

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

**May 28, 2025**

On Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, the KRSMWG meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. and adjourned at 04:30 p.m. Meeting time was approximately 7 hours and 30 minutes. A quorum was established with 8 voting members. Barb Carlson and Lamont Albertson chaired the meeting. This meeting was the first Working Group meeting of the season. Primary themes were centered around the front-end closures and schedule of subsistence openings and Working Group business including elections.

## **PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:** *Audio for this update begins at 24:10 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25*

- Dan Esai, Working Group member, speaks about salmon runs and management strategies.
- Paul Cleveland reminded participants that June 1-July 15 subsistence fishing in Quinhagak is restricted to one net per boat and no fishing on Sundays. *Audio for this update begins at 28:57 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
- Kevin Whitworth, Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) is celebrating 10-year anniversary, describes the history of the KRITFC, advertises the KRITFC teleconference. *Audio for this update begins at 30:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
- Martin Andrew discusses Federal court case injunction, prohibiting state from counteracting federal announcements.
- Chair asks for subsistence fishing reports from meeting participants. *Audio for this update begins at 42:30 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

## **AGENDA ITEMS AND SUMMARY INFORMATION:**

### **A. 2024 Season Recap (Sean Larson, ADF&G)**

- *Audio for this update begins at 45:45 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
- Sean Larson, ADF&G, reviewed the results of last year's assessment. Project results from 2024 can be found on pages 4-10 of the meeting packet.
- Chinook salmon total run size was estimated at 170,000 with an estimated drainage wide escapement of 143,000.

### **B. 2025 Forecast** Chinook salmon are forecast to have a run size between 136,000-217,000 in 2025. Pages 11-12 of the meeting packet. *Audio for this update begins at 57:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

- Discussion of assessment projects- aerial surveys, sonar. *Audio for this update begins at 1:01:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*  
*Break 1:17*

### **C. 2025 Assessment projects:**

- Sean Larson, ADF&G, lists assessment projects that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be operating during the 2025 summer season. Page 2 of the meeting packet. *Audio for this update begins at 1:28:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
  - Projects include sonar, George, Kogrukluuk and Tatlawiksuk river weirs, aerial surveys, Telaquana River Weir (NPS), Bethel Test fish discontinued.
    - Discussion of Kuskokwim sonar project fish distribution. *Audio for this update begins at 1:31:30 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
  - ONC
    - *Audio for this update begins at 1:39:45 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
    - Jacob Wade, ONC, speaks about Harvest surveys at fish camps and the Bethel boat harbor, Ichthyophonous sampling, fish distribution, chum otolith sampling.

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- Discussion about surveys, Ichthyophonous sampling. *Audio for this update begins at 1:45:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

- NVN

- *Audio for this update begins at 1:49:40 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
- Dan Gillikin, NVN, speaks about the George River outgoing smolt project, partnerships with Owl Ridge and Donlin Gold, Aniak test fishery, Salmon River weir (AYKSSI) and camera-based monitoring project, hydrokinetic turbine near Aniak (UAF).
  - Discussion about camera-based monitoring project.

- USFWS

- *Audio for this update begins at 2:12:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
- Nate Akers, USFWS, speaks about Kwethluk outgoing smolt project.
  - Discussion about Kwethluk outmigration.

- KRITFC

- *Audio for this update begins at 2:25:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
- Kevin Whitworth, KRITFC, speaks on KRITFC projects planned for this summer: harvest monitoring, partnerships with ONC, Takotna Weir (AYKSSF), genetics, ocean salmon projects, drone counting projects (Kwethluk 2024, Salmon River 2025), water temperature monitoring.

## D. 2025 Fishery Management:

- **USFWS and KRITFC, Sections 1-3 management actions discussion.** *Audio for this update begins at 2:31:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
  - Spencer Rearden, USFWS and Kevin Whitworth, KRITFC, speaks about the Federal special action based on conservation concerns for Chinook, chum and coho salmon, and Section 1-3 management decisions including the front-end closure, the first announced fishing opportunities, the escapement goal and forecast uncertainty.
  - Aaron Moses, USFWS. Speaks about the first federal announcement. *Audio for this update begins at 2:58:26.*

## Lunch break

- **ADF&G Management, Subsistence Sections 4, 5 Discussion on Specific Management Actions:**
  - *Audio for this update begins at 3:07:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
    - Sam Decker presents ADF&G recommendations for fishery management actions in the state waters of the Kuskokwim River.
    - **Date to begin front end closure in Sections 4 and 5**
      - Discussion
      - Motion to support June 9<sup>th</sup> start date of front end closure
    - **Tributary management and Aniak Box**

Discussion of Chinook retention within Aniak box, Aniak River and Ohut River. There is a discussion about the low population and fishing effort in Subsistence Sections 4 and 5. Motion made to support the announcement as proposed. *Motion passed (Unanimous)*

      - **Sport Fishing:** Regulations provided for reference, Pages 13-15 in the meeting packet. *EO in place to close chinook retention by Sport fish. Audio for this*

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update begins at 3:18:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.

- *Discussion of Kwethluk regulations, State and Federal Agency interactions.* A motion is made that KRSMWG recommend that ADF&G will refrain from issuing any fishing regulations for the Kuskokwim River that contradict or otherwise in conflict with federal regulations or that might cause confusion with subsistence users along the river. (passed 6:1). *Meeting Audio: 3:33:18 - 5/28/25*
- *Discussion of requiring single hooks in the Aniak Box, decided to address at the next meeting.*
- **Subsistence: Jane Jacobs**, speaks about the Post Season Survey, and Upper Kuskokwim Natural Indicators project. *Meeting Audio: 3:48:53 - 5/28/25*

## E. Presentations:

- *Audio for this presentation begins at 4:05:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
- **Salmon Ocean Ecology Program (SOEP): Sabrina Garcia, ADF&G**, reviewed 2024 Southern Bering Sea juvenile salmon survey. *Pages 27-44 in the meeting packet.*
  - Discussion
- **Yellowfin Sole Trawlers management: Krista Milani, National Marine Fisheries Service NOAA**, speaks about Yellowfin sole management, trawling vessels- motherships and catcher vessels, fishing locations, prohibited locations, prohibited species, monitoring, reporting. *Pages 17-26 in the meeting packet. Audio for this presentation begins at 4:39:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
  - Discussion about yellowfin sole trawlers, king salmon on the endangered species list, trawler management, advocating through North Pacific Fishery Management Council, community development quota.

## F. WORKING GROUP BUSINESS:

- **Election of Co-Chairs**
  - *Audio begins at 5:27:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
  - Motion to reelect all co-chairs: Alissa Rogers, Fritz Charles, Lamont Albertson, and Barbara Carlson. (*Passed Unanimous*).
- **WG member: WIRAC representative**
- **Working Group In-Season Meeting Schedule**
  - *Audio begins at 5:30:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*
  - Working Group meetings will be held on Wednesdays throughout the summer beginning at 10:00 AM. *Motion to make next meeting on June 11<sup>th</sup> (Passed Unanimous).*
- **Discussion of whether the WG would like to investigate switching the teleconference platform to TEAMS or ZOOM.** *Meeting Audio 5:33:00*
  - Discussion *Motion to investigate alternative teleconference platforms (Passed unanimous)*

## G. **COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS: meeting audio 5:39:00**

- Motion to elect a Working Group member to represent the Working Group at KRITFC inseason management meetings (*Passed, Unanimous*).

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Meeting adjourned 4:30 pm

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## **WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:**

**Motion 1:** Adopt agenda. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 0:23:43 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

**Motion 2:** Support the ADF&G recommendation of June 9<sup>th</sup> to start the front-end closure in Subsistence Sections 4 and 5. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 3:13:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

**Motion 3:** KRMWG strongly recommends that ADF&G refrains from issuing any fishing regulations for the Kuskokwim River that contradicts or conflict with Federal regulations, or might cause confusion for subsistence users along the river. *Passed (vote 6:1)*

- *Audio begins at 3:33:18 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

**Motion 4:** Re-elect all co-chairs. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 5:27:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

**Motion 5:** Proposed next schedule Working Group meeting shall be on June 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 5:30:30 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

**Motion 6:** Proposed ADF&G will investigate alternative platforms for the Working Group teleconference including TEAMS and ZOOM. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 5:34:05 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25.*

**Motion 7:** Proposed Lamont Albertson will be the Working Group representative to sit on KRITFC meetings. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 5:42:00 – Meeting Audio – 5/28/25*

**Motion 8:** *adjourn at 4 :30 p.m.*

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## WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Excused</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams Sr.
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	<i>Absent</i>
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Dan Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE SEAT 1	Fritz Charles
MEMBER AT LARGE SEAT 2	Avery Hoffman
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	<i>Vacant</i>
YK DELTA RAC	Alissa Rogers
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Excused</i>
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
KRITFC	James Nicori
ADF&G	Sam Decker
CHAIR	Barb Carlson, Lamont Albertson

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<u>ADF&amp;G Comm. Fish:</u> Sam Decker, Sean Larson, Madison Hardwig, Aaron Tiernan, Bailey Korkoske, John Linderman, Zach Liller, Bobette Dickerson <u>Sport Fish Division:</u> John Chythlook <u>Subsistence Division:</u> Jane Jacobs <u>Commissioner's Office:</u>	
<u>USFWS:</u> Spencer Rearden, Aaron Moses, Frank Harris, Brian Daniels, Nate Akers, Christopher Toolik, Emmitt Nicori, Jill Klein <u>OSM:</u> Kevin Foley, Nissa Pilcher, Brooke McDavid <u>NVN:</u> Dan Gillikin <u>ONC:</u> Jacob Wade, Hayden Anning, Lea Valdez, Emily Madsen, Ester Deen, Mary Matthias <u>AVCP:</u> Amy Hendricks, Jennifer Hooper <u>KRITFC:</u> Kevin Whitworth, Terese Vincente, Justin Leon, Bill Bechtol, Joe Spader, Andrew Mabel <u>UAF:</u> <u>WIRAC:</u> <u>YK Delta RAC:</u> Alissa Rogers	
<u>WG Alternates:</u> (not already listed above) (YK Delta RAC)	<u>Media:</u>

## **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), 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**), ADF&G Subsistence Division (**SD**), 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**), Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (**KRITFC**),

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