

Alaska Board of Fisheries Committee Summary

COMMITTEE A

Gulf of Alaska Pacific Cod
October 20, 2013

Board Committee Members:

1. Reed Morisky, *Chair
2. Fritz Johnson
3. Sue Jeffrey

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Staff Members:

1. Mark Stichert – Area Management Biologist, CF
2. Trent Hartill – Assistant Area Management Biologist, CF
3. Steve Honnold – Regional Supervisor - Region IV, CF
4. Karla Bush – Extended Jurisdiction, CF

Advisory Committee Members:

1. Frank Kelty – Unalaksa/Dutch Harbor AC
2. Julie Kavanaugh – Kodiak AC
3. Alfredo Aboueid – Chignik Lagoon AC
4. Kiley Thompson – Sand Point AC
5. Taylor Lundgren – Sand Point AC
6. David Osterback – Sand Point AC

Public Panel Members:

1. Benjamin Allen – Chignik Bay
2. Arthur Schultz – F/V Lindsey Marie
3. Ron Kavanaugh – F/V Sylvia Star
4. Cheryl Brooking – Chignik Marketing Association
5. Linda Kozak – Kodiak Vessel Owners
6. Adam Lalich – F/V Yorjim
7. Ken Mack – F/V Shonna Jacole
8. Paul Gronholdt – F/V St. Francis
9. Corey Wilson – F/V Justin Case, Miss Courtney Kim
10. Sam Cotton – Aleutians East Borough
11. Ray Nutt – F/V Vicki Rae
12. Jeff Stephan – UFMA

13. William Dushkin – F/V Bobby Dee

The committee met October 20, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. and adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

PROPOSALS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE WERE: (18 total) 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28.

PROPOSAL 7 – 5 AAC 28.467. Kodiak Area Pacific Cod Management Plan; 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan; and 5 AAC 28.577. South Alaska Peninsula Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Clarify Pacific cod landing requirements.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Housekeeping proposal.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to support.

PROPOSAL 8 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Limit pot vessels over 50 feet to 50 percent of state-waters Pacific cod pot fishery allocation.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Author withdraws support for proposal during committee.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to withdraw proposal.

PROPOSAL 9 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Establish daily trip limit for state-waters Pacific cod pot fishery.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Proposal would harm existing fleet (RC 12).
- A longer season may result in limited tender availability.
- Currently there are no local shore based processors in Chignik.
- Proposal would increase fuel and operating expenses.
- Proposal would result in more trips at sea to catch the same amount of fish which increases risks to crew and vessel safety.
- Area O state-waters fishery may reduce competition in Chignik fishery for existing participants.
- Insurance and fuel costs increasing.
- To be profitable large boats must catch more than proposed trip limit allows.
- Small boats want to slow fishery down, but this proposal may not accomplish this.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to oppose.

PROPOSAL 10 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Decrease state-waters Pacific cod pot limit.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Proposal not strongly supported after board action to create Area O state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- Most Chignik vessels have already invested in 60 pots.
- Would require more time to catch the same amount of fish – decrease fishing efficiency.
- Would increase fuel costs.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to oppose.

PROPOSAL 11 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Establish daily fishing periods in state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Author withdraws support for proposal during committee.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to withdraw proposal.

PROPOSAL 12 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Establish maximum pot size for state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Most vessels use 6.5 x 6.5 foot pots.
- Pots cost \$1,200 per pot/very expensive to replace gear.
- Unanimous opposition by Chignik AC.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to oppose.

PROPOSAL 13 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Change date for rollover to all gear types of unharvested guideline harvest level (GHL) in state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

Comment Summary:

Department:

- Delivery required between conclusion of rollover season on August 28 and beginning of federal Pacific cod B season September 1.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Salmon season slowing down by August 14.
- Proposal may increase cod fishing opportunities for small vessels during summer.
- Salmon tenders are available in August; those tenders could also tender cod.
- Weather is better earlier in the year.
- Delivery requirement between conclusion of rollover season on August 28 and beginning of federal Pacific cod B season September 1 may be burdensome.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to support.

PROPOSAL 14 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Remove superexclusive registration for jig gear in state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

Comment Summary:

Department:

- Current registration requirements apply to registration area where the fishery occurs. Separate registration requirements have not been applied to different gear types within the same fishery.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Local fishermen are currently working to establish a shorebased processor in Chignik.
- Anticipated processor could provide better opportunity for local jig vessels.
- Current regulation keeps the fleet local and provides for community protection.
- Very few jig vessels currently participate in the Chignik jig fishery (RC 12).
- Unharvested jig quota is rolled over to pot vessels.
- Proposal would not create a race for fish. Few jig vessels would likely take advantage, but it would provide a good opportunity for those that do.

Public Panel Recommendation: No consensus.

PROPOSAL 15 – 5 AAC 28.537. Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Change state-waters Pacific cod jig season opening date and limit jig vessel size.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Very few vessels less than 48 feet in length participate in the fishery.
- Proposal would give cod away to a small number of vessels.
- Proposal would create a fishery inside another fishery.
- Member of public questioned whether proposal was constitutional (allocating within the same fishery).
- Small boats are asking for more than they have historically caught.
- Small boats in Chignik are currently catching more cod than small boats in the Kodiak or South Alaska Peninsula state-waters fisheries.
- Proposed 48 and 50 foot vessel size limits are arbitrary distinctions.
- No history on allocating cod based on those vessel sizes.
- Chignik is already a small boat fishery (less than 58 feet).
- Many boats are getting wider so length based catch limits are not effective (RC 12).
- Area O state-waters fishery may solve problem.
- Could result in unharvested GHL if small boats can't catch allocation.
- Pot gear fishery is not an entry level fishery; entry level opportunities currently exist with the jig allocation.
- Processor/tender availability may continue to be a problem.
- It's hard to make a living fishing cod with small boats/quota should not be guaranteed to certain sized vessels.
- Fishing requires hard work.
- Proposal author referenced RC 15 as alternative approach to proposal.

Public Panel Recommendation: No consensus.

PROPOSAL 16 and 17 – 5 AAC 28.550. Description of South Alaska Peninsula Area.
Modify boundary description of the South Alaska Peninsula groundfish area.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Proposal is meant to protect local fishermen.
- Guideline harvest level increase for South Alaska Peninsula Area state-waters fishery and creation of new Area O state-waters fishery should fix the problem.
- Authors withdraw support for proposals during committee based on comments above.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to withdraw proposals.

PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 28.556. South Alaska Peninsula Area registration. Change registration from exclusive to superexclusive.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Jig participants asked to not to be included in proposal.
- Author withdraws support for proposal during committee based on creation of Area O state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to withdraw proposal.

PROPOSAL 23 – 5 AAC 28.577. South Alaska Peninsula Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Change state-waters Pacific cod season opening date for pot gear.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Federal participants lost 5% of federal TAC which could result in shorter federal pot seasons.
- Could result in state-waters season opening too early.
- Pot fishing is best beginning mid- to late March.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to oppose.

PROPOSAL 24 – 5 AAC 28.577. South Alaska Peninsula Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Change state-waters Pacific cod season opening date for pot gear to March 12 or seven days following closure of the federal Western Gulf season, whichever is later.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Pot fishing is best from mid to late March.
- Pacific cod fishing with pot gear is marginal and should be done when it is most profitable.
- Chignik and South Alaska Peninsula should have the same season opening dates for cod.
- Same season dates good for processor and tender availability.
- Same seasons dates would prevent Bering Sea boats from targeting one fishery over the other.
- Proposal author withdraws support for proposal during committee in favor of status-quo season opening date.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to support author recommendation to maintain status-quo season dates.

PROPOSAL 25 – 5 AAC 28.577. South Alaska Peninsula Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Clarify weather-delay criteria for opening the state-waters Pacific cod season.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Housekeeping proposal.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to support.

PROPOSAL 26 and 27 – 5 AAC 28.577. South Alaska Peninsula Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Modify preseason pot storage regulation for state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Most state-waters participants cannot transport 60 pots to fishing grounds in one trip.
- Proposal would allow all vessels to transport gear to fishing grounds safely.
- Seven day pot storage is a historical practice; regulation fell through the cracks when the management plans were restructured in 2011 to accommodate federal sector splits.
- Chignik passed similar proposal last cycle.

Public Panel Recommendation: Consensus to support.

PROPOSAL 28 – 5 AAC 28.577. South Alaska Peninsula Area Pacific Cod Management Plan. Close state-waters surrounding Caton and Sanak islands to nonpelagic trawl gear.

Comment Summary:

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Small trawl boats need calm areas to fish.
- Area is necessary during poor weather to haul gear onto vessel after tow.
- Many areas for small nonpelagic trawl vessels were lost due to Steller sea lion restrictions.
- Historically this area was not a ‘hot-spot’ for Tanner crab.
- Board was sensitive to rebuilding Tanner crab stocks when area was reopened, but still chose to reopen area.
- Bycatch is low so closing this area to trawl gear probably will not help Tanner crab.
- More important to catch as much cod as possible to reduce predation on Tanner crab.
- There are Tanner crab in the area where trawl fishing occurs.
- Should encourage rebuilding Tanner crab stocks.
- Area was not intended to provide for directed cod fishing when the regulation was originally adopted.

Public Panel Recommendation: No consensus.