

Prince William Sound / Copper River Salmon Harvest  
Task force Meeting  
Thursday, Oct 5 2017  
1:30 pm  
The Cordova Center – Cordova, AK

**Attendance:**

CDFU Seine Division	Present – Telephonically
CDFU Gillnet Division	Present
PWS Set Net Association	Present – Telephonically
PWS/CR ADF&G Advisory Council	Present
Trident Seafoods	Present
Ocean Beauty Seafoods	Present
Peter Pan Seafoods	Present
Icicle Seafoods	Present
Copper River Seafoods	Present
Valdez Fisheries Development Association	Present
PWS Aquaculture Center	Present
ADF&G Management (Chair)	Present, Regional Supervisor Bert Lewis
ADF&G Seine Biologist	Present
ADF&G Gillnet Biologist	Present
ADEC (Honorary Member)	Absent
ASMI (Honorary Member)	Present

**Approve May 20, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

Discussion - M. Wells noted clarification of minutes. Valdez Fisheries Development Association (VFDA) wasn't present. T. Joyce motioned / G. Johnson second. Upon unanimous vote, motion carried.

**Approve Oct 5, 2017 Meeting Agenda**

T. Joyce motioned / J. Bocci second to approve meeting agenda.

Discussion – none

Upon unanimous vote, motion carried.

**Reports**

**ADF&G – Gillnet Biologist, Jeremy Botz**

Reference information provided in the 2017 Prince William Sound (PWS) Salmon Season Summary, harvest summaries and ex vessel value handouts provided for the meeting and discussed his in season management strategy. Highlights included:

- Public comments from preseason meetings.
- Chinook – two periods per week, short duration periods and working with tides.
- Worked with PWSAC for hatchery management.

**ADF&G - Seine Biologist, Charles Russell**

Referenced information provided in the 2017 PWS Salmon Season Summary, harvest summaries and ex vessel value handouts provided for the meeting. Noted 2017 season had the highest number of permits fished since 1991.

**ASMI, Jeremy Woodrow**

Showed a PowerPoint presentation on what ASMI is currently working on. Highlights included:

- Marketing for the state of Alaska paid for by fishermen taxes, State general fund match and grants.
- 60% of AK seafood is international sales.
- Salmon v. other state seafood - salmon 15% of volume but 1/3 of value.
- PWS vs Other State - 1/5 of statewide production, 6 % of value.
- Best ex vessel value since 2013. Catch and value have both increased.

### **PWSAC, Tim Joyce**

Noted he was presenting preliminary numbers. Stormy Haught noted the handout on the table has been updated since Tim's slide.

Highlights included:

- Information on chum and sockeye returns.
- Noted Gulkana contribution was low this year.
- Issues with spring rearing and releases and 2016 water temps were lower than normal. Their standard is to do a mass release but with the presence of whales they've tried releasing smaller groups of fish hoping to dissuade the whales from coming back.

### **VFDA – Mike Wells**

Provided a recap of the 2017 numbers. They reached egg take goal on Aug 27<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully fleet will see the effects of their increased production in 2018. Highlights included:

- Egg take goal was reached on Aug 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Run began weak and late. Seemed to turn around by July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Cost recovery was completed.
- Had some issues with areas fished, but worked with Department to manage through it.

### **Old Business**

Bert Lewis noted past comments by ADF&G concerning SHTF Bylaws including the 2 votes by area managers. He also asked if it was still appropriate for ADF&G to chair the Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF). He introduced the ADF&G employees present.

Discussion:

There was agreement in ADF&G not having a vote, but Department should continue running the meetings. It was suggested this should have been brought up before the agenda was approved but later clarified this was the time to discuss modifications to membership.

T.Joyce motioned /  Second to remove ADF&G as a voting member and keep them as chair for the meetings. ADF&G will also be available for discussions as needed.

Upon unanimous vote, motion carried.

### **New Members**

Letters of interest were submitted by Silver Bay Seafoods, North Pacific Processors, Native Village of Eyak, and CR/PWS Marketing Association.

T. Joyce motion / J. Bocci second to discuss.

It was suggested there are currently a fair number represented. With ADF&G no longer having a vote, adding more processors would give an advantage to this sector. There may also be more villages interested in subsistence seats. The possibility of rotating seats, as PWSAC does, might work. It was suggested to consider the letters individually instead of in a group. Others voiced concerns of it becoming too large to be effective. A member asked about adding a subsistence seat that would be a non-voting seat, similar to ADEC and ASMI. The current quorum was brought up and noted that adding more seats would increase that number. A possibility of rotating processors within the current seats was suggested. Regardless of the decision, a member pointed out the Bylaws needed to be changed first.

T. Joyce motion / G. Johnson second to table adding voting members

Upon unanimous vote, motion carried.

J. Bocci motion /  second to add a subsistence seat

It was discussed to send out a letter of interest. The seat will remain vacant until board decides how to appoint. Rachel clarified the bylaws.

Upon unanimous vote, motion carried. For clarification, the board intends to solicit PWS and Copper River drainage as a whole.

T. Joyce motion/ X second to add CR/PWS Marketing Association as an honorary member similar to ADEC and ASMI.

Discussion – None

Upon unanimous vote, motion carried. A representative from the CR/PWS Marketing Association was seated at the table.

A discussion continued about increasing the number of processor seats. Term limits were discussed as well as rotating processors that buy from all gear groups. It was again suggested to keep the processor voting membership to 5.

X motion / T. Joyce ? second, to create a subcommittee to work with Rachel on changing the bylaws. Volunteer committee will be R. Issac, T. Joyce, and J. Honkola

Upon unanimous vote, motion carried.

### **New Business**

Review Copper River management – It was decided to have public comment after each review instead of all public comment at the end.

Public comment -

Due to the later opening, ADF&G held a subsistence only opener prior to the first commercial opener. Therefore, 500 commercial boats were doing nothing and the subsistence users targeted king salmon. Jeremy noted the subsistence only opener was in regulation which dictates opportunity. Reporting requirements are such that subsistence totals are not yet available. A suggestion to change those requirements was made. The subsistence fishery in the Copper River is not on a scale of other subsistence fisheries in our state. Jeremy wasn't sure if there was flexibility in regulation.

It was pointed out that once the king salmon abundance was met the announcements still said "due to low abundance". Jeremy noted the language was in there because ADF&G didn't know for sure that they could shift their management strategy. As the season progressed, the wording was removed. A discussion on managing by forecast vs abundance began. Bert Lewis noted forecasts are inherently uncertain. ADF&G uses it to set a preseason management strategy and then transitions to their in season management tools. T. Carpenter noted while forecasts do assist processors in preparing for the season, forecasting the king salmon caused a great deal of media attention and panic. He would like to see ADF&G consider not forecasting for king salmon as the methodology is questionable.

Review Port Chalmers management

Chum salmon were late and took a wide swing through the area. ADF&G made adjustments in area as the fishery progressed in an attempt to alleviate salmon destined for other areas.

Public comments included the following

- Does ADF&G have a value of seine caught fish destined for Esther?
- How can ADF&G and PWSAC get information on run strength faster?
- Shorter openers would give more timely reporting, allowing a quicker response by ADF&G.
- In 2015 there was a large interception of pinks to VFDA. Is there a plan to reduce area in a similar situation?

Charlie thought the reduced area this year worked well but will look at it earlier next season. He noted Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) may make changes at the Dec, 2017 meeting regarding Port Chalmers.

Review Coghill District management

Public comments included the following:

- Could we use deep gear sooner? This season too much area opened and fish destined for other areas were harvest by the seine fleet. ADF&G noted it has been discussed, although not certain we could reduce the risk enough to use deep gear. There are enforcement issues with opening deep gear in only certain districts.
- This year seine announcements were typically late. What is the strategy going to be to help fix that? ADF&G heard it loud and clear and will work to be timelier. It was a challenge this year, ADF&G short of two FB II positions which meant people

were doing multiple jobs. There were times when we get a late decision from PWSAC or VFDA or a needed aerial survey to get best information. It would be helpful to get a “heads up” if announcement will be late.

- What is the strategy for alternating gear zone harvest in Main Bay? ADF&G looks at who had access first the previous year and then alternates from there. Concerns the way openers happened this year the set net fleet had openers after a longer closures and therefore had bigger build ups of fish. They’re already over their allocation. Discussed other ways to alternate and suggested the SHTF could provide some guidance. ADF&G also noted this was in regulation and to make changes would be a BOF action. Another suggestion was to catch fish before they were in that zone.
- Funding for visual markers in the Coghill and Eshamy Districts. ADF&G no longer keeps visual markers and uses lat and long instead. They are open to working with an outside agency for funding. ADF&G would provide staff for maintaining. Discussed possible funding sources. Copper River markers were also mentioned. A suggestion for investing in aerial photographic images with markers on charts that could be used with existing equipment was made.

#### PUBLIC General Comments

- VFDA - Why did seining not open until cost recovery was 95% complete this year? We used to go much earlier with day on day off fishing. This year the run was weak and late, we wanted to get as much as we could early on. Once fishing starts there is pressure to keep it going. ADF&G and VFDA look at it year by year.
- PWSAC – Asked about surpluses at the hatchery’s this year. There was a long, late tail of fish. The goals were met as all hatcheries. The extra sold as roe will be deducted from next year’s cost recovery goals.
- ADF&G was asked to update announcements if runs are doing well. It helps with public concerns.
- Rachel reminded folks there is a landing page on the CDFU website. Please keep giving comments. She monitors this often and will make sure information gets brought to the task force.
- It was suggested to maintain a “library” where past meetings and decisions could be referenced.

#### Determine next meeting

It was decided to have the next meeting around the RPT meeting so out of town folks could attend both.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm