

Lower Kuskokwim Advisory Committee November 30, 2020 Teleconference

- I. Call to Order: [Time] by Phillip Peter Sr
- II. Roll Call
Members Present: Phillip Peter Sr., Earl Samuelson Sr., Jackson Williams Sr., John Andrew, George Alexie, James Nicholai

Members Absent: William “Charlie” Brown, Phillip Nicholas, George Berry, Richard Larson Sr., Henry Parks, Nick R. Henry, Nelson Napoka, James Charles
Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 6
- III. Fish and Game Staff Present: Patrick Jones, Keith Oster, Charity Lehman, Kristy Tibbles, David Runfola, Sean Larson, Nicholas Smith, Todd Rinaldi,
- IV. Guests Present: YKD NWR Aaron Moses, Togiak NWR Kenton Mose, AVCP Jennifer Hooper, translator Pat Samson, AVCP Paige Jones, Janet Bavilla
- V. Invocation by James Nicholai
- VI. Approval of Agenda: Earl Samuelson Sr. asks for a moment of silence for late Sandra Nicori. Earl Samuelson Sr. moves to accept agenda as is. Jackson Williams Sr. Seconds. Yes is unanimous. 6 Aye, 0 Nay.
- VII. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes. Feb. 17, 2020. Earl Samuelson Sr. moves to approve of previous meeting minutes Feb. 17, 2020. John Andrew seconds. 6 Aye, 0 nay.
- VIII. Reports – See Appendix A as noted for additional discussion.
 - a. Chair’s report. No report.
 - b. ADF&G
 - A. Report on salmon fishery update given by Sean Larson. Brief update on how our salmon runs came in this year. The preliminary total run estimate for Chinook salmon is about 116,000 fish. This was below average and of those about 88,000 of those escaped fisheries and ended up on the spawning grounds. Spawning escapement fell within our escapement goals 65,000 to 120,000. (See Appendix A for full report and additional discussion.)

Phillip Peter Sr. - I want to make a short comment concerning about subsistence fishing in our river, Kuskokwim. We been not doing good this summer on the Chinook and I know that, I know we have late run on Chinook. And when I tested out on the second week of July with my king net, one drift in 15 minutes, I catch 15 Chinook in the river when the State of Alaska take over from the Federal. And I got really upset because we're too much concentrating on the Chinook, what about rest of the salmon like Sockeye, Chum. So we need to do something because we've been idling for all 2 or 3 weeks and when the first of July comes up we're having problem with rain and the bug season. We're idling for long time, too much concentration on Chinook. I heard we had pretty good escapements at 168,000 good number for all the tributaries. Maybe, if we're going to plan for upcoming season for 2021, lets not concentrate too much on Chinook, we need other salmon too and I heard good numbers on Sockeye escapements but those chums were really low this year so I urge when we're having a meeting lets not concentrate too much on Chinook, concentrate on other species for subsistence. I really appreciate it if we do like that, we need to work together to help each other on this fishing for subsistence, thank you.

Jackson Williams Sr. - I have a comment on the one you mention, chum. You know what it was last year or two years ago we had a climate kind of heat wave that we had. It might have changed a little bit of chum around the Kuskokwim, because when I go Bethel, I don't know how many times I went. I used to see seagulls in the river and when I check there was dead chum. Might be the climate affecting some of these fish too, also. That's all I got, thank you.

John Andrew- I can echo what Phillip brought out, same way with Jackson because everyone that lives on the river sees that. This summer has been pretty hard. Our area this management system is pretty lopsided because most of the time downriver from Tuluksak it's wide open upriver from Kalskag and above can fish anytime all week long whereas we have hardly an openings down here. The burden of concentration down in my area, our area, when they get way up there they get really liberal with the fishing time and then like Phillip said we saw late run of Chinook and jacks. Same way with reds, but reds were pretty healthy. Chums hardly any this summer, maybe couple times. Covid been hitting us pretty hard, food security is a pretty high issue too all of us at the villages. And for me, I gave away practically all my fish away, mostly to my relatives and anybody that asks me I give them some fish. And it was same way when season over I still give away like white fish and Sheefish and I been helping out relatives that need fish. I rarely get to keep any even if I get to go fish, most of my fish always end up to other people at the

community. It's very hardship, compared to other years because of the closures, in some villages, maybe all of them, for people that don't have someone to go fish for them, they're having a very hard time. Even we save some we always still end up giving and sharing to the community. Thank you.

Earl Samuelson Sr. – Going back to the salmon, chum salmon again. Chum Salmon what we saw two years ago we had that really hot summer, question for Fish and Game folks, are we looking at a projection at an even worse year yet to come? Or what are you guys forecasting the cycle of that year?

Sean Larson - We do not have our forecast put together yet. We'll be doing that this March and that will be shared to the wider group, I can say our forecasts, at least for King Salmon, heavily influenced by the prior year run so it's not going to be an incredibility high forecast but I can't say at this point what it's going to be. Thank you.

Earl Samuelson, Sr.– I think we should start talking about that, because, we seen the fish out there. More and more people are becoming reliant on the chum salmon as we can see with all these Chinook restrictions. I know we once relied on the Chinook salmon in this region very heavily but with low numbers and restrictions, I can see we've kind of focused on the chum salmon so with that disaster we might have trouble, probably in couple more years when that fish cycle comes back. No other questions.

James Nicolai - This is for ADF &G, since this moratorium has started, there has been Chinook, has the escapement on the Chinook gone to a point where it's high, medium, low still? We've been having this five year moratorium on Chinook for last I don't know five or six years now and on the lower mouth of the Kuskokwim here, I know we've been having a hard time. It takes a toll on us when we're trying to follow the moratorium, some days we just can't go out because we have to go 120 miles round trip at times to get what we need. Has the chinook levels, are they at the high level, medium level, low level since the moratorium has started, that's my question.

Sean Larson - 2019 was on a high level, or towards the upper end of the escapements we've seen in the past, you know couple decades so that was a good thing, but 2020 we were expecting another fairly large year but it came in more middle ground, kind of closer to more average escapements so not particularly low but closer to average and that's also more in line with what we were seeing 2017-18. Thank you.

James Nicholai - thank you very much another question here, since this closures have been, it's more like middle and the upper Kuskokwim has been open more since this moratorium has started and sometimes we wait patiently to open the lower Kuskokwim from the Johnson River on down, or Kailik on down and then when that doesn't happen, we have to Quinhagak area to do our Chinook Salmon, and is there, will there be more, I don't like to say the resistance, but will there be more openings on the Lower Kuskokwim after all the Chinook has passed up to the Middle and Upper Kuskokwim Area? It's more like we need more openers down on the mouth when all those salmon have gone upstream even in closed on down river mouth of the Kuskokwim and we wait patiently for two or three weeks and the people out here get restless. When they do that, they want to break the law but they have to follow the guidelines that we've been set forth so, you know maybe we need to sit down and meet with the guys, with ADF&G and discuss this more on how the opening on the subsistence on the lower part would be. I know there are a lot of people that are interested in this discussion, but maybe I'll leave it at that for now.

- B. Dave Runfola with Subsistence Division, update on projects that were postponed due to Covid-19. (See Appendix A for full report)
- C. Patrick Jones with the Division Wildlife Conservation update on moose.
- D. Todd Rinaldi with Department Wildlife Conservation, update on Mulchatna Caribou Herd. (See Appendix A for full report and discussion)

c. Others

- IX. Public Comment – None.
- X. Old Business – None.
- XI. New Business – Officer Elections. Phillip Peter, Sr re-elected as chair, John Andrews re-elected as vice chair, Nelson Napoka re-elected as Secretary. Member of the public Janet Bavilla to take minutes for this meeting in Nelson's absence. (See Appendix A for full discussion)
- XII. Set next meeting date: At the call of the chair.
- XIII. Other. Earl Samuelson Sr.- I want to thank all of you, I know this is difficult, hard to get everybody all around online with a pandemic going around area and statewide. This was definitely a learning process for all of us. So, good job, for all the participation and trying to be safe so thank you very much.

William Jackson Sr. – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Earl Samuelson Sr. –I know we lost a very important member, Sandra. I want to see if the Board would recognize her through something, send her family a nice thank you letter or plaque or something for her really fine work on this board.

Charity Lehman– Absolutely, thank you for bringing that up, and I actually talked with the Executive Director Board of Game Kristy Tibbles, and she has sent Sandra’s family something on behalf of Board Support.

John Andrew – Thank you very much and I appreciate that, I appreciate what you guys are doing.

Alaska Board of Game Central & Southwest Region Meeting Proposals January 22-29, 2021 Wasilla, AK			
Proposal Number	Proposal Description		
Support, Support as Amended, Oppose, No Action	Number Support	Number Oppose	Comments, Discussion (list Pros and Cons), Amendments to Proposal, Voting Notes
<i>Note: Effective September 2019, when abstentions occur, the action or decision of a majority of the remaining members at a meeting at which a quorum is present is an act of the committee. For example, a vote tally of 7-6-2 means the motion carries. Members abstaining from voting must provide an explanation that is included in the committee record.</i>			
19	Establish new population and harvest objectives for the Mulchatna caribou herd in Units 9, 17, 18, and 19 as follows		
Support	6	0	Earl Samuelson Sr. motions, William Jackson Sr. seconds. Support as is.
20	Establish Tier II subsistence hunting season and bag limit for the Mulchatna caribou herd (MCH)		
Support	6	0	Earl Samuelson Sr. motions, William Jackson Sr. seconds. Support. Note, make a household permit.
21	Establish a second predation control area for Mulchatna caribou on federal lands in Game Management Units 17 and 18		
Support	6	0	Earl Samuelson Sr. motions, John Andrew seconds. Support as is.

