

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

## Meeting Agenda

Date: May 20, 2014

Time: 1:30 pm

Place: Bethel

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Time Called to Order

Chair

Time Adjourned

### ROLL CALL TO ESTABLISH QUORUM:

Upriver Elder:  
Downriver Elder:  
Commercial Fisher:  
Lower River Subsistence:  
Middle River Subsistence:  
Upper River Subsistence:  
Headwaters Subsistence:

### QUORUM MET? Yes / No

Processor:  
Member at Large:  
Sport Fisher:  
Western Interior RAC:  
Y-K Delta RAC:  
ADF&G:

### INTRODUCTIONS:

### INVOCATION:

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** *the agenda may be amended at this time.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *ADF&G does not prepare official meeting minutes. The April 4<sup>th</sup> post meeting email, containing meeting action and motions, is attached. ADF&G meeting summaries may be found*

*online: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.kswg>*

### PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

**DISCUSSION WITH FISH AND WILDLIFE: 2014 SEASON MANAGEMENT FOR KUSKOKWIM DRAINAGE WATERS ON OR ADJACENT TO FEDERAL LANDS:**

**DISCUSSION WITH ADF&G: 2014 SEASON MANAGEMENT FOR WATERS OF THE KUSKOKWIM DRAINAGE OUTSIDE OF FEDERAL JURISDICTION.**

**REPORT FROM MIKE WILLIAMS REGARDING RECENT YUPI'IT FISH MEETING IN BETHEL**

**ADDITION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS**

**DISTRIBUTION OF TEST FISH KINGS**

**SUPPORT FOR MONITORING PROJECTS**

**COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:**

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Shelden, Christopher A (DFG)

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**From:** Shelden, Christopher A (DFG)  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 06, 2014 10:01 AM  
**To:** .; Aaron Tiernan; Agatha Erickson; Alex Nick; Alice Bailey; Angela Denning Barnes; Angela Morgan; Art Nelson; Barbara Carlson; Becca Robbins Gisclair; Bergstrom, Daniel J (DFG); Beverly Hoffman (Sport Fishing); Bloomquist, Richard A (HSS); Bob Aloysius (YK Delta RAC); Borba, Bonnie M (DFG) ; Brazil, Charles E (DFG); Brenner, Andrew R (DFG); Brittany Blain; Brodersen, Amy R (DFG); Brown, Caroline L (DFG); Bruce, Geron (DFG); Burr, John M (DFG); Cappiello, Thomas A (DFG); Carl Berger; Casie Stockdale home; Catherine Moncrieff; Charlie Brown new; Chris Zimmerman; Chythlook, John S (DFG); Clark, Joshua N (DFG); Clinton Goods; Cogswell, Stewart; Conitz, Jan M (DFG); Craig Whitmore; crowvillage@gmail.com; Daniel Gilliken (dgillikin@knafish.org); daniel\_esai@yahoo.com; Dave Cannon (KNA); David Carpenter; Donald\_Rivard@fws.gov; Doug B Molyneaux (dmolyneaux@gci.net); Doug Kernak (Commercial Fisher); Duncan Allen (Ottertail); Ed Fleming; Elai Wassillie (Nunap); Elison, Travis B (DFG); Estensen, Jeff L (DFG); Evelyn Thomas (Upriver Subsistence); Evenson, Matthew J (DFG); Fred Bue; Fritz Charles (Member at Large); Gerri Sumpter; Gerri Sumpter; Greg Hoffman Jr; 'Greg Roczicka '; Greg Roczicka new; Greg Ruggerone; Hamazaki, Hamachan (DFG); Hayes, Steve (DFG); Hoffman, Lyman F (LAA); Horne-Brine, Maureen H (DFG); Ikuta, Hiroko (DFG); Jack Reakoff; James Charles (Downriver Elder); Janet Bavilla; JB; Jeffrey Brooks; Jeffrey Anderson - USFWS KFO; Jennifer Hooper (AVCP); Jennifer Peeks; Jerry Domnick; Jill Klein; Jim Hautala; Joe Spaeder; Joel Hard; John Andrew; Joseph, Alissa N (DFG); Kalskag, City of; Karen Hyer ; Kate Thalhauser ; Ken Harper; Kevin Bartley; KYUK; LaDonn Robbins (ladonnrobbins@gmail.com); LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing); Liller, Zachary W (DFG); Linderman, John C (DFG); Liz Clement; Maridon Boario; Mark Leary; McCaffery, Brian; McEwen, Malcolm S (DFG); 'Megan McPhee'; Mike Williams (Lower R. Subsistence); Myron Naneng; Nathan Underwood; Nick Petruska (Headwaters Subsistence); Nick Souza; Olson, Lisa E (DFG); Palm Ingles; Park, Jeff L (DFG); pat@sweetwatertravel.com; Patrick Snow; Penny Crane; Perry Hendricks (CVS); Peter Snow (psnow22@hotmail.com); Peter Tony (tonypeter869@gmail.com); Pfisterer, Carl T (DFG); Pippa Kenner; Polly Wheeler; Ray Collins (Western Interior RAC) (raylc1936@gmail.com); Rebecca Frye; Rob Earl (Rep. Herron's Assistant); Rob Kinkade; robert\_sundown@fws.gov; Roberta Chavez; Ron Simon (aluaq@yahoo.com); Runfolo, David M (DFG); Schaberg, Kevin L (DFG); Schawna Thoma; Sechrist, Katie A (DFG); Shane Iverson; Shelden, Christopher A (DFG); Simon, James J (DFG); Sisinyak, Nancy L G (DFG); Skaugstad, Calvin (DFG) ; Spicer, Chantell M (DFG); Steve Miller (USFWS); Steven Hall; Stuart Currie; Stuby, Lisa A (DFG); Taube, Tom (DFG); Templin, Bill D (DFG); Terry Reeve; Tim Andrew; Tiny; Trim Nick ; Vince Mathews; Volk, Eric C (DFG); Wayne Morgan; Wilson, Seth J (DFG); Yuhus, Jennifer S (DFG); Zachariah Bryan  
**Subject:** Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group: Meeting Motions April 3-4

Working Group Participants,

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group held a two day meeting in Anchorage on April 3 and 4. The meeting was held to coincide with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Kuskokwim Interagency Meeting, in order to allow Working Group members to network with agencies and researchers and be informed about research being conducted in the Kuskokwim Area.



During the two days of Working Group meetings, the received presentations and conducted discussions with management and collaborating agencies, discussed salmon management for 2014, and conducted Working Group business (e.g. election of officers and member seats).

Below you will find the motions that were made and the results of those motions. There is a lot of detail regarding each of these motions that does not appear in this email.

## **Thank you all for your participation and interest.**

### **Meeting Motions:**

**Motion 1: to approve agenda as amended. No opposition (considered Unanimous)**

**Motion 2: Approve Henry Mitchel to represent CVS to act in the interests of the Processor seat for the next couple of days. No opposition (considered Unanimous)**

**Motion 3: The lower section of the Kuskokwim River will close to subsistence salmon fishing on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May in 2014. Motion Passed (9 yea, 1 no)—See Motions 6 and 7**

**Motion 4: To recess the meeting until 9:00am April 4. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 5: The department will issue a news release explaining that based on run assessment; the department will open the lower section of the Kuskokwim River to the use of Dipnets in mid-June (subsequently rolling upriver by section). The news release would also indicate that the first opening for drift gill net (restricted to 6") is anticipated to occur in the last week of June. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 6: The Working Group will reconsider motion 3. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 7: Schedule salmon closure in section 1 and 2 on May 20 and apply closures to upriver sections every three days. Motion passed (9 yea, 1 no).**

**Motion 8: The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group will submit an emergency petition to the Board of Fish to allow the department to limit the use of 4" mesh gillnets to setnets only, subject to time and area in the mainstem Kuskokwim River between May 20 and June 30. Motion passed (9 yea, 1 no).**

**Motion 9: The KRSMWG will support the statement presented in the meeting regarding talking points to be distributed in the name of the WG. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 10: This group requests state and federal managers that, to the extent possible and through some special action, provide special use permits to tribal councils, upon request, for the harvest and distribution of up to 30 king salmon per community earlier in the run. Motion passed (Unanimous).**

**Motion 11: Draft letters to NOAA, AVCP, and BSFA requesting that a portion of Salmon Fisheries Disaster funding be provided for the purchase of gear for Kuskokwim River subsistence fishers and for further research for the purpose of rebuilding king salmon stocks. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 12: Retain the current co-chairs. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 13: Elect Peter Snow to become Upriver Elder and Peter Tony to become the alternate to the Headwaters Subsistence seats. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 14: Elect Nick Kameroff and Lisa Feyereisen as alternates to the Middle River Subsistence seat. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 15: Remove those members that did not participate in 2013, with the exception of Carl Morgan who was assigned to serve by the Western Interior RAC. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 16: to move Fritz Charles to the position of Member at Large, and make Henry Lupie alternate to that seat. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Motion 17: Accept Greg Roczicka as an alternate of to the YK Delta RAC seat pending approval of that group. Motion passed (9 yea, 1 abstention).**

**Motion 18: Elect Henry Mitchel to serve as an alternate to the Processor seat. Motion passed (unanimous).**

**Since 2010 the Kuskokwim River has experienced the two lowest returns of king salmon on record - 2013 being the lowest ever. Neither 2010 nor 2013 surpassed the lower bound of the desired drainagewide escapement goal of 65,000. The 2014 return is expected to be similar to last year.**

Because of the drastic decline of the king salmon, the **Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group** realizes that king salmon conservation measures are necessary to provide king salmon for future generations.

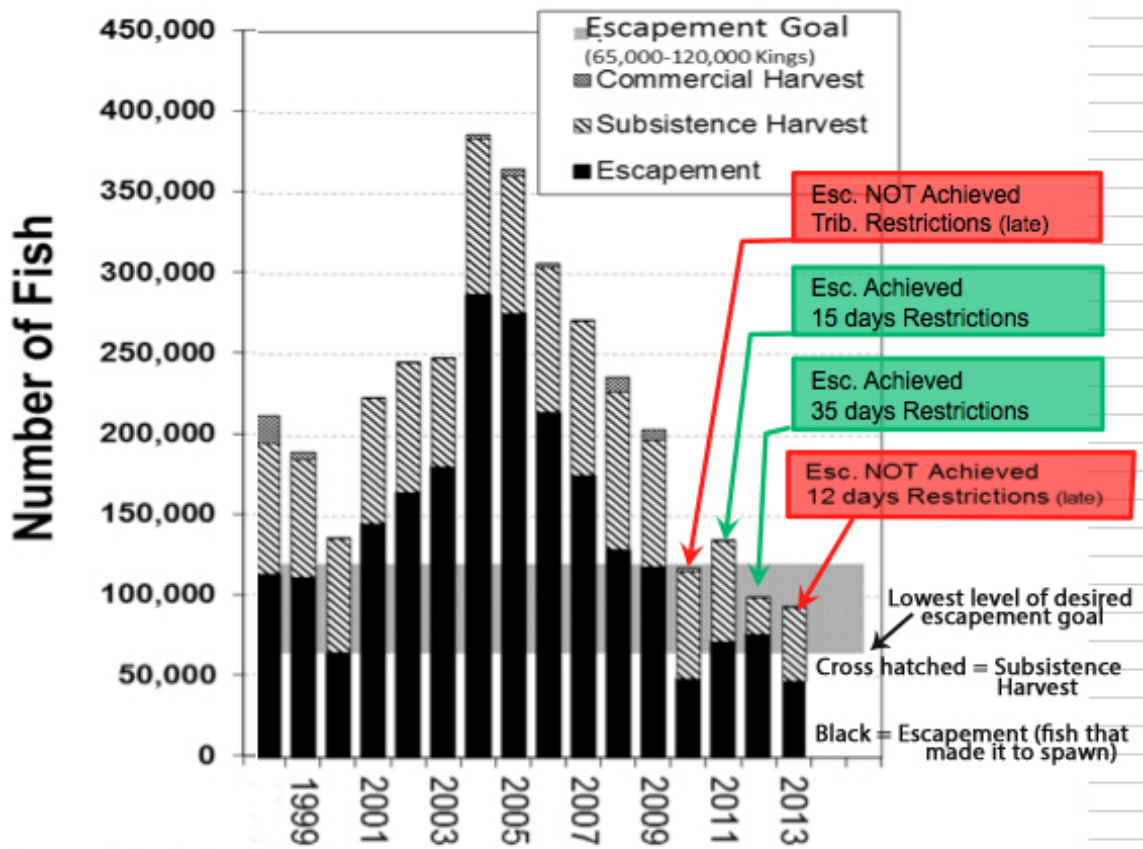
In an attempt to get adequate kings to the spawning grounds in 2014, the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group supports the following measures:

- No targeted king salmon fishing in 2014.
- Commercial and sport fishing for king salmon will be closed.
- Starting May 20 - subsistence salmon fishing in the lower river will be closed.
- **4" mesh gillnets no longer than 60 feet** in length will be allowed for the harvest of whitefish and other non-salmon species. Whitefish nets should be **secured on one end to the bank** as is typical for whitefish harvest (incidentally harvested king salmon in these nets can be kept).
- Dip nets to be allowed starting around mid-June to harvest chum and red salmon and other non-salmon species – all king salmon captured in a dip net **cannot be removed from the water and must be released immediately.**
- In-season information will be assessed daily to determine at what point additional opportunities may be employed to harvest chum and red salmon (for example, the allowance of 6" or less drift and set gillnets during late June).

The graph below shows how the king salmon escapement goal, or the amount of kings returning to spawn, was not met in 2010 or 2013. The minimum of 65,000 kings for the entire Kuskokwim River was barely met in 2011 and 2012.

This is why the Working Group members all agree that conservation measures are necessary to bring back the king salmon to normal levels...but it will take sacrifices by all.

## King salmon harvest levels and escapement 1998 - 2013



Source: Bue et al. 2012

### KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

*Contact these Working Group members with Questions regarding the 2014 fishing season*

MEMBER SEATS	NAMES	Phone	VILLAGE
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	CASIE STOCKDALE	545-7550	Bethel
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	DAVE CANNON LISA FEYEREISEN	676-0012 467-2120	Aniak Chuathbaluk
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	MARK LEARY BARBARA CARLSON	545-2877 449-4255	Napaimute Sleetmute
YK DELTA RAC	BOB ALOYSIUS	545-3456	Kalskag
PROCESSOR	HENRY MITCHELL	230-2365	
SPORT FISHING	LAMONT ALBERTSON	675-4380 or 947-4405	Aniak
ADF&G	Travis Elision	267-2379	





U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Land Management  
National Park Service  
Bureau of Indian Affairs

1

## Federal Subsistence Board

1101 E Tudor Rd, MS 121  
Anchorage Alaska 99503



### Federal Waters Within the Boundaries of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

#### 2014 Kuskokwim Area Salmon Fishery News Release 2

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Issued at: Bethel, Alaska  
May 16, 2014

This is an announcement from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for subsistence fishermen in the Kuskokwim Area.

#### **Federal Special Actions**

Two Special Actions were issued at the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge this afternoon. These are restrictions to the Chinook fishery that will begin on **Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>**. The first Special Action, 3KS-01-14 limits who can participate in the Chinook salmon fishery on the Kuskokwim River. Only residents of the Kuskokwim River District and members of the villages of Chefornak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok and Kongiganek can participate in openings that *may* occur for Chinook salmon or opening that have incidental harvest of Chinook salmon. The second Special Action, 3KS-02-14 closes the Chinook salmon fishery in the Kuskokwim River drainage to all user groups and limits gillnets that may be used to set gillnets less than 4" stretch mesh and less than 60' in length. It also limits hook and line gear to equipment that does not target Chinook salmon. For instance, using 4 pound test line on a rod designed for 15 pounds while using small spinners is gear designed for grayling, dolly varden, rainbow trout, etc. Compare this to using a rod designed for 40 pounds, using 30 pound test line, and large hooks, which could be construed as targeting Chinook salmon. Chinook salmon incidentally harvested in the gillnet fishery may be kept; however, Chinook salmon incidentally harvested using all other gear types must be immediately released. Information about the timing and management of the dip net fishery on the Kuskokwim River will announced at a later date

#### **Biological Rationale**

Since 2010, the Kuskokwim River has experienced poor Chinook returns and 2013 was the lowest return on record. The 2014 Chinook forecast is for a return of 94,000 fish (range of 71,000–117,000). The drainage-wide escapement goal is 65,000–120,000. If the 2014 return is within the forecast then there would be enough fish to meet escapement goals and provide for very limited Chinook subsistence harvest. The majority of escapement goals were not met in 2013 and all weir assessment projects had the lowest on record. Given consecutive years of low Chinook returns and non-achievement of escapement goals conservation measures are warranted.

**Affected Area****Kuskokwim River Mouth to Tuluksak: Sections 1 and 2 (Federal Special Action)**

**Effective 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, May 20, 2014 Chinook salmon fishing in the Kuskokwim River drainage is closed to all user groups. Gillnets are restricted to set gillnets, 4-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length in Salmon Conservation Sections 1 and 2. Subsistence fishing with dipnet will adhere to State fishing schedules (AS 16.05.060). Chinook salmon incidentally caught in gillnets may be retained. Chinook salmon incidentally caught using all other gear types must be immediately released.** The area covered by this action is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge border at the mouth of the Kuskokwim, described by a line from a point on the west shore 5.1 miles south-southwest of Popkamiut (approximately 59° 59' 57.8198 -162° 30' 24.47688) across to a point on the east shore 3.4 miles south-southeast of the mouth of Kuskokwak Creek (approximately 59° 59.57.14979 -162° 11' 14.92507), upriver on the Kuskokwim to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth. This section includes the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: those portions of Kinak, Kialik, Tagayarak, Johnson and Gweek rivers more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these closures.

**For additional information concerning this news release:**

**USFWS: Brian McCaffery 907-543-1014**

-end-

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Tim Towarak, Chair, Federal Subsistence Board  
 Members, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council  
 Gene Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS  
 Jim Hjelmgren, Chief of Refuge Law Enforcement  
 Ryan Noel, Acting Special Agent in Charge, LE Division, USFWS  
 Myron Naneng, President, Association of Village Council Presidents  
 Cora Cambell, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
 Sgt. Mark Agnew, Alaska Bureau of Wildlife Investigation  
 Delta Discovery  
 Tundra Drums  
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 National Park Service  
 Bureau of Indian Affairs

## Federal Subsistence Board

1101 E Tudor Rd, MS 121  
 Anchorage Alaska 99503



Forest Service

# SUBSISTENCE FISHING

## SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of **50 CFR Part 100.10 and .19**  
**36 CFR Part 242.10 and .19**

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Special Action No.:	3-KS-01-14	Issued at:	Bethel, Alaska May 16, 2014
Effective Date:	May 20, 2014 12:01 a.m.		
Expiration Date:	July 18, 2014 11:59 p.m. unless superseded by subsequent Special Action		

### EXPLANATION:

Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River will be closed to fishing for king salmon to non-Federally qualified users to provide for escapement.

### REGULATION

50 CFR 100.27(e)(4)(ii) is amended to add:

*Federal public waters in that portion of the Kuskokwim River drainage that are within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge are closed to the harvest of Chinook salmon except by the residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Chefnak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok and Kongiganek. Based on observed run strength, and in consideration of conservation concerns and escapement goals, the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager may open portions of the drainage to the take of Chinook salmon.*

### JUSTIFICATION

#### *Biological*

Since 2010, the Kuskokwim River has suffered from poor king salmon returns. 2013 was the lowest return on record. The 2014 State of Alaska king salmon forecast is for a return of 94,000 Chinook (range of 71,000–117,000). The drainage-wide escapement goal is 65,000–120,000. If


the 2014 return is within the forecast, then there will be enough fish to meet escapement goals and perhaps provide for a very limited king salmon subsistence harvest.

The majority of tributary escapement goals on rivers within the Kuskokwim drainage were not met in 2013 and all weir assessment projects had the lowest Chinook counts on record. Given consecutive years of low king salmon returns and a forecast that indicates a return barely adequate to meet escapement needs, it will be necessary to impose strict conservation measures. .

In addition to the anticipated closure to Chinook harvest for non-subsistence users on Federal public lands, severe chinook harvest restrictions to subsistence users are expected to be in place for the 2014 season with little harvestable surplus available.

#### FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

By delegation to:

  
 Brian J. McCaffery, Acting Refuge Manager  
 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

#### DISTRIBUTION:

Tim Towarak, Chair, Federal Subsistence Board  
 Members, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council  
 Gene Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Subsistence Division, USFWS  
 Jim Hjelmgren, Chief of Refuge Law Enforcement  
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## Federal Subsistence Board

1101 E Tudor Rd, MS 121  
Anchorage Alaska 99503



# SUBSISTENCE FISHING

## SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of **50 CFR Part 100.10 and .19**  
**36 CFR Part 242.10 and .19**

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Special Action No.:	3-KS-02-14	Issued at:	Bethel, Alaska May 16, 2014
Effective Date:	May 20, 2014 12:01 a.m.		
Expiration Date:	July 14, 2014 11:59 p.m. unless superseded by subsequent Special Action		

### EXPLANATION:

#### **Kuskokwim River Mouth to Tuluksak**

This Special Action closes king salmon fishing to all users in conservation sections 1 and 2 on the Kuskokwim River drainage. This action follows the conservation strategy discussed with the members of local Tribes, the public, Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game over the previous 10 months.

### REGULATION

50 CFR 100.27(e)(4)(ii) is amended to add:

**Effective 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, May 20, 2014 Chinook salmon fishing in the Kuskokwim River drainage is closed to all user groups. Gillnets are restricted to set gillnets, 4-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length in Salmon Conservation Sections 1 and 2. Subsistence fishing with dipnet will adhere to State fishing schedules (AS 16.05.060). Chinook salmon incidentally caught in gillnets may be retained. Chinook salmon incidentally caught using all other gear types must be immediately released.** The area covered by this action is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge border at the mouth of the Kuskokwim, described by a line from a point on the west shore 5.1 miles south-southwest of Popkamiut (approximately 59° 59' 57.8198 -162° 30' 24.47688) across to a point on the east shore 3.4 miles south-southeast of the mouth of Kuskokwak Creek (approximately 59° 59.57.14979 -162° 11' 14.92507), upriver on the Kuskokwim to a line between ADF&G

regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth. This section includes the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: those portions of Kinak, Kialik, Tagayarak, Johnson and Gweek rivers more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these closures.

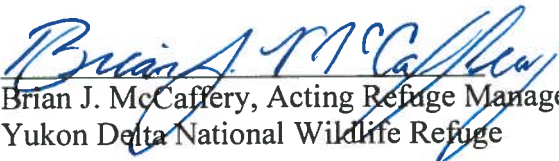
## JUSTIFICATION

### *Biological*

Since 2010, the Kuskokwim River has experienced poor king salmon returns and 2013 was the lowest return on record. The 2014 State of Alaska king salmon forecast is for a return of 94,000 fish (range of 71,000–117,000). The State of Alaska drainage-wide escapement goal is 65,000–120,000. If the 2014 return is within the forecast then there would be enough fish to meet escapement goals and provide for very limited king salmon subsistence harvest. The majority of escapement goals were not met in 2013 and all weir assessment projects had the lowest on record. Given consecutive years of low king salmon returns and non-achievement of escapement goals conservation measures are warranted. To limit incidental catch and mortality of Chinook salmon, all gear types that target or are likely to target Chinook salmon are restricted. This includes gillnets larger than 4", drift gillnets, and hook and line gear that are designed to target Chinook salmon.

## FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

By delegation to:

  
 Brian J. McCaffery, Acting Refuge Manager  
 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

## DISTRIBUTION:

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