



BRISTOL BAY

Regional Seafood Development Association

**** COVID-19 FLEET ADVISORY #03: COVID Fleet Team Plan Update ****

April 8, 2020

Summary of Progress and Upcoming Timeline

Responding to a desire to execute a Bristol Bay salmon season while protecting public health and recognizing a planning gap on the part of the fishing fleet, BBRSDA assembled a [COVID-19 Fleet Team](#) to propose a set of safety ideas for the 2020 season - for the consideration of other stakeholder groups. A [COVID-19 website](#) has been created for the fleet. This advisory provides information about future needs and BBRSDA's capabilities.

BBRSDA is also releasing a proposed set of safety ideas today (see [COVID-19 website](#)) that could be implemented if the situation warrants more attention in coming days and weeks. Going forward, BBRSDA will engage stakeholders (i.e. State, communities, and processors) about the fishery's status and provide input/support on any mandates affecting the fleet. Although fishing is still over 2 months away, now is a critical time for any changes involving travel and pre-season separation.

We want to be absolutely clear: the ideas proposed in this document are not set in stone and BBRSDA has zero authority over how fishermen conduct their business. The adoption, implementation, and success of any idea presented will require action and enhancement by other stakeholders, principally the State of Alaska, local government, and processing companies. BBRSDA's role has always been to support the fishery (through marketing/etc.), provide information/research, and advocate where necessary or appropriate. However, BBRSDA has no authority over the actions of the fishing fleet. As such, BBRSDA can make no promises about the implementation or success of any ideas. The purpose of BBRSDA's COVID-19 Fleet Team is to support the efforts of decision-making stakeholders about specifically how the Bristol Bay fishing fleet can carry out its essential services while protecting public health.

Planning Timeline

- April 10 - BBRSDA Fleet Advisory #04 (target deadline): Economic Relief Materials
- April 16 - Pre-quarantine begins for those traveling to Bristol Bay on May 1
- April 21 - State begins reassessing travel mandates
- May 1 - State Travel Mandates reassessment deadline
- May 15 - Potential start date for non-local travel into the Bay (under the Charter-only option)
- June 10 - Start of Port Moller Test Fishery
- Mid June - Commercial salmon fishing starts in Bristol Bay
- Early July - Historical peak
- Late July - Non-local fishermen/processors begin returning home

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Needs from State Government, Local Government, & Processors

- For this season to safely occur, we need the following:
 - Medical response (additional care capacity and/or scalable medevac capacity)
 - Fleet headcount to be incorporated into the modeling for the rural medical response plan
 - Support from the State to gain cooperation from those in the communities that are pushing back
 - Maintain that fishing is an essential function
 - Action by stakeholders to establish and enforce any conditional requirements for having a safe and successful season. It will be important that any conditional requirements are clearly communicated with an appropriate amount of lead time.
- Enforcement & Compliance
 - In order to avoid contact between community residents and non-local fishermen using commercial air travel, non-local fishermen may need to be required to use charters or drive vessels to the Bay. Possibility of making charters a market requirement or a State-mandated requirement has been discussed. Direction and communication from Fleet Managers would be critical.
 - Separation and self-quarantine enforcement and compliance within Bristol Bay communities is also critical, to avoid industry/community contact which could potentially spread the virus.
 - Fishermen can be encouraged to wear high-visibility [buffs](#) (provided prior to boarding a charter) around their wrist, neck, or face; particularly when near areas where locals are within earshot. Buffs of a separate color could be provided to local residents as well, as they are fairly inexpensive when purchased in bulk.

BBRSDA Role & Capabilities

1. Instruct fleet to use [Unified Plan](#) (see Catcher/Tender Vessel Procedures v1.5 and Catcher/Tender Vessel Checklist) as baseline Industry Health Response Plan.
2. Provide materials to support best practices:

- All fishermen could receive a “[buff](#)” or a facemask to offer some protection against viral spread en-route to Bristol Bay. Vessel captain would receive two flags, to fly on their vessel indicating the vessel is “under self-quarantine” or is “all clear” having completed their quarantine.
 - BBRSDA can provide informational material regarding required safety protocols for the 2020 season. Create and provide COVID 19 Vessel Log (Printable Version).
3. Act as liaison between communities and fleet
 - Continue to participate in meetings/discussions and provide updates on COVID page that may impact fleet decisions
 4. Educate - build a campaign around what it means to operate in Bristol Bay this summer.
 - Town hall session(s)
 - Slide shows, other materials
 5. Potentially provide bridge funding for Safety Protocol needs (would seek economic assistance through COVID-19 programs)
 - Medevac insurance for fishermen
 - Safety protocol booklets & materials
 - Buffs and flags
 - Other items??? (cost & situation dependent)
 - Supplemental medevac capacity?
 6. Working as an advocate for economic relief/response
 - BBRSDA can provide information regarding economic relief options for fishermen who are unwilling or unable to fish (e.g. failed screening/test), as well as information about potential reimbursement for COVID-19 business costs.