

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working group

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

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

June 29, 2020

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Monday June 29, 2020 and adjourned at 8:56 p.m. Meeting time was approximately 3 hours and 2 minutes. Eight full voting members were present, and a quorum was established. Fritz Charles chaired the meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS:

USFWS/KRITFC Update:

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

People to be Heard:

Continuing Business:

Old Business Discussion Topics:

- Meeting attendance and vacant seats
 - This topic was tabled but will be discussed at a future meeting when more voting members are in attendance.

New Business Discussion Topics:

WORKING GROUP ACTION ITEMS:

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

1. Approve the agenda. *Passed (Unanimous)*
2. Motion to add Alissa Rogers as a YK Delta RAC alternate. *Passed (Unanimous)*
3. Motion to extend the meeting until 8:30 p.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*
4. Motion to align state regulations to federal regulations to allow state subsistence users to keep Chinook salmon using selective methods from the Kuskokwim River mouth to the Kalskag Bluffs. *Passed (7 yes, 1 no)*
5. Motion to keep fishing closed to gillnets from the mouth of the Kuskokwim to the Kalskag bluffs until there is a 10:1 chum and sockeye to Chinook salmon ratio for 3 consecutive days in a row. *Passed (6 yes, 2 no)*
6. Motion to support ADFG recommendation to keep fishing open from the Kalskag bluffs to the headwaters. *Passed (Unanimous)*
7. Motion to extend the meeting until 9:00 p.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*
8. Adjourn at 8:56 p.m. *Passed (Unanimous)*

KRITFC/ USFWS UPDATE: Ray Born (USFWS; Acting Refuge Manager) reported there are no special action items under consideration.

ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Nick Smith (ADF&G, Area. Management Biologist) reported that on July 1 ADF&G will align regulations to the current USWS regulations. These regulations will allow the retention of Chinook salmon in the main stem of the Kuskokwim below the Kalskag bluffs with selective gear types.

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

- Adolf Willie (Tuntutuliak) reported that there are subsistence concerns about the low numbers of fish coming into the river.
- Kevin Whitworth (KRITFC) reported that there is high water in McGrath. Mr. Whitworth commented that he has spoken with several fisherman in McGrath and that some people have not begun fishing whereas others are done fishing for Chinook for this season.

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SUBSISTENCE REPORTS:

- **ONC Subsistence Report:** Avery Hoffman (ONC) provided an overview of the ONC inseason harvest monitoring project. *(For more information on the ONC subsistence survey report, please see the June 29, 2020 Informational Packet. Pages 4-6)*
- **Lower River:** James Charles (Downriver Elder) reported that he has caught enough Chinook salmon to be satisfied for the season. Alissa Rogers (Lower River Subsistence Alt.) reported that the amount of male Chinook salmon being caught is greatly outnumbering the amount of female Chinook salmon being caught. Mary Peltola (Lower River Subsistence Alt.) reported that when fishing on the Johnson River she caught 5 Chinook salmon and all of them were males. Mike Williams (Lower River Subsistence) reported that the Chinook salmon being caught this season are smaller and almost all males.
- **Middle River:** Lisa Feyereisen (Middle River Subsistence) reported that people are putting a lot of time into fishing this season. Ms. Feyereisen commented that some people have waited for the first run to pass and have just begun fishing. Megan Leary (NVM) reported that fishing has picked up in Kalskag and Aniak. Ms. Leary commented that people are starting to catch chums and sockeye in higher numbers than Chinook.
- **Upriver:** Barbara Carlson (Upriver Subsistence) reported that her neighbor set a net over night and caught a 1:1 ratio of Chinook and sockeye salmon. Ms. Carlson commented that the sockeye numbers are beginning to pick up.
- **CONTINUING BUSINESS:**
 1. **Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects:** Sean Larson (ADF&G) provided an overview of the ADF&G assessment projects. *(For more information on the 2020 inseason assessment projects, please see the June 29 Informational Packet, Pages 8-18).*
 - **Bethel Test Fish:** Mr. Larson reported that as of June 28, the cumulative CPUE of Chinook salmon at the BTF was 282. Based on historical data, the 2020 Chinook salmon run appeared to be tracking slightly lower than average at this point in the season.
 - **Aniak Test Fish:** Mr. Larson reported that as of June 28, the cumulative CPUE at the ATF was 653. Based on historical data, the 2020 Chinook salmon run appeared to be tracking slightly lower than average at this point in the season.
 - **Sonar:** Mr. Larson reported that as of June 26, an estimated 38,200 Chinook salmon have passed through the sonar site. 3,800 chum salmon have passed through the sonar site. 63,600 sockeye salmon have passed through the sonar site.
 - **Weirs:** George River weir has passed 23 Chinook and 50 chum salmon. Kogruklu River weir has passed 23 chum salmon. Salmon Pitka Fork River weir has passed 3 Chinook salmon.
 - **Subsistence Division project update:** No projects in the water.
 2. **Sport Fishing:** LaMont Albertson (Sport Fishing) reported that sport fishermen are doing well on the Aniak River.
 3. **Discussion of ADF&G Management considerations and discussion of possible alternatives:** *(Please see Motions 4-6 on page 3).*

OLD BUSINESS:

- Meeting attendance and vacant seats
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NEW BUSINESS: *No new business to report at the time of this meeting*

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COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP:

Fritz Charles (Member at large) announced that the next Working Group meeting will occur on Monday, July 6 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	James Charles
UPRIVER ELDER	Absent
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams Sr.
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Lisa Feyereisen
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Absent
MEMBER AT LARGE	Fritz Charles
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	<i>Vacant</i>
YK DELTA RAC	John Andrew
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Absent
SPORT FISHING	LaMont Albertson
PROCESSOR	<i>Vacant</i>
KRITFC	James Nicori
ADF&G	Nick Smith
CHAIR	Fritz Charles

Other Participants:		
<u>ADF&G Comm. Fish:</u> Ben Gray, Sean Larson, Charles Brazil, Keegan Birchfield, Bobette Dickerson. Lily Reichard <u>Sport Fish:</u> John Chythlook <u>Subsistence Division:</u> Dave Runfola		
<u>USFWS:</u> Ray Born, Aaron Webber, Carol Danberg <u>OSM:</u> Eva Patton		
Jennifer Hooper (AVCP) Janessa Esquible (ONC) Danielle Lowery (ONC) Avery Hoffman (ONC) Van Kapsner (ONC) Bill Bechtol (KRITFC) Amanda Hoeldt (NVN) Katie Hoeldt (NVN) Jim Simon (KRITFC) Kevin Whitworth (KRITFC)	Bill Bechtol (KRITFC)	 <u>Media:</u> <u>WG Alternates:</u> Mary Peltola (Lower River Sub. Alt.) Alissa Rogers (Lower River Sub. Alt.)

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsaranmiut Traditional Native Council (**OTNC**), 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**), Native Village of Napaimute (**NVN**), Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (**YKHC**), Alaska State Troopers (**AST**), University of Alaska Fairbanks (**UAF**)

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