

BOF Meeting

https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2022-2023/proposals/entire_proposal_book.pdf

I'd like to acknowledge the traditional land that we are on today, the homelands of our relatives, the Dena'ina who are the original stewards of this land that we are on today. As well as acknowledge that Alaska is an Indigenous place and give thanks to the original stewards of these lands and waters. I'd also like to acknowledge the elders in the room, Tribal leaders and those that have traveled to be here today.

Drin gwinzii, Shoozhri' Rochelle Adams oozhii. Gwichyaa Zhee ts'a' Tseeduu diinkeedhat. My name is Rochelle Adams, I was raised along the Yukon River in the villages of Fort Yukon and Beaver in the Yukon Flats. My first memories in life are of my Gramma and Grampas fish camp near Fort Yukon. My family has been connected to the Łuk Choo, King Salmon since time immemorial — since creation. We have always lived alongside our Salmon relatives. Right now it feels like we are mourning them.

I came here to show my support for Proposal 140. With historical low runs of Salmon, now is the time that we need to be good relatives with one another. We need to do the right thing and give the Salmon an opportunity to return home.

I'm very grateful for those that have come and stood together for the salmon. We're currently at a very dire moment in time were we have to put our differences aside and make the right decision for the future.

The salmon connect us. We have to look at the entire lifecycle of the fish, whether in River or out in the Ocean, we need to work together to do what is best for them. Let us not forget that the Salmon have rights too. They deserve a right to complete their life cycles. They deserve a chance to go home to the River to replenish. It is our moral obligation to do what we can to save every single fish. It makes no sense that we have been in a moratorium along the River while commercial fishing is taking tons of those Salmon to sell while they are in the ocean. Don't let the people of the River starve in vain. Let us all do our part, in all stages of their lives to let the fish return.

In my language of Gwich'in, our name for the month of July is Łuk Choo Zhrii. This is our world perspective and it is the time of the King Salmon. If this is not the time of the King Salmon, what is it? There is a tremendous void in our life right now, as you've been hearing about all week. Not only are our needs not being met, but our traditions are being broken and there is an emptiness in our lives. We are not on the land and waters with our young ones. We are not bringing our first catch to the elders. We are not getting the same nutrients that our bodies need to be healthy.

A deep part of this symbiotic relationship is an obligation to protect all that live in the place that we call home. We are doing our part as the original stewards, the subsistence users to uphold

our end of the responsibilities. We are not taking one fish! Even if it means that our families are hungry, our elders cannot eat their medicine food, our babies brains cannot develop as they always have, we cannot practice our potlatch and ceremony. The salmon feed more than our bodies, it is our soul food, our spirituality. Our connection to ancestors. Our connection to place. I urge all of you to uphold your duties and to do what is right to protect the Salmon for everyone in the future. If nothing is done at this moment, you will be contributing to the demise of a once great species and also contributing to systemic genocide of Alaska Native people.