

Excerpt from report submitted in November 2022, to provide Board with the names of the Nushagak King Salmon Committee members, submitted as an RC in March 2023

## Summary of Outcomes from the Committee to Examine the Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan, 2019-2022

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Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan Committee  
and  
Alaska Board of Fisheries

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## Executive Summary

This report is one of four reports prepared by the Study Team that worked with the Alaska Board of Fisheries committee to examine options to revise the Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan (NMKSMP). This report documents the process and outcomes from that committee, which met between February 2019 and April 2022.<sup>1</sup>

During the December 2018 Bristol Bay Finfish meeting, the Board of Fisheries (Board) struck a committee to review Nushagak River and District fisheries and regulations, and to provide recommendations on a comprehensive solution to Chinook salmon management. Three Board members were assigned to the committee (Payton, Morisky, and Ruffner) and the selection of stakeholders to serve on the committee was to be done in early 2019. In February 2019 at the Special Committee Meeting immediately following the Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Island/Chignik Finfish meeting the Board selected 8 Committee members representing the commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries. The inaugural committee meeting took place on October 2019 and a total of 15 committee meetings occurred between December 2019 and March 2022. A final committee meeting was to be held in November 2022 to review this report and prepare for the upcoming Board of Fisheries meeting.

As a starting point for discussions during the first year of committee meetings, members identified the current challenges to, or problems with, management of Nushagak River king salmon fisheries. The focus was on challenges or problems related directly to the NMKSMP, but the discussion was not limited to challenges pertaining narrowly or only to the Plan. After discussing the fishery challenges faced by the Nushagak River king salmon fisheries at the initial meetings, committee members were asked to discuss what constitutes success in their various fisheries? Members were then asked to identify possible management objectives that, if implemented, would ideally fulfill the measures of success as identified. Finally, the groups were asked to identify possible changes or additions to the NMKSMP “action” provisions that direct ADF&G to act and that would, in turn, lead to achieving the objectives previously developed in this process.

In January 2021, the full committee reviewed and revised the lists and descriptions of the Measures of Success, Management Objectives, and Possible Management Plan Actions that had been developed. Shortly thereafter, work focused directly on clarifying possible regulatory management actions needed to achieve the management objectives, and further discuss non-regulatory actions needed. BBSRI provided technical information on certain topics, particularly management triggers and the effects of mesh size on sockeye exploitation rates, to inform and address questions raised by the committee. By April 7, 2022, the committee had reached consensus on seven proposed actions. The committee examined five other actions in detail but failed to reach consensus on them. On behalf of the Committee, the Study Team submitted a

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<sup>1</sup> The four reports prepared by the study team include: 1) Historical review of Nushagak River King Salmon Management, 2) this report, 3) Technical analysis of options considered by the Nushagak King Salmon committee, and 4) Recommendations for non-regulatory actions for Nushagak King salmon management.

and Research Institute (BBSRI) committed to supporting the committee's work through a stakeholder-led technical analysis of options the committee was expected to consider (RC 80).

## Committee Process

### *Committee Formation*

The board released a request for committee nominations on January 31, 2019 ([https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2018-2019/nm\\_committee\\_nominations\\_request.pdf](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2018-2019/nm_committee_nominations_request.pdf)). The intent of the solicitation was to have interested parties apply by sending in a letter of interest which included their background in the fishery. The applicants' letters of interest were due to the executive director of boards by February 18, 2019.

The Board received 14 letters of interest from which they chose 8 public committee members to represent the stakeholder groups involved with the Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon fishery.

### *Committee Members*

**Robert Heyano** – Lifelong resident of the Nushagak Bay area. He started fishing in the Nushagak Bay on the family-owned set net site in the 1960s. In 1972 he started drift gillnetting as an owner operator which he still currently doing. He has been active in the Board process since 1978 and served on the Board from 2004 to 2007. He has also served on the Nushagak AC and as its chair. He was on the AC when the original NKMP was drafted in 1991.

**Bud Hodson** – He has been fishing King Salmon on the Nushagak River for 40+ years with 2 different camps for guided angling for Kings. He served on the Board of Fisheries from 1986 through 1990 and served as Chairman of the Board for over 2 years. He was deeply involved with the original drafting of the NKMP and the allocation considerations in the creation of the original Plan.

**Brian Kraft** - He was the author of Prop 41 and 42 that were before the BOF in Dillingham at the 2018 meeting. Those proposals were the catalyst for the Board to create this committee. He has owned and operated a fishing lodge in BB for more than 25 years. He has operated a fishing camp on the Nushagak for similar time.

**Bob Klontz** – He has been involved in the Nushagak King salmon sport fishery since 1984 and a property owner on the river since 1999. His families on-river experience of more than 30 years and networking with other camps and fisherman has given him a well-rounded perspective of the status of the inriver fishery and of the King Salmon stock.

**Tom O'Connor** – He is a year-round resident within the Nushagak Bay area. He has many decades of experience as a set net fisherman in the Nushagak district on Ekuk beach. He is a

long-time member of the Nushagak AC and has participated in the Board process for more than 20 years.

**Nanci Lyons** - She has been guiding in the Bristol Bay region since 1985 and has been a user of the Nushagak river since 1986. She was involved in the Board of Fish meetings that constructed and approved the original Nushagak King Salmon management Plan and has been actively involved in the fishery and the management Plan ever since. She is the owner/operator of a sportfishing lodge in the BB area.

**Peter Christopher** – He is resident of New Stuyahok which is a community on the Nushagak River. He has served on the Nushagak AC for many decades. He has subsistence fished for his entire life and commercially fished in the Nushagak district from 1965 to the present. He is an active subsistence fisher for King, Chum, and Sockeye salmon. He and his family are heavily dependent on the salmon they catch for their winter food.

**George Wilson** - He resides in Naknek across the Bay from the Nushagak. He has commercially fished since 1980 when he was 9 years old with his dad. He currently owns and operates his vessel and permit and has done so since 1999. His children are his crew and will be taking over the family business in due time. He also participates subsistence fishing.

### *Study Team Members*

A three-person Study Team sponsored by BBSRI led and facilitated the committee process, prepared project analyses, and project reports.

**Tom Brookover** – Tom worked in various capacities with ADF&G since 1985, including as the Commercial Fisheries Assistant and Area Management Biologist for the Nushagak District from 1990-1998. He also worked as the Sport Fish Area Biologist in Sitka, Southeast Alaska Management Supervisor, Statewide Habitat Research Supervisor, and Deputy Director. Tom served as Director of Sport Fisheries Division from 2015 – 2018. Tom joined BBSRI's Nushagak Study Team shortly after retiring from ADF&G in 2018.

**Michael Link** – Michael has been the Executive Director of the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute (BBSRI) since 2002. He first worked in Bristol Bay as the Research Project Leader for ADF&G's Commercial Fisheries Division in the late 1990s. Michael has led numerous research projects and policy analyses including an extensive multidisciplinary analysis of escapement goal policies for Bristol Bay sockeye salmon (2012-2015, <https://www.bbsri.org/escapement-goal-analysis>). Farther back, he led an analysis to examine options to restructure the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery (2001-2003, <https://www.bbsri.org/other-project-reports>).

**Jeff Regnart** – Jeff has held several positions within Bristol Bay. Starting in 1990 he was the commercial fishery manager for the Naknek-Kvichak district. He then moved into a variety of Bristol Bay regional positions each with a greater scope of responsibility. From 2011 to 2015, Jeff served as Director of the Commercial Fishery Division of ADF&G where he represented the