

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

Meeting Agenda

Date: 05/31/2017

Time: 10:00a.m.

Place: Bethel

Time Called to Order:

Chair: LaMont Albertson

ROLL CALL TO ESTABLISH QUORUM:

Upriver Elder:
Downriver Elder:
Commercial Fisher:
Lower River Subsistence:
Middle River Subsistence:
Upper River Subsistence:
Headwaters Subsistence:

QUORUM MET? Yes / No

Processor:
Member at Large:
Sport Fisher:
Western Interior RAC:
Y-K Delta RAC:
ADF&G:

INTRODUCTIONS:

INVOCATION:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: *the agenda may be amended at this time.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Optional. ADF&G does not prepare official meeting minutes.*

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

- Subsistence Reports: Lowest River, ONC Inseason Subsistence Report, Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, Headwaters.
 - a. ADF&G Subsistence Division report
- Overview of Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment/ discussion of ADF&G considerations:
 - a. Test Fisheries (Bethel and Aniak):
 - b. Sonar/Weirs/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:
- Commercial Catch Report: N/A
- Processor Report:
- Sport Fish Report:
- Intercept Fishery Report: *optional*
- Weather Forecast:
- Discussion of ADF&G Management considerations and discussion of possible alternatives (recommendations from the Working Group):
- Motion for Discussion and Action:

OLD BUSINESS:

- Update on the FACA group's progress- *Aaron Poetter, ADF&G*
- Discussion of Working Group vacant seats (Upriver Elder, Processor) and alternates- *Jen Peeks, ADF&G*
- Amend Working Group By-Laws to include a KRITFC seat- *Jen Peeks, ADF&G*
- Update on Working Group exchange program

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion on the NCEAS meeting, March 8&9- *LaMont Albertson*

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

NEXT MEETING DATE: _____ **Time:** _____ **Place:** _____

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Information Packets *ARE*:

- **Intended to help inform Working Group discussions.**
- **To be viewed and used in context with Working Group meetings only.**

Packets *ARE NOT*:

- **To be viewed as standalone documents.**
- **A final say on fisheries management decisions.**

Please use this information responsibly:

Packet information is an incomplete snapshot of an ongoing discussion and changing conditions. Packet information should not be reproduced for any purpose other than to describe Working Group meeting discussions.

Misuse of Packet information can contribute to misunderstandings that can **cause harm to salmon users** and potentially **damage salmon resources**.

Ask Questions: ADF&G staff will be happy to answer biology and management questions. Please call **1-855-933-2433** to reach ADF&G Kuskokwim Area staff.

Attend Meetings: Each Working Group meeting is announced at least 48 hours prior to time and date of meeting. In addition, each meeting is recorded. Recordings can be found here:
http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarea_kuskokwim.kswg

Viewing the information packet while listening to meetings/recordings will provide a better understanding of the information presented in this packet.

Thank you.
Jennifer Peeks
Aaron Poetter
Working Group Coordinators

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2017 Working Group Members ROSTER

DOWN RIVER ELDER	JAMES CHARLES	Tuntutuliak
	JOHN W ANDREW	Kwethluk
UPRIVER ELDER	VACANT	
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	MIKE WILLIAMS	Akiak
	MARY PELTOLA	Bethel
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	DAVE CANNON	Aniak
	LISA FEYEREISEN	Crow Village
	NICK KAMEROFF	Aniak
	WAYNE MORGAN	Aniak
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	MARK LEARY	Napaimute
	BARBARA CARLSON	Sleetmute
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	DANIEL ESAI	Nikolai
MEMBER AT LARGE	FRITZ CHARLES	Bethel
	MARY PELTOLA	Bethel
	BARBARA CARLSON	Sleetmute
YK DELTA RAC	ROBERT ALOYSIUS	Kalskag
	JOHN W ANDREW	Kwethluk
PROCESSOR	VACANT	
	VACANT	
COMMERCIAL FISHING	CHARLIE BROWN	Eek
	GREG HOFFMAN, JR	Bethel
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	RAY COLLINS	McGrath
	VACANT	
SPORT FISHING	LAMONT ALBERTSON	Aniak
	VACANT	
ADF&G	AARON POETTER	Bethel
	AARON TIERNAN	Bethel

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2017 Kuskokwim River Assessment Projects

Overview:

Project	Location	Start Date	End Date	Species	Data Availability	Organization
Test Fishery						
Bethel Test Fishery	Bethel	May 25	August 20	K, C, R, S	Daily	ADF&G
Aniak Test Fishery	Aniak	June 01	July 15	K, C, R	Daily	Napaimute
Mainstem						
Sonar	Bethel	June 01	July 26	K, C, R, W,	Daily	ADF&G
Tagging	Fowler Island	May 28	July 20	K	End of season	ADF&G
Harvest						
Subsistence Surveys ¹	Bethel	June 08	July 15	K, C, R	Weekly	ONC
Subsistence Surveys ²	Lower River	June 12	Open	K, C, R, W	As needed	KRITFC
Subsistence Surveys ³	Lower River	June 12	July 31	K, C, R	Weekly	ADF&G
Subsistence Surveys ⁴	Middle River	June 12	July 31	K, C, R, S	Weekly	ADF&G
Subsistence ASL ¹	Bethel	June 02	Open	K	End of season	ONC
Subsistence ASL ²	Lower River	June 02	Open	K	End of season	KRITFC
Weir						
Kwethluk River	Lower River	June 01	Sept. 10	K, C, R, S	Daily	USFWS
Tuluksak River	Lower River	June 19	Sept. 10	K, C, R, S	Daily	USFWS
Salmon (Aniak) River	Aniak River	July 01	August 15	K, C, R	Daily	Napaimute
George River	Middle River	June 15	Sept. 20	K, C, S	Daily	ADF&G
Tatlawiksuk River	Middle River	June 15	Sept. 20	K, C, S	Daily	ADF&G
Kogrukuk River	Holitna River	June 26	Sept. 20	K, C, R, S	Daily	ADF&G
Telaquana River	Stony River	July 03	August 15	R	Daily	NPS
Takotna River	Upper River	June 24	August 15	K, C	Daily	MTNT
Salmon (Pitka) Fork	Upper River	June 24	August 15	K	Daily	ADF&G
Air Survey	Drainage	July 17	August 05	K	End of season	ADF&G

Species Key: **K** = “King” or Chinook; **C** = chum; **R** = “Red” or sockeye; **S** = “Silver” or coho; **W** = whitefish.

New for 2017 – Joint USFWS and ADF&G Kuskokwim River Salmon Assessment Update

- Beginning June 5, 2017 USFWS and ADF&G will produce a daily assessment document summarizing the most relevant inseason data about Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon run timing and abundance.
- This document will focus exclusively on inseason data from Bethel Test Fishery, Aniak Test Fishery, and mainstem Sonar.
- The assessment documents will be publicly available via email and posted online. ADF&G will distribute the document to the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group email distribution list. Contact Jen Peeks jennifer.peeks@alaska.gov if want to be added or removed from this list.

Informational Packet

Project Descriptions:

- **Bethel Test Fishery** – ADF&G, Division of Commercial Fisheries will operate the Bethel Test Fishery in the same location and use the same methods as in prior years. This project will produce daily catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) for Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon. Data will provide information about inseason run timing, relative abundance (e.g., species ratios), and run strength. Data will be included in the daily assessment update and posted to the ADF&G Fish Counts webpage by 10AM, Monday through Friday:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#fishcounts>

Note: The top of the head will be removed from all Chinook salmon to collect otoliths (ear bones) for a separate study designed to determine where each fish was born.

- **Aniak Test Fishery** – Native Village of Napaimute will operate the Aniak Test Fishery in the same location and use the same methods as in 2015 and 2016. This project will produce daily catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon. Data will provide information about inseason run timing and relative abundance (e.g., species ratios). Data will be included in the daily assessment update.
- **Kuskokwim Sonar** – ADF&G, Division of Commercial Fisheries will operate sonar upriver from Bethel near the upper end of Church Slough and just downriver from the Kwethluk “Y”. This is the first year of project operations. This project will produce daily inseason estimates of abundance for Chinook, chum, sockeye, whitefish, and other species passing the sonar site. Total cumulative abundance with 95% confidence intervals will be estimated daily. Data will be included in the daily assessment update.
- **Chinook Salmon Tagging** – ADF&G, Division of Commercial Fisheries will be tagging Chinook salmon downriver from Bethel near Fowler Island and the confluence of the Johnson River, similar to what was done in 2015 and 2016. All fish will be marked with a brightly colored tag located near the dorsal fin on the back of the fish. A subset of 250 fish will also receive a radio tag inserted into the fish’s stomach. This project aims to estimate total abundance of Chinook salmon returning to the Kuskokwim River. In addition, radio tag data will provide some information about fish distribution, run timing, and migration speed. Estimates will be produced post-season. Inseason catch information will be provided during regularly scheduled Working Group meetings.

Note: please report any tagged fish that are harvested this season to ADF&G by calling 1-800-467-2104 or stopping by the ADF&G office in Bethel.

- **Subsistence Harvest Surveys** – There will be several overlapping and complimentary efforts to collect inseason information about subsistence harvest, catch, and effort. Information will be used to monitor fishing progress as the salmon run develops. In addition, detailed catch and effort information may be used by USFWS to estimate inseason subsistence harvest within specific areas of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge during specified fishery openers.

Informational Packet

- Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) – will conduct weekly fish camp surveys throughout the Bethel area similar to past years. The survey questionnaire has been updated to include more detailed information about catch and effort. Additional survey effort will be conducted at the Bethel boat harbor as needed and provided to USFWS for estimating inseason subsistence harvest. Survey results will be presented weekly at scheduled Working Group meetings.
- Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) – will collect catch and effort information from the following seven communities: Tuntutuliak, Nunapitchuk, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Kwethluk, Akiachak, Akiak.
- ADF&G Division of Subsistence – is conducting two separate projects. First, they will coordinate with volunteer fishermen from Oscarville, Nunapitchuk, Napakiak, and Bethel to estimate subsistence CPUE. Second, the department will partner with the Native Village of Napaimute (NVN) to survey middle river communities from Kalskag to Stony River to monitor how fishers are progressing toward achieving subsistence harvest goals. Survey results will be presented weekly at scheduled Working Group meetings.
- Subsistence Age-Sex-Length (ASL) Sampling – As in past years, ONC will recruit and train subsistence fishermen to collect scales, sex, and length data from Chinook salmon harvested by subsistence fishermen in the Bethel area. Beginning this year, KRITFC will also assist with collection of Chinook salmon ASL from seven lower river communities through their community monitoring program. ASL summaries will be generated post-season.

*Note: Training and sampling supplies will be provided for anyone who wants to participate in the ASL program. Training is scheduled in Bethel for **June 2, 2017 from 9AM–6PM at the Cultural Center**. Contact ADF&G if you want to schedule training in your home community.*

- Weirs – A total of nine weirs will be operated to monitor salmon escapement throughout the lower, middle, and upper portions of the Kuskokwim River drainage. Final estimates of escapement for each location will be made post-season. Daily escapement counts will be updated on the ADF&G Fish Counts webpage daily by 10AM, Monday through Friday:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#fishcounts>
- Aerial surveys will be flown throughout select lower, middle, and upper river tributaries to index Chinook salmon escapement. Aerial survey results will be provided post-season once surveys are completed.

Informational Packet

ADF&G FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE LIAISON TEAM

**KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP
FISHERIES EXCHANGE SUBCOMMITTEE**

DAVE CANNON / LISA FEYEREISEN / DANIEL ESAI / BEVERLY HOFFMAN / MARK LEARY

FRIDAY, AUGUST 08, 2014

J.YUHAS

Dear Exchange Subcommittee participants,

Thank you first to the Working Group for approving this subcommittee to further explore the idea of an exchange program along the river, and also to you for your service on this subcommittee. I am here simply to help your process move along and see if I can provide assistance to this endeavor. It is important to me that as I move forward with assisting you with the details, that this remain the Working Group's endeavor. In order to assist you, I have laid out a few process suggestions for you, and I will be asking some questions so that I can consolidate these answers into some products for you to review.

Suggestions for order of events / process:

1. We need to fully articulate some of the details of the Exchange in writing so that we can "shop the project around" to find support in the form of funding and administration once the full working group has approved / supported our write up. It is much easier to obtain funding when we have a clearly articulated and approved project we're asking someone to fund and we know how much we need. This write up should include the following:
 - What is the stated goal of having this exchange?

To increase the understanding of the differences between fishing means and methods in different parts of the River by subsistence fishers from the Lower, Middle, and Upper River.

To especially increase the understanding of Lower River fishers to the difficulties Middle and Upper River fishers face in meeting their subsistence needs (things like shallow, swifter, narrower river and much lower fish densities.

To increase understanding of fisheries management techniques and their value to sustaining/supporting the subsistence fishery. This is especially to those Lower River fishers that have never seen salmon spawning grounds and those that are most critical of weirs, aerial surveys, and even the Bethel Test Fishery.

- i. Will anything be required of the participants such as a write up after the event, an oral report to the working group, or a special meeting they will need to attend?

Informational Packet

There should be a final product from these exchanges that can be shared to bring additional understanding to the larger group the exchanges represent. The type of final product would depend on the age of the participant. A simple oral interview or report may be enough for older participants. Younger people with their tech savvy could be required to put together a power point, youtube video or something like that.

- Who should be eligible to participate?
 - i. If the only funding sources we can find place further requirements on eligibility, will the working group approve that, or hold off on the exchange? (Examples: NARF or BLA may say only Native participants qualify, a university may say they have to be a student etc... we don't always know until a potential sponsor comes back with a requirement to run by the group.)

I think that the Native People along the Kuskokwim are the largest and longest user group of our salmon and should have priority for participation. The booming population of the Lower River also now has the fishing ability to greatly impact low salmon returns. Because of this I believe they should be the target group for this exchange. They need to become more aware of the impact they can have and how when they take too much it negatively effects fishing efforts further up the River and ultimately escapement as well.

- ii. Will the working group be actively selecting and approving the participants, or will they leave the details up to the administrator once one has been secured as long as the participants are residents of the river?

It would be good to have the working group actively participate in the selection. Maybe initial applicants could be recommended by village tribal councils.

- How many people are you hoping to sponsor?

10-20

- When should the first exchange occur? (*I think we're shooting for next fishing season?*)

June 2015 if possible

- What is the desired duration of the exchange? (*1 week, a few days, a month?*)

2-3 days

- How much money do we think we need for the overall project for next year?

\$25,000

- i. How will participants travel to and from their destination?

Plane/boat – ultimately boat to the fish camp setting

- ii. Where will they be housed?

Depends on where they are going. In Napaimute for example, we have lodging facilities for guests

- iii. How will meals be provided?

Seems like the hosts would feed the guests

2. We need to make the details of this desired project known and seek support.

- Does the Working Group have the ability to receive funding for this endeavor directly, or does an administrative entity (*a Tribe, a non-profit or for profit corporation, or a separate funding account*) need to receive the funding for future expenditure?

If you need a tribal entity to receive & administer the funding, the Native Village of Napaimute might be interested

- Do we have any offers to administrate this program as yet? If not we'll need to seek an entity who can do this. Some suggestions include: a Tribe or other

Informational Packet

local entity, a Vista Volunteer (*we would still need a sponsor / host for them to sit at a desk and have a telephone even though Vista would pay for their stipend*), a volunteer. I would assume it would be beneficial to have this administrator reside somewhere in the area, is this accurate, or does the subcommittee and working group have more lukewarm feelings on this?

- **Once a project plan is written** (*which I plan to do for you with your input and approval on the final product*), we can send a copy of it with a solicitation for funding and administration to as many entities as we can think of, so we'll need a comprehensive list. I've initiated a starter list for you to look over. Please let me know if there are entities you do not want considered for solicitation listed, and I'll scratch them off the list. Please also let me know what to add to this list:
 - **Special** federal or state legislative **appropriation**
 - **Chamber of Commerce** donation through their Rural Outreach program
 - **UAF** Rural Studies or Rural Economic Development program, or a masters student
 - Other Federal or State entities ie: DCCED, Education, etc
 - **BIA**
 - **AFN**
 - **NARF**
 - **Institute of the North** in partnership with the **First Alaskans Institute**
 - **Rasmussen Foundation**
 - **Alaska Humanities Council**
 - **Council on the Arts**
 - **Historical Foundation**
 - **Rotary International** – one big club or donations from the clubs to the District
 - **Corporate sponsors** ie: oil company / Bass Pro Shop and run administrate with a Vista Volunteer (*Vista pays them but they work for a program for 1-2 years, it's like homeland Peace Corps*) housed at one of the area Tribal entities
 - I'll actually be trolling the internet for funding sources who might fit – it sounds strange but they're out there in the most unsuspected places!
 - **United Fishermen of Alaska** or processors
 - **Crowdsourcing** (*yes, I'm serious*) where all of the above plus private entities chip in and we get someone to run it once we have the funds
 - **Pick-Click-Give**, Did you know that once an entity is formed it can apply to be part of this, and that it's pretty easy to get accepted if it's not political / partisan?
- 3. **Once the plan has been articulated and funding has been secured, participants will need to be solicited and approved. I will write up a full outreach plan with your input and for your approval once we have more of the details written down about the project. Hopefully this portion of the process will take place with an administrator who will be implementing the project for you. I will of course continue to make myself available to the process.**
- 4. **Having some experience doing these types of things before, below is my suggested timeline for following through on this in time to have an exchange next fishing season:**
 - **August 2014:** Finalize a Project Description approved by the full Working Group
 - **September 2014:** Begin Sponsor Search & Funding Details
 - **October – January 2014:** Report to Subcommittee on Search / Modify if Necessary
 - **February - March 2014:** Solicit Exchange Participants

Informational Packet

- **April 2014:** Approve Participants and Initiate Arrangements for Travel / Housing

That's all I have for you for this first bite at moving the process forward. Feel free to send me information related to this document, and I'll start working on getting things written up for your review in the next week.

I think we can do this, it will just take a little organization, but we can do it!

I look forward to working with you on this project,

Jennifer Yuhas