

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
April 4-5, 2004**

Prince William Sound Salmon Allocation

DESIGNATED REPORTER: Sherry Wright

This summary of actions is for information purposes only and is not intended to detail, reflect or fully interpret the reasons for the Board's actions.

PROPOSAL NO. 258

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Amend the purse seine fleet catch trigger percentage in the Prince William Sound Management and Salmon Enhancement Allocation Plan

DISCUSSION: The board met as a committee of the whole with the working group and other members of the public selected from those who provided testimony at this meeting. There was no consensus reached by participants of the public panel. Some of the points brought up during the committee meeting include: the 40 percent put in place last year was considered a band-aid; the board created their own "buffer zone" by the percentage that was put in place. Board discussed an amendment of 49 percent with an intent of eliminating as much of the variables as possible for participants in the fishery. Discussion included that without it, the fishery will continue to be unstable. The amendment failed, but further discussion showed that although allocation issues should be dealt with in cycle, the board is concerned and intends to continue allowing the workgroup to meet to see if consensus can be found.

PROPOSAL NO. 259

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Amend the buffer zone outside the Esther Subdistrict surrounding Esther Island

AMENDMENT: Modified the buffer zone area and addressed quality concerns.

DISCUSSION: The board met as a committee of the whole to discuss this issue. There was no consensus reached by participants of the public panel. Department reported an increased likelihood that the sockeye BEG for Coghill River will be exceeded due to less commercial fishing time/area in the general Coghill District as a result of the buffer area. In the event of a buildup of chum salmon in the buffer area, there will be some lag time between recognition of the problem and prosecution of a fishery resulting in reduced product quality. Board does not believe radical changes are appropriate at this time and that adopting this will address some of the concerns brought regarding this fishery. The amendment addresses the issue of the alternating access.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Emergency Petition

ACTION: Failed

Upper Cook Inlet salmon management: Clarify department management based on escapement goals by emergency order.

DISCUSSION: The petition asserted that if the sockeye escapement to all other systems is being achieved, there could be times, especially with anticipated sockeye salmon runs over 3 million to the Kenai River, when the escapement goal would be exceeded within the existing management plan. An otherwise biologically allowable harvest would be forfeited without emergency action. Board discussed last year's season with department staff. Department asked board for direction on how to work within the existing plans in an effective manner. Board encouraged the department to utilize the emergency openings as deemed biologically sound. Emergency order authority given the department has been addressed in previous meetings. The board found that the petition does not meet its emergency petition criteria.

2004/2005 Meeting Schedule

Board added two days to its 2004/2005 meeting cycle to address crab rationalization. Meeting dates are tentatively scheduled for October 8-9, 2004, depending on meeting space availability.

Findings for Decisions at February 2004 Meeting

The board will generate two findings for decisions made at the February 2004 meeting as follows: 1) General District for Bristol Bay; and 2) South Unimak/Shumagin Islands (Area M) June fishery. The findings will become available for the public after adoption according to the board's policy on findings.

Salmon Restructuring Task Force

The board has been interacting with the Joint Legislative Salmon Industry Task Force who has requested the board continue in efforts to restructure the salmon industry.

If funding is approved, the board will solicit names for a public panel to meet this fall to generate a plan of action for this effort. If approved, the board and public panel will continue to work and gather public comment and scientific information, make recommendations on needed research, analyze fishery policy, and consideration of proposal process, with a goal of reporting to the legislative council in March 2005. A full work plan will be available.

Federal Subsistence Board Meeting Notice

The board received a report that the Federal Subsistence Board will hold a meeting April 27-28 in Anchorage to take public testimony on requests that the federal government intervene in management of the Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands (Area M) commercial salmon fisheries. A decision from the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture is expected before the start of the June fishery. Written comments must be received by April 23 to be included in the public meeting materials.