

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

**1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET) Code: 58756# (KUSKO)**

**ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433**

**May 30, 2014**

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm on May 30, adjourned at 4:00pm. Total meeting time was 2 hours. Eight voting members attended and a quorum was maintained throughout the meeting.

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

- **People to be heard.**
- **Meeting with Senator Mark Begich.**
- **Comments from the Working Group.**
- **Additional public comments.**

**WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:** *these items were not called "action items" at the time of meeting; however work was assigned or volunteered.*

1. Scheduled the next KRSMWG meeting for Thursday June 5, 2014 at 1:30pm at the Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) office in Bethel, AK
2. Update on use of fishwheels in state waters at the next Working Group meeting. *Assigned: ADFG staff*
3. Update on social and cultural permit requested of the state by Working Group participants. *Assigned ADFG staff*
4. Update on dipnet use including management, demonstrations and a possible earlier start. *Assigned: ADFG staff*
5. Report on the smelt study in the upper river. *Volunteered: Dave Cannon*
6. Request by Working Group to share dipnet demonstration videos from ADFG Sport Fishery Division. *Assigned: Chris Shelden. Distributed 6/3/2014*
7. Request by Senator Begich for the Working Group to provide 3-4 priorities regarding jurisdictional challenges between the federal and state governments. *Assigned: Working Group Members*

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

### **MEETING WITH SENATOR BEGICH**

#### **Senator Begich Addressed the Working Group**

Senator Begich discussed the re-authorization of the Magnusson-Steven's Act (MSA) currently in progress within the United States Senate. He remarked that they had already received comments from subsistence, commercial and sport users across the country. The committee was exploring the following issues: climate change and ocean acidification; a ten year plan for rebuilding depleted fish stocks; research on declining fish runs; additional resources for stock assessments; and recognition of all user groups.

*Meeting summaries are prepared and distributed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in cooperative agreement with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management (USF&WS OSM). The department is responsible for summary content. Summaries are not comprehensive or considered meeting minutes, and are designed to provide context on meeting proceedings for the convenience of interested parties/participants. Audio recordings of meetings can be found at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.kswg#2013>*

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**Working Group Comments to Senator Begich**

- 1) Mike Williams from Akiak commented, in regards to the MSA, that a review of the effects of climate change on the ocean is needed. Mr. Williams also suggested further examination of the Community Development Quota (CDQ) program.
- 2) Greg Roczicka from Bethel encouraged Senator Begich to work with his colleagues to incorporate recognition and deference to the cultural aspect of fisheries for local people. Mr. Roczicka commented on how women, especially, are being affected by the change in their normal activities. Mr. Roczicka also recognized Gene Peltola for his work in the area of subsistence. Mr. Roczicka encouraged management agencies to find a better way to work with local people.
- 3) Charlie Brown from Eek commented on historical runtining of Chinook salmon in the early to mid-part of June and chum and sockeye salmon runtining in later June and July.
- 4) Dan Esai from Nicholai requested further research on the relationship between ocean krill and 1-2 year old Chinook salmon in the Kuskokwim Bay. Mr. Esai encouraged the Senator to visit Nicholai to learn about the local life-style. As a Working Group member, he expressed his desire for the “fish” to return.
- 5) Mark Leary from Napaimute discussed a great need for tribal co-management of the Chinook salmon fishery. He commented on growing frustration regarding the dual, state and federal, management occurring in the Kuskokwim River in 2014. Mr. Leary reported that the federal government had identified 32 communities along the Kuskokwim River to receive a federal *Social-Cultural Chinook Permit* to allocate a specified number of Chinook salmon to each qualified community. He went on to say that 12 of these communities are located in state managed waters. He was concerned that although these communities may apply for and receive a federal permit, they would be unable to use it due to the distance needed to travel. Mr. Leary commented that the state had “no mechanism in place” for the people up river to harvest small amounts of king salmon, even though this was requested by the Working Group in April, 2014. Mr. Leary commented on the need for all the people along the river to be “at the table” when it comes to management discussions.
- 6) Dave Cannon from Aniak recalled the low Chinook salmon runs in the Kuskokwim River between 1998-2000. He also discussed his concern regarding the potential for hatcheries and the problems they might bring to the area.
- 7) Nick Kameroff, also from Aniak, suggested the cessation of sport fishing that targets king salmon indefinitely. Mr. Kameroff suggested exploring the impact of high seas fishing on fish stocks. He commented that he would also like to see an end to the use of jet equipped boat motors in the upper rivers and spawning areas.
- 8) Barbara Carlson from Sleetmute emphasized the importance of subsistence fishing and its impact on families. She asked the Senator to help support subsistence fishing in their waters. She also requested help in allocating funds for research needed to “pinpoint” the cause of the Chinook salmon decline, including an understanding of what is happening in the ocean. Ms. Carlson commented that the people on the river are actively working to help increase the numbers of Chinook salmon and help get them to the spawning grounds.
- 9) Henry Lupie commented on the impact the Chinook salmon fishing closures have on subsistence fishing. He said the people would like to conserve the Chinook salmon, but alluded to current closures also affecting opportunity to harvest chum and red salmon. Mr. Lupie pointed out that the people along the Kuskokwim River are sacrificing and he would like to see the high seas fisheries have similar restrictions.

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- 10) Bev Hoffman from Bethel commented on the impact by-catch has had in the Kuskokwim, Yukon and Norton Sound areas. Ms. Hoffman stressed the need for further reduction and restriction of Chinook salmon by-catch. Ms. Hoffman noted the importance of co-management and encouraged the federal government to work with international governments as well.
- 11) Henry Mitchell, representing Coastal Village Seafoods, commented on the concerns he had for proper management of the resource and the need for better science in the Bering Sea. He discussed the decline of capelin in the Bering Sea and its importance to king salmon growth. He pointed to this as a possible contributor to the declines in king salmon and requested more funding for research. Mr. Mitchell also expressed concerns that any increase in the directed Pollock fishery allocation be given to those companies within Alaska.
- 12) Lisa Feyereisen from Crow Village recognized the Working Group members for their time and commitment. She also discussed local people's concern that starvation was a real possibility. Ms. Feyereisen explained that subsistence is about providing life for the people through utilization of a variety of resources.

## **Public Comments to Senator Begich**

- 1.) John Angaiak from Bethel recognized the Working Group for their efforts to conserve king salmon.
- 2.) Ivan M. Ivan, of Akiak introduced his wife, Helen, who spoke to commend the Senator for his visit.

## **Senator Begich Response**

- Senator Begich affirmed the importance of understanding subsistence issues in Alaska.
- Senator Begich asserted that any distribution, or redistribution of Pollock, will stay in Alaska.
- The Senator said that the legislature had recently passed 4 new treaties in response to pirate fishing that gave the federal government more international authority to curtail illegal fishing in US waters.
- The Senator identified research gaps in both terrestrial aquatic and marine environments. He noted that within the MSA, the committee hoped to increase the authorization capacity for research to include scientific and traditional knowledge of fisheries and fish habitat.
- Senator Begich recognized the jurisdictional challenges between the federal and state governments and requested that the Working Group provide 3-4 priorities for the federal government to address in relation to these issues.
- Senator Begich agreed to assist in creating federal forums to improve understanding of subsistence among federal officials.

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## WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

<b>MEMBER SEAT:</b>	<b>NAME:</b>
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Absent</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Dave Cannon
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mark Leary
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Dan Esai
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	<i>Absent</i>
YK DELTA RAC	<i>Absent</i>
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Charlie Brown
SPORT FISHING	Absent
PROCESSOR	Henry Mitchell
ADF&G	Absent
CHAIR	Bev Hoffman

## **Other Participants:**

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Dan Bergstrom, Chris Shelden, Kevin Schaberg

Sport Fish:

Subsistence Division:

ADF&G Liaison Team:

USFWS:

OSM:

Dan Gillikin (KNA) Rebecca Frye (KNA) Roberta Chavez (ONC) Carl Berger (LKEDC) Bill Bechtle (AVCP)	Greg Roczicka (Lower River Subsistence alternate) Casie Stockdale (Lower River Subsistence alternate) Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence alternate) Nick Kameroff (Middle River Subsistence alternate) Barbara Carlson (Upper River Subsistence alternate) Henry Lupie (Member at Large alternate) Greg Hoffman Jr. (Commercial Fisher alternate) Ben Matheson (KYUK Radio) Doug Molyneaux (Unaffiliated) Ivan Ivan, Akiak Helen Ivan, Akiak John Angaiak, Bethel
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## **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), Kuskokwim Native Association (**KNA**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), Georgetown Traditional Council (**GTC**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG**, **Working Group**, or **WG**), Sustainable Escapement Goal (**SEG**), Biological Escapement Goal (**BEG**), Management Objective (**MO**), Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence (**ANS**), Emergency Order (**EO**), Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (**BSFA**)

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