cycle Bristol Bay Board meeting. Work products from this process will be available to the public prior to the April 2021 call for proposals. We are aware that the timing of the next Bristol Bay meeting could be impacted by COVID-19 and if so, we may adjust schedules accordingly.