Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1 (888) 788-0099 OR Zoom.us Code: 849016
ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433

MONTH DATE, YEAR

Meeting called to order at **10:05** a.m. on **Wednesday, November 4, 2026** and adjourned at **1:02** p.m. Meeting time was approximately **X** hours and **X** minutes. Seven full voting members were present and a quorum was established partially through the meeting. **Barbara Carlson** chaired the meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS:

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

A. **SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:**
B. **KUSKOKWIM RIVER SEASON SUMMARIES:**
    1. **ADF&G: Sonar, aerial surveys, weirs, telemetry season summary**
    2. **USFWS: Season Summary**
    3. **NVN: ATF, Salmon weir, smolt outmigration, George River internship**
    4. **ONC: Bethel Harvest**
    5. **KRITFC: Community-Based Harvest Monitoring program**
    6. **ADF&G: Division of Subsistence**
C. **MARINE BYCATCH/HARVEST REPORT**

OLD BUSINESS:

D. **AG DECISION ON AREA M REGULATIONS – DRAFT LETTER**
E. **SERVICE AWARD EXAMPLES**

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

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WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda. *Audio for this section begins 02:44 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: *Audio for this section begins 03:09 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

A. ***Subsistence Reports*** *Audio for this section begins 08:17 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
   1. Lowest River: Jame Nicori reported fishers catching sheefish and some whitefish. Henry Hunter reported low chum and coho salmon numbers, and people focused more on whitefish this season. *Audio for this update begins 08:17 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
   2. Lower River: Avery Hoffman reported fall storms limiting ability to fish, though he commented on lush numbers increasing and consistent whitefish numbers. *Audio for this update begins 12:07 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
   3. Middle River: Dr. Mike Williams, Sr reported minimal coho salmon fishing at the end of the season due to fall storms and high water. Dr. Williams, Sr commented on mix catches of sheefish and whitefish. *Audio for this update begins 13:26 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
   4. Upper River: Barbara Carlson reported low coho salmon numbers in her setnet during the fall. Mrs. Carlson also commented on higher whitefish numbers. *Audio for this update begins 17:15 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
   5. Headwaters: Dan Esai reported high water and delay of normal culture practices due to run timing. Mr. Easi also reported low effort to fish due to the high fuel cost and high water. *Audio for this update begins 1:44:21*

B. ***Kuskokwim River Season Summaries:***
   1. ADF&G: Sam Decker summarized the 2026 season, including the management changes between the USWFS and the state, and overviews on run sizes and escapement goals. Madison Hardwig summarized management in the Kuskokwim Bay, including aerial surveys, escapement, and the 2026 commercial fishery. Fritz Charles had a question on confidentiality requirements and why the harvest data wasn't available to the public. Ms. Hardwig answered that the state requires three or more processors to make the data public or a waiver, and neither condition was met. Henry Hunter commented that he'd like to see the commercial harvest data due to conservation on the Kuskokwim river and wanted equality for subsistence users across the management area. Avery Hoffman commented that he'd like to

see more subsistence opportunities and more transparency from ADF&G in regards to commercial harvest opportunities, regardless of confidentiality requirements. Dr. Mike Williams, Sr commented that District 4 and 5 are managed outside the Working Group, and that he'd like to see the escapement of Chinook salmon in the drainages and how the fishery impacted escapement. Bryan Daniels and Nate Akers both requested tables with footnotes denoting years with confidential data and years without a fishery. Ms. Hardwig stated it is noted in the AMR and that their comments will be taken into consideration when publishing season summaries. *Audio for this update begins 18:24 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

Sam Decker gave a summary of the 2026 sonar passage and run timings. Kay Stewart gave a season summary of the Kuskokwim River Sonar, reporting high waters and overall a successful season. *Audio for this update begins 1:00:04 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

Bobette Dick gave a summary of the 2026 weir passages, including escapement goals and challenges. Dan Esai had a question on Pitka Fork passage and how the high waters affected passage. Mrs. Dickerson reported the Pitka Fork weir flooded and wasn't water tight for counts for the majority of the season. Nate Akers asked about the expected age class distribution for the Kogrukluk weir passage. Mrs. Dickerson reported that she estimates the majority of fish passing the Kogrukluk weir to be four year old salmons. *Audio for this update begins 1:03:29 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

Bailey Korkoske gave a summary of the 2026 telemetry project. Mrs. Korkoske reported a successful season and high numbers of chum salmon, though some gaps in tracking were reported. *Audio for this update begins 1:13:07 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

2. USFWS: Spencer Rearden gave a summary of the USFWS management season and federal special actions taken throughout 2026. *Audio for this update begins 1:18:45 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
3. NVN: Dan Gilikin gave a summary of the NVN projects, including the outmigration project with Owl Ridge and complications with the Salmon River weir. The Aniak Test Fishery was successful in its season, and experienced high water. Mr. Gilikin also gave a report on the in river turbine project, though there were complications that impacted its installation. Tad Lindley had a question about the in river turbine, how it will be anchored and where it will sit in the water column. *Audio for this update begins 1:34:45 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
4. ONC: Jacob Wade gave a summary of the Bethel Harvest surveys. *Audio for this update begins 1:48:45 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

5. KRITFC: Andrew Magel gave a summary of the Community-Based Harvest Monitoring program, as well as other KRITFC monitoring projects. Mr. Magel reported they do not have coho salmon data for the 2026 season. *Audio for this update begins 1:52:26 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
6. ADF&G Division of Subsistence project update: Tim Bembenic gave an update on the funding status for the Post-Season Salmon Survey, and reported the division was unable to secure funding and subsequently, unable to complete the survey. Doug Molyneaux spoke to the importance of the PSSS and made a call to organizations to provide funding. *Audio for this update begins 1:59:43 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

C. ***Marine Bycatch/Harvest Report***: Terese Vicente gave an encompassing report on marine bycatch in the Bering Sea and in Area M. Fritz Charles asked about the public comment process for the ACR in the Board of Fisheries Special Meeting process. *Audio for this update begins 2:04:59 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

OLD BUSINESS:

D. ***AG Decision on Area M Regulations – Draft letter supporting BOF decision***

The Working Group voted to sign off on the draft letter and send it to the acting Attorney General. *Audio for this update begins 2:35:33 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

E. ***Service award examples***

The Working Group voted on a service award for retired Working Group members. *Audio for this update begins 2:43:55 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*

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WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. **Approve the agenda**
    a. No quorum to approve agenda at the beginning of the meeting.
2. **Extend the meeting to 12:30**
    a. Member Williams moves to extend the meeting, Member Hoffman seconds, motion passes. *Audio for this motion begins 1:34:16 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
3. **Extend the meeting to 13:00**
    a. Member Hoffman moves to extend the meeting, Member Charles seconds, motion passes. *Audio for this motion begins 2:17:36 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
4. **Sign draft letter to Acting Attorney General**
    a. Member Williams moves to sign the draft letter, Member Charles seconds, motion passes with one abstention due to conflict of interest (Sam Decker). *Audio for this motion begins 2:35:33 – Meeting Audio 11.4.26*
5. **Service award**
    a. Chairwoman Carlson requested "roll call" vote for preferred service award still. Style 1 won majority. *Audio for this vote begins 2:43:55 – Meeting Audio*
6. **Adjourn**
    a. Member Charles motions to adjourn, Member Decker seconds, meeting adjourned 13:02

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP: *No additional comments were provided from the Working Group Members.*

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	*Absent*
UPRIVER ELDER	*Excused*
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dr. Mike Williams, Sr
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	*Absent*
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Dan Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	VACANT
YK DELTA RAC	*Absent*
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Tad Lindley
SPORT FISHING	VACANT
PROCESSOR	VACANT
KRITFC	Henry Hunter
ADF&G	Sam Decker
CHAIR	Barbara Carlson

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Other Participants:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">ADF&G Comm Fish: Madison Hardwig, Bailey Korkoske, Bobette Dickerson, Iris Fletcher, Kara Domnick, Kay Stewart
Sport Fish: John Chythlook
Subsistence: Jane Litvin, Tim Bembenic</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">USFWS: Spencer Rearden, Nate Akers, Bryan Daniels, Aaron Moses, Chris Tulik, Emmett Nicori, Christian Alexie, Jr
OSM: Nissa Pilcher</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">KRITFC: Erald Murati, Justin Leon, Bill Bechtol, Daniel Auerbach, Andrew Magel, Terese Vicente</td><td rowspan="2">NVN: Dan Gilikin
AVCP: Jennifer Hooper
ONC: Paul Larson, Jacob Wade</td><td>Media:</td></tr>
<tr><td>WG Alternates:</td></tr>
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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsararmiut Traditional Native Council (**OTNC**), 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**), 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**), Native Village of Napaimute (**NVN**), Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (**YKHC**), Alaska State Troopers (**AST**), University of Alaska Fairbanks (**UAF**)

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