

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

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

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

August 2, 2017

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday August 2, 2017 and adjourned at 12:00 p.m. Meeting time was two hours. Seven full voting members were present and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Management Actions Under Consideration:

Continuing Business: Run assessment and management actions.

People to be Heard:

Old Business Discussion Topics:

- Follow-up on Whitefish Lake regulations and enforcement.

New Business Discussion Topics:

- Discussion on Working Group's role in inseason messaging. *Tabled to the August 16 meeting.*

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS: *No Action Items at the time of this meeting.*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda as amended. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. To schedule the next Working Group meeting for August 16, 2017. *Passed (Unanimous)*
3. Adjourn. *Passed (Unanimous)*

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Aaron Tiernan (ADF&G acting Area Management Biologist) reported there were no new management actions under consideration as of August 2, 2017.

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Jeff Sanders (Bethel) commented that salmon were often driven into non-salmon spawning tributaries such as the Kialik, Johnson and Gweek rivers by tidal influence; he suggested that these streams be entered into the anadromous waters catalogue for protection. Working Group members discussed fishery management actions in non-salmon spawning tributaries. Further discussion was tabled to the August 16 meeting.
- Jen Peeks (ADF&G) provided upcoming Board of Fish (BOF) meeting dates and proposal deadlines.
- Alice Bailey (former ADF&G employee) discussed a potential film project that would focus on the Working Group process and its members.

SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

- **Lowest River:** Charlie Brown (Commercial Fishing) reported that he had been primarily fishing for sockeye and chum salmon. James Charles (Downriver Elder) reported that subsistence fishing for chum salmon had been good; however, due to strong winds fishers were unable to successfully fish at the sockeye salmon sites.
- **Lower River:** Mary Peltola (Lower River Subsistence alternate) reported that she had not started coho salmon fishing. John Andrew (Downriver Elder alternate) commented that he caught five coho salmon in five minutes using a 20' length gillnet; other people were also catching a few coho salmon.
- **Middle River:** Nick Kameroff (KRITFC) reported that people had been fishing with rod and reel; many people were waiting for coho salmon.
- **Upriver:** Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence alternate) reported that people continued to use drift gillnets to harvest sockeye salmon and that, to date, few coho salmon had arrived.

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#2017>

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CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:** Jordan Head (ADF&G) provided an overview of the assessment projects. (*For more information on the 2017 inseason projects, please see the August 2 Informational Packet.*)
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** As of August 1, coho salmon were the most abundant species in the BTF. The BTF indicated that the Chinook salmon run had essentially completed in the lower river; chum and sockeye salmon were nearing the end of their runs.
 - **Sonar:** The sonar project completed operations on July 26. The 2017 end of season point estimates were ~61,500 Chinook salmon; ~863,000 sockeye salmon; and ~629,000 chum salmon. As of July 26 ~20,292 coho salmon had passed the sonar site.
 - **Weirs:** Chinook salmon escapements were above the 5 and 10-year averages at nearly all weir projects. Chum salmon escapement indicated an average to above average run size. Sockeye salmon escapement indicated an above average run size. Coho salmon passage was just beginning at the weirs. The Kogruklu River weir had suspended operations on July 26 due to high water.
 - **Subsistence Division Project:** Dave Runfola (ADF&G, Subsistence Division) reported that lower river fishers indicated that ~24% had completed their subsistence fishing and ~75% were nearly completed; all fishers intended to harvest coho salmon during the 2017 season. Approximately ~25% of middle river fishers had completed their subsistence fishing, but intended to harvest coho salmon; ~14% of middle river fishers had not begun fishing as of July 25.
2. **Commercial:** Aaron Tiernan reported that a catcher-seller opportunity for coho salmon was expected after August 7.
3. **Processor:** Aaron Tiernan announced that there were no longer any processors interested in Kuskokwim River commercial opportunities during the 2017 season.
4. **Sport Fishing:** LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) reported that guides were catching coho salmon in the lower portion of the Aniak River.
5. **Discussion of ADF&G Management Consideration and Discussion of Possible Alternatives:** *There were no new management actions under consideration.*

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Follow-up on Whitefish Lake regulations and enforcement:** Aaron Tiernan (ADF&G) provided the State of Alaska's fishing regulations for Whitefish Lake. He commented that due to low staffing, as of August 2, law enforcement had been unable to conduct an aerial investigation into recent illegal fishing reports in Whitefish Lake.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Discussion on Working Group's role in inseason messaging:** *Tabled until the August 16 meeting.*

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. **Approve the agenda as amended. Passed (Unanimous)**
2. **To schedule the next Working Group meeting for August 16, 2017. Passed (Unanimous)**
3. **Adjourn at 12:59 p.m. Passed (Unanimous)**

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COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

- Bob Aloysius (YK Delta RAC) suggested that fishers use barbless hooks while hook and line fishing.
- Mary Peltola reported that there had been several complaints during the 2017 fishing season concerning fish spoilage due to flies and rain. She commented that historically fish had been processed all summer and people, historically, adapted to various weather conditions.

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	<i>Vacant</i>
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mary Peltola
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Absent
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Absent
MEMBER AT LARGE	Absent
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	Absent
YK DELTA RAC	Bob Aloysius
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Charlie Brown
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	<i>Vacant</i>
KRITFC	Nick Kameroff
ADF&G	Aaron Tiernan
CHAIR	Barbara Carlson

Other Participants:

ADF&G Comm. Fish: Aaron Tiernan, Zach Liller, Jordan Head, Jen Peeks

Sport Fishing:

Subsistence Division: Dave Runfola

USFWS: Ken Stahlnecker, Lew Coggins

OSM:

Jim Simon (BSFA, KRITFC)

Bill Bechtol

Tim Andrew (ONC)

Avery Hoffman (ONC)

Alice Bailey

Jeff Sanders

Media:

Anna Rose MacArthur

WG Alternates:

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsararmiut Native Council (**ONC**), 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**), Law Enforcement (**LE**), Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (**KRITFC**)

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