

**Copper River Prince William Sound Salmon Harvest Task Force
Spring 2023 Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2023 || 9:30am
Cordova Center meeting room + Zoom**

Minutes taken from the meeting audio recording, available at www.cdfu.org/shtf-meeting.

1. Call to Order (03:22)
 - a. Meeting was called to order at pm by Chair Dennis Zadra.

2. Roll Call
 - Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ex-officio)
 - Jeremy Botz
 - Heather Scannel
 - Tracy Hansen
 - Mark Somerville
 - Cordova District Fishermen United - Gillnet seat
 - Darin Gilman
 - Cordova District Fishermen United - Seine seat
 - Mike Mickelson
 - Copper River & Prince William Sound Marketing Association
 - Bret Bradford
 - Copper River & Prince William Sound AC
 - John Renner
 - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation
 - Geoff Clark
 - Valdez Fisheries Development Association
 - Mike Wells
 - OBI Seafoods (ex-officio year)
 - Ben Kirk
 - Trident Seafoods (ex-officio year)
 - Leo Vargas
 - Copper River Seafoods
 - Roelle Castello
 - Silver Bay Seafoods
 - Hunter Hammer
 - Peter Pan Seafoods - not present
 - 60 North Seafoods

- Rich Wheeler
- Camtu's Alaska Wild Seafoods
 - Tyler Dillon
- Prince William Sound Setnet Association (not present)
- Native Village of Eyak
 - John Whissel

3. Approve Meeting Agenda (06:19)

- a. Amendment by Darin Gilman, Section 6 Part 8, add recommendation to allow deep gear at Port Chalmers district June 1st for gillnet fishery - second Bret Bradford.
- b. Note by John Renner, graph in back of packet to be used during Section 1 Part A.

Motion to approve the agenda with amendments. John Renner/second Bret Bradford. Unanimous. Motion carries.

4. Approve Minutes from fall meeting, November 1, 2022 (07:35)

Motion to approve the Fall 2022 Salmon Harvest Task Force meeting minutes. Darin Gilman /second John Renner. Unanimous. Motion carries.

5. 2023 Updates and Reports (08:22)

- a. Tracy Hansen provided an overview slide presentation of upriver salmon fisheries, with Mark Somerville supporting via zoom.
 - i. Darin Gilman asked whether there are plans to liberalize the sport fishery upriver based on the king prediction mark. Mark Somerville responded no, and that the only way the king or sockeye salmon fisheries would be considered to be liberalized is if the upper bound were greatly increasing. No restrictions are planned.
 - ii. John Renner asked whether an increase in guided chinook sport fishery upriver is expected based on their report. Mr. Somerville said he can't predict but does expect an increase. Guides have to register with the state but the State does not officially monitor where they are with a database or record - but they do get a sense.
 - iii. John Whissel asked whether there were predictions on late ice breakup. Mr. Somerville anticipates high floes at the start of season similar to 2022.

- iv. Mr. Renner asked whether subsistence users were happy with harvest last year. Mr. Somerville speculated that highwater in the season caused many fish wheels to turn off. The river changes directly impact either way.
- b. Jeremy Botz provided the 2023 Gillnet Management Outlook (29:10)
- i. Mr. Gilman asked for clarification on “inside waters”. Mr. Botz noted this could mean traditional what’s in regulation, or the expanded closure area on the east end of the district - and could mean either depending on chinook abundance. The first opener may use the expanded line.
 - ii. Mr. Botz indicated that the fleet would likely be engaged for 3 openers to gauge the runs abundance before any closures.
 - iii. Mr. Renner asked for clarification on the number estimate for chinook, and if it should be 56K. Mr. Botz will investigate and report back.
 - iv. Mr. Renner asked again whether there would be 3 openers for data; Mr. Botz indicated that is traditional.
 - v. Bret Bradford asked how effective the Miles Lake sonar has been for delineating between reds and kings, and if it can be used for stronger management. Mr. Botz noted it’s still a pilot project.
 - vi. John Whissel remarked on spring river conditions and the lack of data, and whether there will be an effort to collect data. Mr. Botz indicated there isn’t enough capacity to do that but management will adapt along with harvest data.
 - vii. Mr. Renner remarked on the complexities of the composite forecast number for the Copper River and asked whether management explains this in conversations. Mr. Botz answered yes and agreed about the complexities.
 - viii. Mr. Gilman asked what it would take to liberalize the Esther subdistrict for Coghill sockeye management. Mr. Botz noted it didn’t present last year but explained what they would look for to open and be more effective.
- c. Heather Scannell provided a 2023 Seine Management Outlook. (46:30)
- i. Mike Mickelson noted that the budget looks better and asked what kind of flying would be done to supplement management decisions. Ms. Scannell said she plans to be in the air as much as possible, even with help from orgs like CDFU.

- ii. Mr. Renner thanked the department for the visual marker program and its helpfulness. He commented that Bristol Bay is measuring boats and noted that he'd liked to see that happen here.
- iii. Mr. Mickelson noted regular scheduled announcements are helpful, and that her pending announcements are appreciated.
- iv. Heather ran through the particulars and emphasized the importance of Fish Ticket Reporting. She reminded that ticket reporting informs management decisions.

d. Mike Wells provided a report on VFDA (56:10)

- i. Mike Mickelson asked what the factors are for a cost recovery threshold. Mr. Wells spoke to 2022 and described the balancing act of the run entry, timing, buyer, and what makes the most sense.
- ii. John Renner asked whether run timing is shifting later. Mr. Wells described the fish show up at the weir "on time" but that things have changed, and some of that may be how the hatchery/fishery/cost recovery is managed.

e. Geoff Clark provided a report on PWSAC (1:10:17)

- i. Darin Gilman asked whether a solution was identified for the challenges of having one buyer in 2022. Mr. Clark spoke to the licensing agreement and how to navigate that legally, and PWSAC's status and ability to influence those decisions as a 501(c)3 organization.
- ii. Ben Kirk asked about deep gear at the hatchery terminal. Mr. Clark described ways ADFG authorizes the emergency orders to use deep gear in Special Harvest Areas.
- iii. Mr. Renner noted Chenega's coho and chinook program and shared interest in a local chinook sports fishery.
- iv. Mr. Gilman asked for clarification on the Gulkana broodstock goals. Mr. Clark answered no. He didn't have broodstock numbers on hand, but Gulkana egg goal was 35M and achieved 6M.

6. New Business (1:24:00)

- a. John Renner explained the harvest percentages graph included in the packet.
- b. Gillnet Issues and Recommendations (1:26:12)
 - i. Gulkana brood and upriver management

1. Darin Gilman directed a question to Mark Somerville on upriver management, whether an increase in popularity in PU guiding in the Chitina subdistrict is negatively impacting subsistence fisheries. Mr. Somerville answered no there is no correlation, but driven by what is coming upriver. Mr. Gilman asked if he sees the PU fishery becoming more effective with personal guides. Mr. Somerville said no, the participants using guides aren't necessarily more effective they simply get a platform.
- ii. Gillnet recommendations to the SHTF: (1:33:11)
1. Darin Gilman thanked PWSAC for reducing the Gulkana brood inriver number following the Fall SHTF meeting set of recommendations from CDFU.
 2. Mr. Gilman presented a set of gillnet recommendations from CDFU Gillnet Division:
 - a. to eliminate the expanded closures of the last few years and follow the mandatory king closures in the management plan.
 - b. to follow the management plan for traditional data and run projections. Given the prolonged winter conditions it is prudent to utilize the fleet for three consecutive openers as a preliminary run index.
 - c. to open the Esther Subdistrict in June for Coghill sockeye harvests.
 - d. to maintain a single district of Copper River flats for coho management and either open or close succinctly.
 - e. PWSAC Esther buoy and cost recovery updates
 - f. to use a deep seine for Esther cost recovery.
 - g. to open deep gear in Port Chalmers on June 1st for the gillnet fishery
 3. Jeremy Botz responded to the recommendations. (1:35:10)
 - a. He spoke to the history of Port Chalmers/deep gear and what enforcement concerns there have been by Board of Fish. It would be more likely to be triggered by other districts.
 - b. Mr. Renner asked about ADFG authority on gear specifications, like designating an orange marker every 10 corks for deep nets. Mr. Botz would consult legal.

- c. Dennis Zadra asked for clarification whether Mr. Botz has EO to allow deep gear in Port Chalmers at the start of the season. Mr. Botz responded that it would depend on the justifications and reasoning he crafted. Ben Kirk asked if anything needs to happen at BoF to use his EO. Mr. Botz said he could see reasons to approach BoF on this topic to make a consistent standard.

Motion to accept all spring 2023 Salmon Harvest Task Force gillnet

recommendations. John Renner /second Darin Gilman. Yes: NVE, Copper River Seafoods, Silver Bay Seafoods, 60North, Camtu's, CRPWSMA, CRPWSAC, CDFU Seine, CDFU Gillnet. Abstention: VFDA and PWSAC. Motion carries.

4. Mr. Clark noted mistakes in the roster for the hatcheries. They were incorrectly listed as ex-officios when they are SHTF voting members. Jess Rude noted the clerical error.
 - iii. Seine Issues and Recommendations (1:46:40)
 1. Mike Mickelson shared that CDFU Seine Division is not bringing forward any issues to SHTF this meeting.
 - iv. No other issues were presented to the SHTF.
7. Public Comment (1:47:25)
 - a. XXX - Is 44% cost recovery for the whole chum run, or just Esther bound chums? - Mr. Clark responded it's just for WNH. Is the State ex-vessel price of \$0.44 something to be counted on for 2020? - Mr. Botz responded that 2020 should be vetted.
 - b. Jeff Bailey - thanked the SHTF for the forum. With high operating costs and facility costs, but fish prices going down, does PWSAC see a time when the WNH permit could be moved to Nelson Bay and closer to our processors? - Mr. Clark encouraged discussions like this and invited people to participate in PWSAC meetings.
8. Closing SHTF Member Comments (1:56:00)
 - a. Dennis Zadra encouraged involvement with CDFU and its work with legislation, specifically SB128.
 - b. John Renner thanked the department for its expertise and longevity.

- c. Mike Mickelson thanked those who traveled to Cordova for the meeting, and CDFU staff for organizing the SHTF together. Thanked fleet for joining.
 - d. Darin Gilman reminded the group about CDFU's annual membership drive/meeting in May, and upcoming opportunities for involvement with Board of Fish committee.
 - e. John Whissel spoke to early run compression on the Copper and a need for deployable resources to sonar, and ways we could think outside the box with NVE's support. Subsistence Saturdays created a conflict at Main Bay with broodstock and cost recovery, and NVE plans to deconflict that through Board of Fish. Also will be pursuing entire Flats being open to subsistence. Recommends we invite enforcement to the SHTF.
 - f. Jess Rude thanked 60North and Camtu's for joining the SHTF in processor seats for the first time.
9. Calendar Fall meeting
- a. Consider conflicts with UFA annual meeting Oct 17/18 (revised to Oct 25/26), PWSAC fall board meeting Oct 12/13, and fall SERVS ending Sept 26. John Whissel argued for spreading things out instead of piggybacking because of housing availability.
 - b. CDFU will doodle this as fall schedules take shape.

10. Adjourn (2:06:20)

Motion to adjourn. Renner/second Gilman. Unanimous. Motion carries.