

**Alaska Peninsula / Aleutian Island / Chignik (AREA M) Board of Fisheries Meeting  
February 20–25, 2023 | Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center, Anchorage**

**DRAFT TESTIMONY for James Nicori**

- My name is James Nicori. I am Yupik from Kwethluk, a lifelong fisherman and hunter, and an Elder Advisor to the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.
- I have fished my whole life and observed many things about our salmon.
- I have observed when and how chum come up to the Kuskokwim from the ocean through False Pass.
- I have observed chum declines, like the 91% decline of chum escapement on the Kwethluk River, where I have lived and fished my whole life.
- I have observed how these declines are hurting our communities and environment and way of life.
- **And I have observed the disconnect between salmon management by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on the Kuskokwim River and by the Board of Fish in Area M.**
- These are the same fish but managed in completely different ways.
- This is why when we are closed for chum fishing on the Kuskokwim to protect these fish and try to meet escapement, the Board allows South Area M June fisheries to continue with their openers.
- **We are sacrificing everything up here. There is nothing more that our people can do. But there is no sharing in this sacrifice in Area M that the Board has directed.**
- The Board needs to look at the whole picture. Chum salmon live their lives from tributaries to oceans and back.
- We need to look at every stage of their lives to conserve them – not just when they return to our rivers.
- We need to focus on what we can do now for salmon.
- **The Board needs to adopt Proposal 140 in its entirety.** This proposal will help all of us conserve chum salmon and not just leave the burden of conservation to our subsistence fishermen, and not just blame climate change.
- Proposal 140 will align the Board with the Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon, the Statewide Escapement Goal Policy, and other state statutes that call for precautionary management and the state's highest priorities of subsistence and escapement.
- The Board needs to act now to protect chum salmon and our subsistence way of life.
- Quayana.

314,000 vs 10 chums

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