

Prince William Sound / Copper River
Salmon harvest Task Force Mtg.
April 17, 2019
The Cordova Center – Cordova, AK

Attendance: who's on tele?

• CDFU Gillnet Division – James Honkola	Present
• CDFU Seine Division – Galen Meyer	Present
• PWS Set Net Association – Forest Jenkins	Not Present
• PWS/CR AC – John Renner	Present
• Trident Seafoods – Leo Vargas	Present
• Ocean Beauty Seafoods – Ben Kichenschlager	Present
• Copper River Seafoods – Tom Carpenter/ voted in as chair	Present
• PWSAC – Casey Campbell	Present
• Peter Pan Seafoods – Colby Boulton	Present
• Icicle Seafoods – Bob Nathanson	Present
• Silver Bay Seafoods – Tommy Sheridan	Present
• North Pacific Seafoods – Inlet Fish Producers (NSPI) – Clayton Hevly	Present
• VFDA – Mike Wells	Present
• Native Village of Eyak – John Whissel	Present
• Copper River/Prince William Sound Marketing Association – Jeff Bailey	Present

Honorary non-voting members

- ASMI Not present
- ADEC Not present

ADF&G

- Aaron Poetter – Chair
- Jeremy Botz – Area Gillnet Manager
- Charlie Russell -- Area Seine Manager
- Mark Somerville -- Area Sportfish Biologist, Copper River
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Pete HoephnerJohn Williams

Call to Order: 1:03 pm

Roll Call-

September 2018 minutes, Approved -T. Sheridan motion to approve /2nd Mike Wells

Call for edits. Discussion – change board to “Task force members”. Will change and re-submit. Approved with changes. Approved meeting agenda / Unanimous

UPDATES/ REPORTS:

Mark Somerville; Sportsfish, Subsistence And Personal Use Management, Upper Copper River :

“We’re changing the fishery and management so often we found out communications fell by the wayside. A lot of people were concerned with the fishery and our management. We’re trying to correct that this year by being up front with our communications”

He mentioned Chelsea (Haisman) gave him input towards what might be concerns; “how to manage the funding phase vs. in-season reporting vs. accuracy of our management.” Somerville detailed changes from 2008 as compared to now including explaining “expanded harvest numbers,” “we take the reported data and expand it based on the number of permits.” He spoke of “harvest potential” Upper Copper and Chitina Subdistrict and gave numbers for State and federal catch. He stated management is based strictly on what passes by the sonar and anticipated harvest is based on previous 5 year average. Somerville explained the process by which he makes allowance decisions. Also, not including Gulkana hatchery escapement which is a component not addressed at this time. Questions were asked including whether there was a process for addressing dip net mortality, which remains an unknown factor

Kyle Shed with ADFG Genetics Conservation Lab based in Anchorage

Shed talked about Genetics, strain, and the Alaska Hatchery Research Program also known as Hatchery/Wild interaction project. He mentioned as background wildstock priority and in statutes and salmon hatchery enhancement regs that wildstocks should not be impacted in a negative manner. He stated priority is given to not negatively affect wildstocks and this is being done primarily through reducing gene flow. He spoke on genetic effect over time and what effect natural selection has on wildstocks, and possible homogenization. He also talked on state funding which no longer exists and the genetic study still being done to track genetic structure of pink and chum salmon in S.E. and other unknown questions about salmon strains

ADF&G – Charlie Russell 2019 Seine Season outlook : AFK Hatchery, natural chum forecast June 17, 1st survey. Forecast for pinks “looking rosey” with combined pink Salmon forecast for the sound at 66 mil fish. Leaving about 58 mil for common property harvest. If the 2019 natural pink salmon run is realized it will be the 2nd largest natural run on record.

Casey Campbell on PWSAC Outlook – review of last year ; goals met, successful egg takes at Wally Noremborg and AFK. At Main Bay the sockeye however there was lower fecundity in the females than typically anticipated and came up a half million short. Wally Noremborg experienced a shortfall of 140 of their 153 million goal. IT was heavily fished last year. Short at Cannery Creek due to drought conditions. At Gulkana we also did not meet our egg take goal falling short of broodstock. The state fell short on their Chinook goal as well. We’re seeing higher survival on both kings and chums att Wally Noremborg however we are seeing lower survivals at Cannery Creek. Main Bay and Gulkana are showing average survivals. Forecasts are: mid point return of 22.3 mil pink salmon 2.57 mil chum 1.37 mil sockeye 249 k coho Preseason for cost recovery 5.9 mil dollars, coho 5.6 mil chum. Chum cost recovery starts around July,1. Construction and energy projects were reported on. Warmer water temperatures are being seen.

VFDA Outlook – Mike Wells . Some heavy humpback predation was seen on salmon fry. 1st release 30th of April, 2nd May 18. Target weight was met and on second release, exceeded. 1.93 mil Coho smolt were released at 20.3 grams this year we switched to a 10 year odd or even data set because there were relatively robust returns in 2013 and 2015 forecast this year is 87,405. Preseason Pink salmon goal is

right at 4.5 mil with 408 k fish for brood. Cost recovery we expect to start around June 5. Test fishing is hoped for around June 20. In the last ten years the average is about 17.6 mil. 2019 forecast is roughly 20.2 mil. Low end is 10 mil-- high 30 mil. 2019 out-migration achieved, 270 mil egg take at Solomon's Gulch last year and successful winter incubation went very well. est 257 mil anticipate releasing 1.8 mil coho smolt. Construction projects are coming up, depending on funding. Pink expansion, 270 mil over 5 years was achieved. This will be the second year of returns at 250 mil increase, 1st phase based on a 242 mil pink fry release, that additional 20 mil looking at an average rate survival of 8.33. We're hoping the fleet sees another 1.6 mil pinks.

Matt Piche NVE, Natural Resources Coordinator, Fish Biologist

Piche reported on Copper River Chinook Salmon Capture Project est 2003. 97% of in-river salmon are sockeye, 3 % are chinook. Copper River work is difficult for both fishermen and researchers There are > 40 tributaries over 62k of the CR Watershed used by chinook. Population sampling statistics are used to determine abundance estimate. Weir counting is an impossibility. History of population monitoring: 1960s-70s, aerial escapement surveys were done and on some of the clear water spawning grounds they were used as escapement index. In the 80s and 90s the catch age model was added to that taking data from commercial fisheries. It was found the majority of Chinook were spawning outside of the aerial index streams, problematic because they can't all be seen from a plane. 1999 -2002 ADF&G conducted the 1st 2 sample market catch project on the CR to estimate Chinook salmon abundance. First sample was dip nets from a boat/ Wood Canyon. Second Sample was Wood Canyon at the time it was subsistence fishery with household limits @ 1 chinook salmon. In 2001 NVE began looking at how to increase sample size and precision and we came up with using fish wheels in channel constrictions to do our own market capture project. By 2003 we were coming up with trusted data used to manage post season chinook since 2003. A powerpoint presentation was given on the four research style fish wheels in use. The wheels sample 24 hours / day to get consistent accurate counts according to river changes. Tagging was explained. 82 k chinook measurements have been taken since 2003. The importance of tagging location was expressed, in determination of run size and spawning escapement. Recapture math was explained: Baird Canyon vs. spawning escapement. Determination of system wide escapement and prediction math was explained.

NVE's sportfish study was reported on; system wide spawning and run timing study Led by the Glenn Allen field office. Radio telemeter tags will be put in chinook for tracking, "We're going to have towers at the mouth of spawning tributaries and flights are going to be conducted" for assessment throughout the watershed. ADF&G will be assisted by NVE in another study to determine in-river survival and smolt to adult survival. High resolution imaging in sonar was mentioned as valuable in reducing stress for fish handled and also reducing long range costs.

Stormy Haught--

2019 Forecast – Provided an update. Was released online in Mid Jan. Quite a good pink salmon forecast, middle of the road chum forecast , sockeye return was discussed with reduction in the five year old return and with a massive return of age four fish. "I'm a little bit uncomfortable with this for a couple of reasons." (Coghill weir washed out twice reducing sample size, our sampling was dominated by early season sampling we may be overestimating that movement of 1-2s.) Forecast history and Forecast Methods were discussed, (do not take into consideration environmental changes, pink – good, chum –

average, sockeye decent but with some concerns.) history shows forecast to be higher than actual. Noticing fish are getting smaller. Sockeye for Coghill, Miles Lake. Chinook – CR also seeing smaller fish.

Jeremy Botz 2019 Gillnet Division–

Management priorities, escapement. Early season inside closure line and chinook escapement goals; “Over the last few years we’ve seen a rapid decline in sockeye harvest and also an over abundance in CR sockeye. Last year was the second lowest on record.” Coho early 1940s peaked. Copper River District outlook; “We are anticipating a weak sockeye and above average chinook run.” Coho salmon fishery has gone up after Aug 15 I would anticipate a 24-36 hour period once or twice a week depending on run strength and fishing effort. Bering River 2k sockeye and 67k coho-- which has gone up substantially over the last 5 years. Coghill outlook, 443k one of the largest forecasts in quite awhile. There will be frequent communications with PWSACC. Unakwik recent average is 2,750 sockeye typically opening mid June and concurrent with Coghill District. Port Chalmers is 250k.

Public Comment:

Does dept need any additional help for large runs in Coghill. Via fishing? Or?

OLD BUSINESS

Bylaw Committee Update and Recommendation

Bylaws were reported on by the committee to revise the bylaws. John Renner motioned to accept the Bylaws Committee recommendations /2nd Casey Campbell

Discussion: Quite a bit of discussion was had in regards to the bylaws as written; including

1. amended language, subsection 8 pp 22-27,
2. Casey Campbell commented on board members becoming ex-officio members, clarifications on recommendations and stating general attempts for the SHTF to become more of a formal process.
3. Tom Carpenter commented on p 24 Copper River Seafoods and North Pacific were left off of the list of Task Force permanent members and would like to be included. Tommy Sheridan spoke to this as being an oversight and amended accordingly.
4. Majority discussion- 8 + members constitutes majority, 15 voting seats. Quorum discussion; John Whissel: quorum is 7, is majority the majority of vote or majority of membership?
5. **Amendment:** Tommy Sheridan: under conduct of salmon harvest task force, add list item 10, quorum consisting of majority of 7+ of voting membership must be present for salmon harvest task force meetings .
6. **Amendment:** in bylaws to remove individual processor names, processor seats will be reflective of processor voting matrix with 5 voting seats and two ex officio seats.

After discussion on organizational policy, esp. simple majority consent of members present (8 + members constitutes majority, 15 voting seats,) Quorum discussion- John Whissel- quorum is 7, is majority the majority of vote or majority of membership?

Questions called and heard, in voting to adopt the Bylaws as modified by amendments, **motion passed with unanimous consent.**

Tommy Sheridan /2nd grey haired man to R of Honkola

A motion was made by Tommy Sheridan that “the Prince William Sound SHTF Bylaw Committee recommend that the PWS Task Force take action here to remove the ADF&G staff from Salmon Harvest Task Force chaired role.”

Motion passed with unanimous vote.

Tommy Sheridan /2nd grey haired man to R of Honkola motioned to nominate Tom Carpenter to chair the remainder of the meeting. Tommy Sheridan stated the Bylaw Committee discussed this “By no means is it a negative reflection on the Department [ADF&G]. The Task force greatly values the department’s role here, and really appreciates all that the Department does. All the presentations given today were really fantastic, so thank you. But there was consensus that the Department no longer serve in that role.”

Motion Passed unanimously. Chair was turned over to Tom Carpenter.

Jon Renner was asked by the Russian fleet to give a recommendation against Sunday openers whenever practical. Jon Renner **motioned** that Sunday openers not happen whenever practical. No second, no action taken.

NEW BUSINESS

Seine Issues

1. Priority Stream List- Charles Russel unsure of why these were listed, maybe stream markers- Galen states “there was miscommunication on shipping from sign manufacturer” and they do not know the whereabouts. Aaron Poettoer stated “ I put together a list I’ve noticed during aerial surveys and from concerned fishermen who would like to see new signs put out.”
2. Chum Salmon Escapement- Tom Carpenter unaware of why this was on agenda. This was tabled for a future agenda.
3. Fishery Announcement Recommendation:
 - a. **Motion:** Galen Meyer/John Renner 2nd: recommendation that ADFG provides daily update on seine fishery
Discussion was had on how to get information to fleet with aerial survey updates, escapement numbers, cost recovery, when to expect announcements

Upon unanimous vote, **motion passed**

Gillnet Issues

1. James Honkola/ 2nd **unidentified 1:31:9 Motion** to recommend keeping Main Bay subdistrict open to minimize build up in the AGZ.

Discussion: for management to find a way to reduce build up, keep it open as long as possible to reduce competition and chaos, Would this make broodstock accumulation more difficult, or is size of brood affected?

Approved with unanimous consent

2. James Honkola/ 2nd **unidentified** recommendation to motion to recommend to have at least a short duration Coghill opener along with Granite Bay subdistrict.

Discussion: considering flexible ways to alleviate congestion and short duration. Tom Carpenter: “Hopefully the new Coghill weir will not cause problems because it is a floating weir.”

Approved with unanimous consent

3. James Honkola/ 2nd **unidentified** recommendation to continue the use of emergency order authority to allow the use deep gear in PWS prior to July 1.

Motion passed with unanimous consent

4. James Honkola/ 2nd **unidentified** - Motion to recommend to include number of permits fished not number of deliveries reported in fisheries announcements With input from Tom Carpenter concerning communicating with processors, Honkola **tables motion** till next SHTF meeting .
5. James Honkola/ 2nd **unidentified** Motion to recommend for SHTF to reinstate Eshamy Weir

Discussion: Honkola- Department funding no longer allows, benefits both user groups but can try and seek out funding to do so

Motion passed with unanimous consent

6. James Honkola/ 2nd **unidentified** Motion to recommend during sockeye conservation concerns department shifts opportunity, when harvestable surplus of Chinook the Department uses EO authority to shift mesh size adjustment prior to July 15

Discussion: king gear

Motion passes unanimously, VFDA and PWSAC abstain,

7. James Honkola/ 2nd **unidentified** **Motion** to recommend support for weekly reporting of Copper River Subsistence Gillnet Catch

Discussions: Would weekly reporting be useful as in-season management tool? Effort distribution information would add to value.

Motion passed with unanimous consent

Public Comment

1. Pete Hoephner- against long duration opener in Main Bay district, thinks it affects the size of fish
2. John Williams- test fishery on Copper was poor choice from Fish and Game, dumping fish on the market that were not known to be on the market, something must be done in Main Bay, enforcement- give tickets
3. Darin Gilman- Number of permits seems redundant, but he supported Eshamy weir.
4. Thea Thomas- question to Casey, buildup of dark chums, early season openers close to hatchery were great for fishermen and market but broodstock was not met, Casey states behavior was different, management strategy will be similar to last year but a “touch more cautious.”
5. Shawna Williams- support of Eshamy weir, question for Department, Mark Specifically- Gulkana Brood is accounted for within inriver goal but not managed in-season due to run timing however run timing on the Gulkana, when in the personal use fishery they are still a month away from the hatchery so there is no way to manage in-season
6. Makena- odd years have had a huge surplus in Orca which is regulatory closed waters, why is it closed waters and would you open if there was a surplus? In lifting closed waters manager does have EO authority, in 2017 there was a buildup around town but didn’t open but would like to do so in 2019 if there is sufficient fish to do so
7. Task force remarks
8. Dennis Zadra- Test fish Copper River Salmon hitting market were of substantial detriment to market
9. General thanks to department and bylaw committee
10. Homer seine meeting May 21
11. John Whissel/ 2nd **unidentified Motion** to recommend that the SHTF recognize that the research and management position be split back into two positions staffed by 2 full-time people here in Cordova.
12. Discussion: John Whissel felt this work load is too much for one person to efficiently do so and he would like them split. Aaron Poetter: can appreciate the desire for more staff, however this is not the time the administration is going to support more positions however it is not up to the department, we have to make do with what the legislation gives us, making a recommendation to the department is not the appropriate route

Motion passed by Unanimous consent

Determine next meeting date: Sept 25 and chairmanship:

Discussion of chairmanship- Tom Carpenter is OK with doing it, John Whissel- CDFU is organizing body so could give chair, Casey Campbell- agrees with Whissel on CDFU designating chair, long term continuity with the body, Galen Meyer- thinks it's within CDFU to find chair, nominates Tom for next meeting

Galen Meyers/ 2nd ??? **Motion** to nominate Brian O'Leary as co-chair for the Fall meeting

Motion passed with unanimous consent

Non-voting member could be co-chair

Motion to nominate Brian O'leary Mike Wells does not support ex-officio member as chair or vice chair, suggests it is tabled, **Motion** tabled for fall meeting

Motion to adjourn by Galen Myers/ 2nd James Honkola

CH: ccr