

Building and Maintaining Public Support of Salmon Resource Management

R&M#01-10

Project Proponent: Jason Hale, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, 725 Christensen Drive, Suite 3-B Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

1. Introduction:

Objectives:

- 1) To build and maintain public support of, and meaningful participation in, salmon resource management.
- 2) To maintain a dependable communications and education infrastructure that can be built upon every year.
- 3) Facilitate and provide support for the U.S. Yukon River Panel Section Advisory Group teleconferences.
- 4) Rework YRDFA's operational structure to facilitate more decisive, effective action on key fisheries issues.

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) achieved these objectives through a combination of outreach strategies. YRDFA hosted meetings, published newsletters, conducted teleconferences, coordinated an international educational exchange, maintained a social media campaign and informational website, and developed outreach materials on current topics of interest.

Tasks and Accomplishments:

1. **YRDFA will schedule and host the Annual Meeting & Fisheries Symposium, which is a multi-day meeting that takes place within the Yukon River drainage. YRDFA will arrange and provide travel through charter service and per diem expenses of select Tribal representatives, YRDFA representatives, fishers, and other stakeholders in Yukon River drainage fisheries—45 to 70 individuals representing communities from throughout the Alaskan portion of the drainage and parts of Canada.**

YRDFA held its 22nd annual meeting in Galena from February 13-16, 2012. With an almost full delegation at the table and representation from most villages along the Yukon River in attendance, YRDFA was able to conduct a successful meeting. All told, 80 out-of-town attendees and numerous local stakeholders participated. Hosted by the community of Galena and Loudon Tribal Council, the meeting took place at the Larson Charlie Community Hall. There was a strong local turnout, especially at the evening potluck. Further, there was excellent representation from ADF&G, USFWS, and the Legislature.

Topics of discussion/presentation included fisheries management and upcoming regulatory opportunities. The YRDFA Board of Directors passed a whopping 16 resolutions addressing a wide range of concerns. During the meeting, YRDFA convened a riverwide Elders Council, who discussed fisheries and other local issues for the edification of all. In the evenings there was a potluck, a fiddle band, a dance featuring a local school band, along with YRDFA's annual raffle.

YRDFA feels it is important to give back to the communities in which we meet. This year the organization did this by working with the school to present activities in the classrooms with the school children, and to give them the chance to participate in the annual meeting. The school kids treated meeting goers to an activity of their own—the Living Wax Museum—which gave attendees the chance to learn a bit of history.

This grant covered nearly all of the expenses associated with this meeting; the most notable expense was travel. See Appendix A for a meeting agenda, summary article from our newsletter, and YRDFA Board resolutions.

2. Publish and distribute three newsletters to commercial and subsistence fishers, Tribal Governments, First Nations, and others throughout the Yukon River drainage.

As in past years, the newsletter *Yukon Fisheries News* was published three times during the grant period—Fall (November), Winter (March), and Spring (May). It was mailed to more than 2,000 households, Tribal organizations, agency representatives, and city offices, and it was posted on the YRDFA website. Topics included the Yukon River Panel, Bering Sea marine bycatch, fisheries science and management, traditional knowledge, state and federal policy and management updates, insights from fishers, and other fishery-related issues of concern on the Yukon River. Each issue was 16 to 20 pages in length.

Visit <http://www.yukonsalmon.org/news/newsletters.htm> to view copies of these newsletters.

3. Conduct in-season teleconferences for participation by fishers, villagers, management agency representatives, and other stakeholders to provide information on the status of Yukon River salmon returns, harvests, and pending management actions.

During the 2011 salmon fishing season, YRDFA organized and carried out a total of 13 in-season management teleconferences. Participation in terms of number of communities actively participating was equal to previous 5 year average, though it was down 8% from 2010. This drop was due to lower participation from U.S. communities; Canadian community participation held steady. Average participation for the entire season was above the 9 year average, though below that of the previous three years.

As is typical, overall call volume tracked well with Chinook salmon run timing past Pilot Station sonar, indicating that fishers wanted to learn about pulse timing and run strength as the fish were coming in the river. This was driven by U.S. participation; there are more communities in the U.S. portion of the drainage. Canadian participation tracked reasonably well with Chinook and fall chum salmon run timing past Rapids Video Test Fishwheel,

indicating that Canadian fishers wanted to learn about pulse timing and run strength shortly before the fish were to enter Canadian waters.

Active participation—direct verbal input from a caller—varied by community. As usual, it was strong in a number of communities, notably including the 10 U.S. communities with in-season harvest interviewers and the lower river.

Anecdotally, there was quite a bit of information sharing on the teleconferences. For example, DFO explained the scope and practices of the fall chum commercial fishery in Canada, which helped to clear-up misconceptions held by fishers in the U.S. There was also information broadcasting, such as when the Office of Subsistence Management made announcements regarding a comment period for proposed regulatory changes and ADF&G promoted upcoming projects in the field. Some fishers did bring up issues external to in-season management, and they were either answered briefly or put in contact with experts to speak with outside of the teleconferences.

Summaries for each teleconference provided highlights on fishers' reports, questions, and comments, along with key management updates. These summaries, each 1 to 2 pages in length, were shared with teleconference participants and other interested parties through email and on YRDFA's website within 3 days of each call.

This grant covered a portion of the staff time required to plan and moderate these teleconferences. Visit <http://www.yukonsalmon.org/Teleconferences/2011summaries.pdf> to view summaries of the 2011 In-season Management Teleconferences.

4. Coordinate and host Yukon Advisory Group (YAG) teleconferences— a more formal fishers' group and process for providing stakeholder input on pre-season planning and in-season management actions of salmon fisheries.

YRDFA coordinated and hosted 6 YAG teleconferences: 3 during the Chinook salmon run, 1 at the beginning of the fall chum run, 1 before the December 2011 Yukon River Panel meeting, and 1 before the March 2012 Yukon River Panel meeting. Participation by YAG members and agency representatives was typically high, as was the level of conversation. In-season, the teleconferences were held at key decision points for management, requiring scheduling and dissemination of information in a short window of time. The YAG members showed notable dedication to the management of the fishery by making themselves available at a moment's notice. As a related note, YRDFA staff became adept at tracking the typical schedules of each YAG member so that we could reach them more easily in these short windows of time. The pre-Panel meeting teleconferences took place with a bit more forewarning and were more informational, easing the burden and increasing the preparation level of the U.S. section for each meeting.

See Appendix B for summaries of these teleconferences.

5. YRDFA will hold a fall meeting of key board members to rework YRDFA's operational structure to maximize effectiveness in the new environment of involved organizations

and pressing issues. Specifically, 10 board members—five from the lower river and five from the upper river, preselected by YRDFA’s co-chairs—will be brought to Anchorage after the fishing season to engage in a multi-day facilitated discussion. State and federal fisheries managers will be invited to join the discussions and advise the board on current needs and barriers to success.

YRDFA convened a successful meeting at the Clarion in Anchorage, November 7-8, 2011. In addition to 10 YRDFA delegates and key staff members, a number of representatives from ADF&G and USFWS participated. We discussed numerous fisheries issues, but focused on organizational effectiveness. The Board underwent an extensive training exercise to pinpoint operational changes that could make it more effective in today’s operational climate.

The most notable outcome was a Board-driven recommendation to ease away from requiring 100 percent consensus on an issue for the Board to officially weigh in. In the past, if a single Board member had a dissenting vote, the organization could not express an opinion on an issue. The recommendations from this meeting would mean that the group could express an opinion without 100 percent consensus, allowing us to more fully participate in regulatory and other processes. Passage of such a change requires a consensus vote from the full Board of Directors, and that did occur at the 2012 Annual Meeting in Galena. As such, based on this action, YRDFA can now express an opinion if at least 80 percent of voting board members agree on an issue.

See Appendix B for the agenda and summary article regarding the fall YRDFA Board meeting.

6. Develop and maintain internet based outreach resources.

YRDFA continues to explore new, internet-based means to share information and opportunities concerning Yukon River fisheries. More and more people are turning to the web to learn and share news, and YRDFA is striving to make it easy to keep up with all the latest happenings. Efforts during the grant period included:

E-News

YRDFA is sending out monthly email newsletters through VerticalResponse. These brief, pointed emails bring fisheries stakeholders news about upcoming events, new research, policy issues, reminders of deadlines, and other current topics. Each edition typically contains five stories and is distributed to roughly 500 email addresses. The average open rate is roughly 20 percent—more in the non-fishing months—which is relatively good and indicative of a successful e-newsletter. YRDFA staff tracks open rates for individual articles and takes those rates into account when planning topics for each edition. This is currently YRDFA’s primary online outreach tool, and we have received positive feedback from stakeholders in the U.S. and Canada regarding its importance and utility.

Website

In addition to the new tools mentioned above, YRDFA regularly updates its website (<http://yukonsalmon.org>) to share more current news and information.

Twitter

Twitter is an online messaging tool, and YRDFA used its account (<http://twitter.com/YRDFA>) to share what's going on with the organization, projects and meetings, and timely concerns of Yukon River fisheries. In addition to the general public, news reporters use this tool to find stories.

Facebook

YRDFA's Facebook fan-page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Yukon-River-Drainage-Fisheries-Association/204306533264>) acts like a hub that keeps track of the organization's varied online activities.

This grant covered much of the staff time required to develop and maintain these initiatives.

7. Coordinate an educational exchange between Canadian and American fishers on the Yukon River to provide a venue for these fishers to explore, experience, and understand regional and cultural differences regarding fisheries issues.

In August 2011, four fishers and community leaders and one fisheries manager from communities in the Canadian portion of the Yukon River drainage spent eight days traveling to communities in the Yukon Territory—Teslin, Whitehorse, Lake LaBerge, Mayo, and Dawson; they also visited a fisheries project in Fairbanks, AK. Participants were exposed to all aspects of the Chinook salmon fishery in those regions. They also met with Yukon River Panel representatives and discussed the important role the Panel plays in U.S./Canadian relations and international fisheries management.

Participants learned and shared information about different cultures, fishing practices, and the importance of salmon in different areas in the Yukon drainage, and they gained knowledge about fisheries management. The trip fostered personal relationships by bringing together fishers and community leaders from different parts of the river to spend time learning about each other. All of these experiences emphasized the importance of communication between all salmon resource users along Yukon River.

After the trip, YRDFA conducted an evaluation of the entire program to evaluate success and improve effectiveness.

This grant covered a portion of the staff time required to plan and guide this exchange, along with some of the costs to independently evaluate the program. See Appendix D for an itinerary of the 2011 international educational exchange, along with the evaluation of the program.

8. Produce additional educational materials and perform outreach as opportunity, need, and interest arise.

Pre-Season Meeting

This spring YRDFA hosted a pre-season planning meeting in Alaska for the fourth year in a row. The goal was to bring representatives from throughout the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage together to give state and federal fisheries managers input on how to manage the run, and to share ideas and build understanding between all users and managers of the resource.

All told, at least 85 people participated in the meeting. This included representatives from 35 Tribes, 3 Inter-Tribal organizations, 3 Regional Advisory Councils, 3 processors, the Yukon River Panel, YRDFA, and other concerned fishers. In terms of number of attendees, this precisely paralleled the 2011 meeting, which boasted the highest level of attendance for this riverwide meeting since the program began. In terms of number of groups represented, this was the most successful rendition of this meeting to date.

Attendees heard the outlook for the 2012 salmon runs, which was the worst outlook to date, and they gave input into how to manage the run. Broad management approaches and specific tools and scenarios were discussed.

In earlier versions of this meeting, we spent more time sorting out the broad approaches. In that time, fishers have made it clear that if they must be restricted because of poor runs, pulse protection is the most equitable tool in the manager's toolbox. Understanding that, we spent more time on other details. These details, in the form of specific management questions, were introduced to every Tribal Council through a survey included with their invitation to the meeting, to give them a chance to consider and discuss the ideas in advance.

This grant covered a portion of the travel costs, which were greater than originally expected due to a spike in gas prices.

See Appendix E for a meeting agenda and summary article.

Meetings to Gather Information, Report, and Plan for Future Projects

Outreach and communications program development should not happen in a bubble. In an effort to remain informed on the current topics of importance/interest and strategically plan the form and function of future initiatives, YRDFA holds and attends meetings.

- *JTC Meeting*: YRDFA's science representative, Shelley Woods, attended the fall JTC meeting to participate in discussions, represent Yukon River fishers needs, and report back on current topics and outcomes.
- *Interagency Staff Meeting*: YRDFA's communications director, Jason Hale, attended the interagency staff meetings to present on current initiatives, learn about upcoming projects for outreach purposes, and plan for upcoming projects, including the pre-season meetings and in-season teleconferences.
- *Pre-Season Meetings in Dawson and Carmacks*: In May 2012, YRDFA's communications director, Jason Hale, participated in pre-season meetings in Dawson

and Carmacks to hear more of the thoughts and issues from Canadian fishers and share information regarding Alaskan fisheries. This grant covered a portion of his per diem for this trip.

Education by Email and Phone

A number of fishers across the drainage call YRDFA for information regarding run strength and management actions in-season, and for all manner of related information throughout the year. Callers ask about bycatch, current science, customary trade regulations, upcoming meetings, and an assortment of other fisheries-related issues. This grant supports staff time to respond to these requests, providing fisheries stakeholders with an easy, trusted outlet for timely information.

Appendices:

Appendix A – YR DFA Annual Meeting

Agenda



**Annual Meeting Agenda
22nd Annual Meeting
Galena, Alaska
February 13 – 16,
2012
Larson Charlie Community
Hall**

Monday, February 13, 2012

Travel Day – people are arriving throughout the day

4:00 P.M. Salmon science workshops for those that arrive early – ADF&G

Evening Yukon River Elders Group meeting

5:30 – 6:30 P.M. Dinner at the Community Hall

7:00 P.M. Call to order at the Community Hall
Invocation
Roll Call
Welcome from Galena
Welcoming remarks by YR DFA Co-
chairs Introduction of board members
Introduction of meeting attendees
Review and approve agenda
Review and approve minutes from last annual meeting
Distribution / explanation of materials
Accommodations and meeting logistics

Recess

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

Elders Council: Day at meeting

Youth presentations: at the school

7:30 A.M. Breakfast at Community Hall

9:00 A.M. King Salmon Management Plan Revision
Draft proposed revisions for the plan *YRDFA*

10:15 A.M. Break

10:30 A.M. King Salmon Management Plan Revision (continued) YRDFA Board
Jason Hale, moderator

11:30 A.M. Public Comment

12:00 P.M. Lunch

1:00 P.M. Elder's Council: comments on the King salmon management plan
Catherine Moncrieff, moderator

2:00 P.M. Yukon River Fisheries Management

Summer season	<i>ADF&G,</i>
Fall chum and Coho	<i>USFWS</i>
AVCP projects	<i>ADF&G</i>
Mesh change and stock productivity	<i>Casie Stockdale</i>
	<i>Gene Sandona</i>

3:00 P.M. Break

3:30 P.M. Yukon River Fisheries Management continued

4:00 Regulatory Proposals & Processes

Federal Subsistence Board	<i>Fred Bue,</i>
Board of Fisheries Proposals	<i>USFWS ADF&G</i>

Recess

6:00 P.M. Dinner

Evening activity- Elders Discussion, part 2 completion of King salmon management plan
comments *Catherine Moncrieff, moderator*

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Elders Council: partial day at meeting and with youth at the school

7:30 A.M. Breakfast at Community Hall

9:00 A.M. YRDFA FY 12 update and overview
Follow up on executive committee discussions: consensus decision-making, conflict of interest, riverwide focus, Robert's Rules, board recruitment *YRDFA staff*

10:00 A.M. Call in from U.S. Senator Begich

10:15 A.M. Break

10:45 A.M. Lieutenant Governor Treadwell, Senator Kookesh, Senator Olson, & Representative Dick

11:15 A.M. Public Comment

**12:00 P.M. Lunch—Generously Sponsored by Ruby Marine
Kid's Living Wax Sculpture Activity at
School**

1:15 P.M. YRDFA Funding Overview *Jill Klein, YRDFA*

1:45 P.M. Citizen Oversight of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (CO TAPS)

2:00 P.M. 2011 Resolutions Update & 2012 Resolutions *YRDFA*

5:00 P.M. Recess

6:00 P.M. Community pot-luck dinner
Evening Activities- Summer fish camps informational meeting
Raffle and live music

Thursday, February 16, 2012

Travel day - sack lunches will be available

7:30 A.M. Breakfast at Community Hall

9:00 A.M. Board Member Recruitment
Nominate primary and alternate 2012 meeting location sites
Community Thanks
Closing Comments
Adjourn

Summary Article

YR DFA's 22nd Annual Meeting *Elders, Legislators, Business, and Merriment* By Jill Klein, Executive Director

YR DFA held its 22nd Annual Meeting in Galena. This was the same location that the first meeting of Yukon River fishers met to determine that they needed to work together to speak with one voice to sustain the salmon fisheries that they all depend on. With an almost full delegation of riverwide representatives at the table, and representation from most villages along the Yukon River in attendance, YR DFA was able to conduct a successful meeting.

Hosted by the community of Galena, the YR DFA meeting took place at the Larson Charlie Community Hall from February 13-16, 2012. We had our meals at the hall and lodged with the many B&B and home stays in Galena. Events ran smoothly due to the assistance of many gracious helpers from the community, including numerous local people, the schools, the Tribal Council, and the refuge. These folks pitched in on lodging, meals, snacks, and driving us around town.

YR DFA discussed the king salmon management plan revision process, made possible by a grant from the Alaska State Legislature through the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The YR DFA delegation passed a motion and also a resolution to support pulse closures as a concept that can work to help rebuild the king salmon stocks. Throughout the meeting, YR DFA had an Elders Council participate. Elders were nominated from across the drainage and then selected by the YR DFA board to attend the meeting in Galena. They discussed the same fisheries issues as the board members and lent guidance to other discussions, especially around the areas of low king salmon returns to the Yukon River. The Elders spoke numerous times during the meeting and our Elder members of our YR DFA board joined in at times.

The second day of the meeting was framed by the attendance of our Alaska State legislative guests, who included the Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell, Senator Albert Kookesh and his staff, Senator Donald Olson, Representative Neal Foster, Representative Alan Dick, and also staff from U.S. Senator Mark Begich's office who helped us teleconference with Senator Begich during the meeting. The legislators in attended updated us on issues impacting rural Alaska and took questions and comments from the delegation. They were able to meet with meeting attendees one-on-one during breaks, making themselves available for quite some time, to the appreciation of all.

The YR DFA board and others in attendance worked to pass resolutions that cover a broad spectrum of interesting, timely, and relevant topics (see related sidebar). The community hosted a covered dish dinner where many delicious foods such as moose and halibut were served. In addition to these Alaska delicacies, the meeting attendees were treated to freshly baked pizza and doughnuts from the Galena Interior Learning Academy.

YRDFFA hosted a raffle with awesome prizes that drew in the community members, and in YRDFFA fashion we had our own musicians including Lester Erhart and Bill Derendoff who played with the best of the local talent, also from the Galena Interior Learning Academy. We watched traditional Athabascan songs and dance, and Ron Chambers from Haines Junction, Canada presented his traditional dance, song, and regalia to the school kids in their classrooms.

YRDFFA feels it is important to give back to the communities where we meet, and we do this by working with the school to develop activities that we can present in local classrooms. This year we had a full schedule of events where YRDFFA brought Elders and other educators into many of the Galena classrooms. We also visited the students during their living wax museum—a fun activity to do as a break from the meeting.

Overall the YRDFFA meeting was a success and we all enjoyed our time in Galena. We look forward to next year in Saint Mary's, which was selected as a primary choice for the 2013 annual meeting.

YRDFFA's work on this project was funded through U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Lannan Foundation, and the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of USFWS, the Lannan Foundation, or ANA.

YRDFA Board Resolutions

YRDFA 2012 Resolutions

01 – Thanking the Community of Galena

Be it resolved that the YRDFA Board Members, delegates and staff of YRDFA gratefully thank the various organizations and the people of Galena, including the Louden Tribal Council, City of Galena, James Honea (driver), Archie Wholecheese (driver), Bobby Frankson (driver), Shirley Cleaver (cook), Sandy Scotton (community liaison), Fred Huntington (board member), bed and breakfasts, businesses, fishers, and families for their generosity and hospitality.

02 – Salmon Bycatch

Be it resolved that YRDFA requests that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council adopt management measures which will adequately protect Yukon River chum salmon runs at a biologically acceptable level.

03 – Unified Yukon River Conservation Plan

Be it resolved that all people on the Yukon River continue to work together to develop a conservation plan for Yukon River Chinook salmon to allow the stock to recover and rebuild.

04 – Hatcheries

Be it resolved that YRDFA supports setting specific limits on hatchery production within Alaska and internationally.

05 – Pulse Protection

Be it resolved that the YRDFA Board supports putting pulse closures in regulation to help rebuild the Yukon River Chinook salmon stock.

06 – Concern with Donlin Creek Mine

Be it resolved that YRDFA expresses its concern that the mine, if permitted, operates with no impacts to the environment and, particularly, no impacts to aquatic life and habitat productivity.

07 – International Cooperation

Be it resolved that YRDFA will continue its efforts to work for international cooperation and understanding between the United States and Canada for the good of the Chinook salmon and fishers of the Yukon River and its tributaries.

08 – Value of Traditional Knowledge in Management

Be it resolved that YRDFA recommends the Federal Subsistence Board, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council include Alaska Native traditional and historical knowledge of the salmon and rivers in the planning, response and management of the Yukon River resources.

09 – Thanking the school and youth of Galena

Be it resolved that the YRDFA delegation and staff gratefully thank the youth and Galena schools for their hard work, creativity and artistic expression.

10 – Thanking the Elders for their participation

Be it resolved that the YR DFA delegation and staff gratefully thank the Elders for attending and participating in the YR DFA annual meeting.

11– Thanking Harry Wilde and Sydney Huntington for their leadership role along the Yukon River

Be it resolved that the YR DFA delegation and staff gratefully thank Harry and Sydney for attending and participating in the twenty-second YR DFA annual meeting.

12 – Tracking and monitoring of fires, floods and other natural disasters potentially impacting salmon and their rearing and spawning habitat

Be it resolved that the YR DFA delegation and staff recommend that agencies review historical information and document occurrences and work together with local people in the region to monitor forest fires, floods and other natural disasters that likely impact salmon rearing and spawning habitat in the future.

13 – Mining in the Yukon River Drainage

Be it resolved that YR DFA expresses its concern that these mines operate with no impacts to the environment and, particularly, no impacts to aquatic life and habitat productivity.

14 – Trans-Alaska Pipeline Citizen Oversight

Be it resolved that YR DFA supports developing citizen oversight capacity of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System to provide for pipeline operations oversight and monitoring.

15 – Marine Research and Cooperation

Be it resolved that YR DFA requests that State and Federal agencies such as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service allocate and apply for funding for continued joint efforts to do research on what is happening to Yukon River wild salmon in the marine environment.

16 – Primary Subsistence Use of King Salmon

Be it resolved that YR DFA defines that the primary use of the Yukon King salmon is to provide food for personal and family human consumption.

Appendix B – Yukon Advisory Group Teleconference Summaries

Yukon Advisory Group Teleconference #1, June 19, 2011 2:00 PM Meeting summary

- Meeting participants:

Panel members: Ragnar Alstrom, Erik Weingarh, Stanley Ned

Panel alternates: John Lamont, Jr., Francis Thompson

Advisors: Angela Demientieff, Tim Andrew for AVCP, Malora Hunt, James Roberts, Joseph Strongheart

Alaska Department of Fish and Game: Anchorage, Fairbanks and Emmonak offices

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Fairbanks and Emmonak offices

YRDFA: Jill Klein, Teddy Willoya

- Katie Howard with ADF&G reviewed the data package.
- Discussion took place among panel members, alternates and advisors and the fisheries managers to gain clarification on the data presented and to further understand the fisheries assessment to date. Discussion also took place about management objectives related to the number of fish needed at Pilot Station sonar to potentially make border passage.
- Steve Hayes with ADF&G reviewed the pre-season outlook and management actions this far and then proposed three options:
 - 1) Do nothing- already pulled 1 period,
 - 2) Pull another subsistence period this Monday starting in Y-1 and follow it up the river to protect the second pulse of salmon, or
 - 3) Pull half (½) of a period; in Y-1 there will be an 18 hour period instead of a 36 hour period. This will protect the front end of the second pulse of salmon.
- Member input: Most were in favor of option 3. Some suggested option 3 but with an increase to 24 hours instead of 18. They all had similar concerns about families that still need to get their fish. Some have not had the chance yet and others have not met their needs. They were also concerned about meeting Canadian escapement. One person suggested pulling a whole period so fish can get to the border. Another suggested that we target chum with smaller mesh gear in a commercial opening and restrict the sale of Chinook salmon so that they can be used in the subsistence fishery or processed by the commercial processor and donated to families still needing fish all along the river.
- The fisheries managers decided to support the 18 hour subsistence fishing period for Y-1 starting on Sunday evening and a press release would be sent out after the call. Fred Bue with USFWS supported this decision.

- Closing comments: Fisheries managers stated that another teleconference is needed to discuss issues such as the commercial fisheries openings suggested here on the call. They proposed another teleconference on Wednesday June 22, 2011 at 1:00 PM. While calls were requested in the morning, the managers stated that they have more information by the afternoon to include in the decision-making if we do them at 1:00.

**Next Teleconference: Wednesday June 22, 2011 1:00 P.M
Teleconference & Code: 1-800-315-6338 Code: 98566#**

**Yukon Advisory Group
(YAG) Summary of
Teleconference #2**

Wednesday, June 22, 2011 1:00 PM

Participants

Panel Members: Ragnar Alstrom, Erik Weingarth
Panel Alternates: John Lamont, Jr., Francis Thompson, Virgil Umphenour
Panel Advisors: Angela Demientieff, Andrew Firmin, Tim Andrew, Victor Lord,
James
Roberts, Joseph Strongheart
ADF&G: John Linderman, Mike Parker, Jeff Estensen, Dan Bergstrom,
Steve Hayes, Dr. Katie Howard, Larry DuBois, Jan Conitz,
Amanda Wiese, Dayna Green, Bonnie Borba
USFWS: Fred Bue and Gerald Maschmann
YRDFA: Jill Klein, Jason Hale, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Teddy Willoya

Summary

- Katie Howard reviewed the current key data collected, along with related analysis. Highlights included:
 - o **King salmon**
 - Age composition: Percentages are close to average for 6 versus 5 year olds, which is good. (having more age 6 fish is a sign of a stronger run)
 - % Female: Percentage is close to average, which is good.
 - Subsistence catches: Reported as good, with high quality.
 - Assessment projects: LYTF and Pilot Station sonar are below average for this date, though poor conditions early in the run and run is later than average.
 - Genetics: More than 50% of first pulse is Canadian origin, which is good because that number normally drops as the run continues.
 - Run seems similar to 2007.
 - o **Chum salmon**
 - Timing: 2 days later than king salmon run, so pretty close.
 - Age composition: Percentages are close to average for 5 versus 4 year olds.
 - Subsistence catches: Reported as good, with high abundance and quality.
 - Assessment projects: LYTF and Pilot Station sonar at expected or above
- At this point in the run, and due to the abundance of summer chum salmon it is time to start discussing commercial fisheries on chum salmon in starting in Y-1 while minimizing the impact to Chinook salmon.
- Steve Hayes presented the current management and assessment, then presented the following three options for how to proceed starting in Y1:
 1. Have a commercial period concurrent with a 18-hour subsistence period beginning in Y1 Friday, June 24, at 2 pm. The commercial period would be 4 hours on the front end (2-6pm Fri). Mesh size would be restricted to 6 inch for both commercial and subsistence fishers. No king salmon may be sold.

2. Have a commercial period concurrent with a shorter subsistence period of 9 hours—beginning in Y1 Friday, June 24, at 2 pm. Mesh size would be restricted to 6 inches for both. No king salmon may be sold.
 3. Delay commercial further until Monday, June 27.
- Several YAG members expressed concerns over the accuracy of the Pilot Station sonar count and other data for the king salmon run to date. ADF&G noted that assessment project numbers are used as an index, and they take into account likely effects of environmental conditions.
 - Several YAG members expressed concerns about having commercial and subsistence fishing simultaneously. It was stated that subsistence fishers should not have to compete with commercial fishers, and at least one participant suggested that subsistence fishers would much prefer using 7.5 inch mesh nets instead of 6 inch. There was also discussion about the history of why concurrent periods were stopped in the past and when fishing windows were created and that the intent of the Board of Fisheries was to have commercial and subsistence fishing concurrently in a window.
 - There was a brief discussion of the idea of putting a cap on the number of king salmon that could be incidentally caught in a commercial chum fishery. Some participants expressed the belief that fishers would not accurately report their king salmon catches if such a cap were in place.
 - Regarding the time of day of commercial openers, a concern was raised about starting an opener at 2 pm. One member shared that this is not a normal time for people to start fishing, it would be problematic for people with regular daytime jobs, it would cause all fishers—commercial and subsistence—to work harder because fish swim deeper during the middle of the day, and it would not be as good a time for the local processor. ADF&G suggested a 6 pm opener instead, and that was satisfactory.
 - Discussion turned to YAG member recommendations. Most members supported option 2, though some did reiterate their concerns over having commercial and subsistence fishers competing and the reduced subsistence fishing time.
 - There were concerns expressed about commercial fisheries taking place before subsistence fisheries have been met both in the lower river and in the upper river.
 - ADF&G closed the call by thanking participants for their input and reminding them that additional adjustments to management strategies may be required based on new assessment data.

Next Teleconference

- To Be Announced; Teleconference Number: 1-800-315-6338, Code: 98566#

**Yukon Advisory Group
(YAG) Summary of
Teleconference #3**

Thursday, June 30, 2011

Participants

Panel Members: Ragnar Alstrom, Andrew Bassich, Stanley Ned
Panel Alternates: John Lamont, Jr., Francis Thompson, Richard Burnham, Virgil Umphenour
Panel Advisors: Angela Demientieff, Andrew Firmin, Tim Andrew, Victor Lord, James Roberts, Gabe Nicholai, Joseph Strongheart
ADF&G: Steve Hayes, Amanda Wiese, Katie
Howard USFWS: Fred Bue
YR DFA: Jill Klein, Teddy Willoya

Summary

- Management reviewed the current key data collected, along with related analysis.
 - o **King salmon**
 - Age composition and % Female: Percentage is close to average, which is good.
 - Subsistence catches: Reported mix feelings on run-some stated it was good and others stated the abundance is low and similar to last year.
 - Assessment projects: LYTF and Pilot Station Sonar-The latest cumulative CPUE was 12.14 and there were just under 75,000 fish that that have passes Pilot Station Sonar so far. This is below what we expect this point in the run.
 - Total Run estimate: The estimate is conservative at 110,000-120,000 fish which is similar to what we saw in 2010. Passage target is 135,000.
 - Concerns with 3rd Pulse: It is very weak and is coming in later than expected. It is estimated that 68% of the run has passed Pilot Station Sonar so far.
 - Genetic Estimates of 2nd Pulse: The Canadian proportion is around 40%; it went down a little and Lower and Middle Yukon stocks went up a little.
 - o **Chum salmon**
 - % Female: Percentage is close to what we expected so far.
 - Subsistence/commercial catches: Reports from the fishers are positive and the fish are large and abundant.
 - Assessment projects: LYTF through the 29th of June, passage is 944,000, we are projecting somewhere between 1.5 and 1.8 million summer Chum salmon total. CPUE is 7495, they are looking pretty good. About 57% of the run passed Pilot Station Sonar so far.
- There was discussion about run timing, the pulses of Chinook salmon that have passed so far. It seems like all of the test fishing sites are lining up.
- There was a brief discussion about when the ice went out and how it impacts the fish entering the river. ADF&G has been working on a timing model with Phil Mundy of NOAA on ice cover, water and air temperature to better predict Chinook salmon arrival. Discussion about the first part of the run took place and questions came up about size, sex and gear. 8.25 inch mesh was used at the LYTF and small fish isn't usually caught

there because of the mesh size. The Chinook salmon that are caught are usually 4 and 5 year old fish and now seeing more 5 and 6 year old fish lately.

- Questions and concerns arose about the Tanana River stocks and what the genetic analysis shows; the first pulse is about 28% were Tanana River fish, and the second pulse was not a large enough sample size to break out the Tanana River stocks.
- Concerns about meeting escapement goals and amounts needed for subsistence were raised. Management stated they are doing the best they can and will follow restrictions to protect the fish up to the border. In 2009 subsistence fishing periods were by the same amount as this year and amounts necessary for subsistence were not met.
- A brief discussion about summer Chum salmon; through the 19th of June at Pilot Station sonar 88% of the Chum salmon were Lower Yukon bound, 11% were Koyukuk bound and less than 1% that were Tanana bound.
- Managers are concerned that the 3rd pulse of Chinook salmon is not arriving as they expected. Due to this, they wanted to receive input on the commercial chum openings that have been taking place and if they should delay them to wait and see if these King salmon enter the river and then proceed with additional commercial openings. Two options were presented:
 - 1) Continue to surgically place the commercial periods where we deem safe and the kings are low, or
 - 2) Delay fishing on summer Chum salmon for 2 or 3 days until we are comfortable that we have the 3rd pulse of Chinook salmon through.
- Discussions continued about the chum and Chinook salmon harvests to date and that the number of incidental Chinook salmon caught to date were 2005. They were mostly younger fish (5 year old) and 17% were female. They are usually about 10-14 pounds but it was also reported that the some of these kings were even less in weight but weights were not taken on all of the fish harvested. These fish were brought home as subsistence or processed and donated to those still needing salmon.
- Most panel members and alternates support option 1 and some had caveats that they preferred openings in Y-1 where management could determine which mouth was open to fishing and if a similar strategy could be done in Y-2 where they avoid king salmon then they may be more supportive there. Most advisors and a couple of panel alternates picked option 2 and were concerned with the additional harvest of incidental Chinook salmon because while the numbers are low in comparison to the chum harvests, these numbers of fish could still have provided for upriver subsistence harvest needs where fish is still needed.

**Yukon Advisory Group
(YAG) Summary of
Teleconference #4**

Thursday, July 14, 2011

Participants

Panel Members: Andrew Bassich, Stanley Ned
Panel Alternates: Francis Thompson, Richard Burnham, Virgil
Umphenour Panel Advisors: Angela Demientieff, Tim Andrew, James
Roberts ADF&G: Jeff Estensen, Bonnie Borba
USFWS: Fred Bue, Gerald Maschmann
YRDFA: Jason Hale, Teddy Willoya

Summary

- The focus of the teleconference was fall chum. Management reviewed the outlook and requested input on management strategies for (1) subsistence and (2) commercial fishing later this month.
- Assessment:
 - o The initial preseason projection based on the performance of the summer chum salmon run is for 750,000 fall chum.
 - o This should be adequate for escapement and subsistence, and there should be a surplus of fish for commercial harvest.
 - o There were lots of 3 year old fall chum in last year's run, so there should be lots of 4 year olds this year.
 - o Chum salmon are doing well in other parts of the AYK region.
 - o Management for fall chum at the mouth of the river will begin July 16.
- Management Question #1: In districts Y1, Y2, and Y3, should there be fishing 7 days per week with unrestricted (up to 7.5 inch) mesh OR should there be two 36 hour period per week with unrestricted mesh?
 - o The vast majority of YAG members and alternates supported fishing 7 days per week. A slight majority supported restricting mesh size to 6 inch or smaller, though nearly as many members and alternates supported unrestricted mesh.
 - o All YAG advisors supported fishing 7 days per week with unrestricted mesh.
 - o Those supporting restricting mesh size to 6 inch or smaller noted that chum catches should really be encouraged given the lack of king salmon, the few king salmon still in the lower river must be protected in light of the poor run and subsistence fishing restrictions, and larger mesh doesn't make sense when targeting chum salmon.
 - o Those supporting unrestricted mesh noted that most of the kings are out of the lower river, those remaining are lower river stocks (not going to Canada), many people in Y3 don't have 6 inch gear, and people need the fish.
 - o The individual who supported two 36 hour periods pointed out that the precautionary principle should be followed.
- Management Question #2: From July 16 to July 31, one quarter of the fall chum salmon run should pass through the lower river. Based on the pre-season projection, this will be 187,500 fish. During those dates, should there be commercial fishing with a harvest cap of roughly 10 percent of the total expected fish for that period (roughly 20,000 fish) and

mesh restricted to 6 inch? Also, should the sale of incidentally caught king salmon be allowed?

- o The vast majority of YAG members and alternates supported commercial fishing on fall chum salmon with a cap of 10 percent and 6 inch mesh restriction. One person recommended management be more cautious and go with a 5 percent cap until more is known about in-season run strength. The vast majority also supported no sale of king salmon.
- o All YAG advisors supported commercial fishing on fall chum salmon with a cap of 10 percent and 6 inch mesh restriction. The majority supported no sale of king salmon.
- o Discussion points on Management Question #2 included:
 - Fall chum salmon are probably the most important subsistence resource in the upper river this year.
 - Subsistence and commercial fishing should be held at the same time.
 - Allowing sale of king salmon is not fair to all the fishers who experienced subsistence closures this summer.
 - It is not politically viable to sell king salmon this year.
 - Likelihood of harvesting king salmon in this commercial fishery is low, and they will probably be small and heading to lower river spawning grounds, so their sale should be allowed.
 - There are still summer chum mixed in with the fall chum so perhaps the cap should be raised. [Management noted that from July 13-24 the run is about half fall chum and half summer chum, and then it goes to predominately fall chum.]
- o Management shared that as more in-season information becomes available they would adjust strategies accordingly.
- The next YAG teleconference will be toward the end of the month, when more in-season data is available for the fall chum salmon run.

**Yukon Advisory Group
(YAG) Summary of
Teleconference #5**

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

Participants

Panel Members: Erik Weingarth, Andrew Bassich
Panel Alternates: John Lamont, Richard Burnham, Virgil Umphenour
Panel Advisors: Tim Andrew (sitting in for Myron Naneng), Victor Lord, James Roberts
ADF&G: Craig Fleener, Steve Hayes, Amanda Wiese, Katie Howard, Jan Conitz, Heather Leba, Dan Bergstrom, Jeff Estensen, Bonnie Borba, John Linderman
USFWS: Fred Bue, Gerald Maschmann, Jeremy Mears
YRDLA: Jason Hale, Jill Klein

Summary

- The focus of the teleconference was preparing for the upcoming Yukon River Panel meeting.
- ADF&G presented season summaries for summer and fall.
 - o John Lamont requested clarification of summer season closures by district. ADF&G responded with more detail, focusing on the reasoning behind partial closures in Y1 and full closures in other districts. It came down to timing—when they confirmed the need for the additional closure, it was too late to cancel the next fishing period in Y1, so they cut the next two fishing periods in half in Y1 and cancelled one full period in other districts. ADF&G also clarified that the upper portion of sub-district 5D was closed for additional time toward the end of the run to get more king salmon across the border to meet harvest share and escapement objectives.
 - o John Lamont asked what type of gear was used in Eagle. ADF&G replied that fish wheels and nets (7.5 inch or smaller) were used. John pointed out that the lower river was restricted to 6 inch, and ADF&G explained that the gear restriction was necessary to allow for commercial summer chum fishing while not increasing pressure on Chinook salmon in the lower river.
 - o Andy Bassich requested that ADF&G report actual harvest numbers from Eagle at the Panel meeting, to show the conservation efforts taken. ADF&G replied that they will try to accomplish this, and at the very least will make note of the conservation efforts taken.
 - o Andy Bassich requested that during the in-season management teleconferences fishers should be given the opportunity to share and promote local conservation efforts.
 - o Erik Weingarth requested a presentation at the Panel meeting comparing subsistence harvest numbers with fishing restrictions (including windows) since the year 2000, to show what effects different restrictions had. ADF&G replied that they will make an effort to do this, but it may not be ready until the spring Panel meeting.
 - o Virgil Umphenour requested a comparison of the size and percent female for Chinook salmon in years with pulse closures and mesh size restrictions. The JTC is looking at this, but they do not yet have enough data.

- ADF&G reviewed scoring for R&E proposals, including details regarding the special case of communications proposals—a lack of scoring criteria and questions as to whether the R&E Fund was designed to have a communications envelope.
 - o John Lamont asked about projects in Canada involving acoustic tagging. ADF&G replied that these are Canadian projects to determine where fish go in the Porcupine River; the fish cannot be detected through aerial surveys as they were with radio tags.
 - o Andy Bassich asked that the U.S. Section try to whittle down the CPs to within \$100,000 of the total amount available.
 - o There was general agreement that the group should review the proposals and be ready to discuss details in Whitehorse.
- Key Fisheries Issues
 - o YR DFA presented information on a new project to revise the Yukon River King Salmon Management Plan. The process will involve meetings with representatives from a number of agencies and stakeholder groups, advice from a newly formed Elders Council, and assistance from contract scientists and a contract facilitator. The first meeting will be January 11-12, 2012 in Anchorage. The end goal is likely a proposal to the Alaska Board of Fisheries for January 2013.
 - o YR DFA requested that the YAG nominate a representative at the U.S. section meeting in Whitehorse to be part of this project.
 - o YR DFA noted that YAG members will be receiving a scoping survey shortly to provide their views on salmon management.
 - o Tim Andrew shared that the AVCP State of the Salmon Convention will be held in Bethel on March 6, 7, and possibly 8. No materials are available at this time.
 - o Steve Hayes mentioned that people should be thinking about Board of Fisheries proposal submission, as they are due on April 10, 2012. He also reminded people of the preseason planning meeting that will likely take place in April (pending Panel funding).
- Other comments for the upcoming Panel Meeting
 - o The spring Panel meeting is scheduled for the week of March 19, 2012, in Anchorage.
 - o YAG members expressed concern that they had not yet received proposal packets. ADF&G replied that these are normally sent out by Panel staff; they will follow up on this issue immediately.
 - o ADF&G reminded YAG members that the charter to Whitehorse will depart Anchorage at 10AM on Monday, December 5. Members should be at the ERA counter in the Anchorage airport by 9AM. The return charter will depart Whitehorse on Friday, December 9 at 1PM.
 - o YAG members shared two heartfelt losses with the group:
 - Fran Thompson lost his daughter and two grandchildren. He will not be attending the meeting in Whitehorse.
 - Stanley Ned lost his son.

**Yukon Advisory Group
(YAG) Summary of
Teleconference #6
March 13, 2012**

6 YAG members present:

Ragnar Alstrom
Stanley Ned
James Roberts
Andy Bassich
Francis Thompson
Joesph Stronghart

Moderated by: Jason Hale, YR DFA

Discussion followed the agenda topics:

**Stephanie Schmidt with Alaska Department of Fish and Game
(ADF&G): Anticipated management strategies for Chinook salmon
for 2012**

- Below average to poor run similar or worse to last year
- Outlook: 109,000 – 146,000 total run Chinook salmon run projection
- JTC recommends same 42,500 – 50,000 interim escapement goal (we would want 50,000 border passage)
- Managers discussed will bring it up at April 4 meeting and get more input on summer management
- Summer chum: 1.5 to 2 million which is average and similar to last year
- 500,000 – 1 million of summer chum for harvest but it is dependent on the king run and will need to wait until in-season

Jeff Estensen ADF&G: fall chum salmon outlook

- 1.1 million and ranges from 986,000 to 1.2 million
- Better production now, so seeing increased production. If summer chum is the case, then fall chum project would hold up
- Coho average about 219,00 this year based on parent year average return from 2008 and could have commercial surplus of 10 – 70,000 Coho
- Bonnie Borba ADFG: Goal mainstream escapement for fall chum at 70,000 – 104,000 and waiting for complete return of 2005 brood year and then adjust the goal if needed in the future
- Need border passage of 80,000
- Fishing branch 22,000 – 49,000 and no new data here so not being reassessed until 2013
- Jeff discussed the approach to fishing for fall chum commercially and when would we allow the sale of kings in the fall season and we would discuss this later on closer or into the season.

Stephanie Schmidt and Katie Howard from ADF&G reviewed the proposals from R&E and R&M

- Scoring process was reviewed and they have some concerns and were unsatisfied how it worked overall. Some proposals didn't fall out in scoring where they thought they would and as a result of this and are looking at other scoring processes.
- Katie asked people if they had received anything from McClain and from Angus related to the proposals and meetings
- YAG members have received e-mail messages from McClain except Stanley Ned and no one had an e-mail from Angus, nor from Jan Conitz (because she did not send one).

Stephanie Schmidt: Highlight of some proposals to take a closer look at:

Conservation envelope:

- One proposal pulled because funded by another entity 21-12N YR stewardship camp funded by USFWS
- 6-3: Chinook ASL with fish wheels: If funded the JTC recommends the wheels to be manned to reduce stress and should convert data to escapement data (?) It is expensive and in comparison to the Rapids, it is expensive.
- 7-5: Little Salmon escapement: Were not happy with the scoring. It is expensive for a short ASL project and other concerns too such as snagging live fish off of reds and could lead to stress and be more cost effective if done with DFO as part of 8-5N and subcontracted to a local organization.
- 10-6: Only a sonar on one side because of assumption with fish only on one bank and have seen that fish are on both banks sometimes so need two sonars on both banks for a couple of years and then if see that this is true, then can go back to doing just one side
- 13-6: rapids coded tagging and recovery of Chinook fry: It was poorly written and quite unprofessional and disrespectful and strongly encouraged panel members to look at this because there is a lack of responsiveness by the proponent and this year will be \$9,000 more so will need more expensive tags this year. Did not address an exit strategy at this point.
- 18-STE 11: On-line delivery of curriculum is very expensive and had a number of questions and concerns about the budget. The scope of AK curriculum development was not clear if it would be useful and appropriate in AK.
- 1-Con-110: Holy Cross, Ruby, and Ft. Yukon subsistence sampling: Another one scored higher because this one was not written as well but the data is still important and essential for run reconstruction, brood table, and run forecasting. In the past ADFG used to this and since no commercial fishing, no samples so we are relying on these projects to gather this data. It scored lower than we anticipated and we think it is because the CDN counterparts did not realize how essential this data is for our run reconstruction. The other project was 5-con4N and was written very well by AVCP but the TCC one was not written as well.
- 10-con6N: porcupine sonar for Chinook salmon: It is a lot of money for a small amount of Chinook salmon that use the river. The project for fall chum should have priority because they use the river more and the Chinook proposal was not fully developed.

R&M (Aaron Martin)

- Trying to create a more objective scoring process. 24 proposals, 16 were approved for advancement. As of Feb. 21st we are looking at a 15% reduction for the R&M, \$200,000 reduction. Free up \$90,000 funding.
- 5con4N
- 4con2

Amanda Weiss with ADF&G discussed proposal 385

- Accepted by board in February, taken up in March.
- No action taken by the YAG

John Linderman with ADF&G updated on open panel seats and meeting logistics

- Discussed that all advisor seats are open except Myron Naneng who was just appointed. He asked people to decide if they are still interested and to recommend any new names they may have.
- US Section meeting will discuss the selection and confirmation of the U.S. section co-chair since Graig Fleener is moving out and we would have Hazel Nelson as the new co-chair and it is to be selected by the section of a member from the section so would need to make Hazel a member.
- We will also discuss the JTC membership and we will need to caucus a few times about these topics and also do executive sessions during the next panel meeting to discuss these topics.
- The final agenda was mailed out on Saturday and Stanley will check his e-mail for the agenda as all others.
- Meeting will start at 10:30 Monday morning.

Appendix C – YRDFA Fall Board Meeting

Agenda



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

Fall Board of Directors Meeting

November 7-8, 2011

Clarion Suites

Draft Agenda

November 7, 2011

9:00 AM

- Call to Order, Bill Alstrom, Richard Burnham
- Consent Agenda
 - a. Roll Call, establish quorum
 - b. Review and adoption of agenda
 - c. Review and approve minutes summary
 - d. Minutes and report of recent fall board teleconference meetings
 - e. Review of election of new board officers
 - f. YRDFA dashboard review
- YRDFA board member Check in
 - a. Life on the river
 - b. Fisheries issues
 - c. YRDFA issues
- Break
- YRDFA Financials:
 - a. 2009 audit review and approval – Brad Cage, CPA
 - b. 2010 Audit review and approval – Brad Cage, CPA
 - c. 2011 budget – Richell Carmichael
 - d. Fundraising update – Jill Klein
- LUNCH – on your own
- Organizational effectiveness training; Dennis McMillian, The Foraker Group

November 8, 2011

9:00 AM

- YRDFA e-board strategies
 - a. Key strategic issues for next 12-18 months from the strategic plan
 - b. Create board operational plan
- Break
- Customary Trade
- LUNCH – on your own
- Habitat – Fish passage projects – Bob Massengale
- Elders Council and fish camps project – Catherine Moncrieff
- Break
- King salmon management plan – Becca and Jason
- Executive evaluation
- Meeting Adjourn

Summary Article

YR DFA Board Gets Down to Business at Fall Meeting

By Jason Hale, Communications Director

In early November, nine members of the YR DFA’s executive board worked together to pound through a varied and ambitious agenda. The tone in the conference room in downtown Anchorage was friendly, which is not unexpected since the participants could be called old friends, but viewpoints did not always match up and some of the topics were challenging. Here are a few key highlights:

Audit

“No financial issues at all.” –*Brad Cage, auditor*

Our most recent audit went smoothly, showing that our accounting is in good shape. This isn’t to say that we’re flush with money, just that we do a good job of managing what we’ve got. Thank you Richell Carmichael, YR DFA’s finance manager!

Check-In

Before diving into more heady topics, we carved out some time for board and staff to catch up regarding life along the Yukon. The idea was to help everyone better understand and appreciate how things are going in different villages and regions, and to encourage bonds amongst all present. We talked about fishing for eels, concerns over the protection of any one specific pulse of king salmon, and effects of the new 7.5 inch mesh restriction. We heard about some larger-than-average king salmon that were caught in Kaltag, Tanana, and Nenana, including one 45-pounder and two that tipped the scales around 55 pounds.

“If I knew [7.5 inch mesh] would do such a good job of catching fish, I’d have switched years ago.” –
Frank Alstrom, Alakanuk

Outside of fishing, we also shared and mourned recent losses across the drainage. To name a few that struck close to home: Robert Walker’s wife and founding board member Ernie Chase in Anvik. Founding board member Carl Walker in Grayling. Close family losses of Stanley Ned of Allakaket and Fran Thompson of St. Mary’s. Hearts were heavy and condolences went out to friends and families. It may not be apparent on any map, but the Yukon River is a small community.

Organizational Effectiveness Training

The board members went back to school for the afternoon, as they participated in a top-notch training from The Foraker Group. They heard about current trends in funding and nonprofit structure, and discussed their roles in YR DFA’s continued success. Everything was on the table: consensus voting, fundraising, Robert’s Rules, board structure, working for the best interest of the entire river. We were also told that the economic downturn is likely going to continue to affect nonprofits, but were somewhat assured that we’ll make it through.

Consensus

YR DFA has always operated under 100 percent consensus—if a single board member disagrees with something, it does not happen. This has served us well, as when we put our support behind something, it implies that it’s good for the whole river. However, on some issues it has prevented us from being able to weigh-in. So, the board members present discussed other options, and unanimously elected to take a

couple specific ideas to the full board at the upcoming annual meeting, this February in Galena. Should anything change, you'll read it here first!

Hatcheries

There are two proposals—114 and 115—before the Alaska Board of Fisheries this December that aim to reduce hatchery production of chum salmon in Prince William Sound. YRDFA passed a motion to support both of these proposals.

Customary Trade

As the tri-RAC subcommittee on customary trade moves forward in developing a proposal for the Federal Subsistence Board on the limitation of customary trade (see related article in this newsletter), the YRDFA board weighed in on the issue through the passage of two motions:

YRDFA recommends to the Federal Subsistence Board that any customary trade restrictions put into place apply only in times of shortage—when there is no commercial fishery on Chinook salmon and there are restrictions on subsistence fishing.

YRDFA supports reductions in fishing time or subsistence fishing period closures in times of shortage, instead of addressing customary trade specifically.

Meeting Adjourned

Phew! That's a lot to cover in just two days, and these were just select highlights!

YRDFA's work on this project was funded through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the USFWS.

Appendix D – Educational Exchange

Sample Itinerary

Angie Demientieff's Travel Details & Important Phone Numbers

Monday, August 8

10:45 a.m.-11:10 a.m. ERA/Hageland, Holy Cross to Aniak, *confirmation code CCQMPZ*
12:20 p.m.-1:35 p.m. ERA, Aniak to Anchorage, *confirmation code CCQMPZ*
5:35 p.m.-6:40 p.m. ERA, Anchorage to Fairbanks, *confirmation code CCQMPZ*
7:45 p.m. Meet group in lobby of Alpine Lodge to go to orientation dinner
Lodging Alpine Lodge, Fairbanks

Tuesday, August 9

8:15 a.m. Tour Salcha River counting tower
1:10 p.m.-5:05 p.m. Air North, Fairbanks to Whitehorse, *confirmation code 564004*
7 p.m. Dinner with DFO at Giorgio's
Lodging Westmark Hotel, Whitehorse

Wednesday, August 10

9:00 a.m. Overview of Canadian Fisheries Management with
DFO Late morning Drive to Teslin
1:30 p.m. Tour Teslin, attend Teslin Tlingit Council presentation at Heritage
Center, storytelling, meet locals
5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. BBQ at Heritage Center
Lodging Yukon Motel, Teslin

Thursday, August 11

5:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m. Check out bird banding station (*optional*)
9 a.m.-2 p.m. Boat to fish camps on Teslin River, traditional lunch at camp
2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Tour George Johnson Museum
3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Meet & greet at First Nation administrative building
5:00 p.m. Drive back to Whitehorse
Lodging Yukon Inn, Whitehorse

Friday, August 12

8 a.m.-5p.m. Orientation of tour day with Al von Finster
Breakfast at Helen's fish camp
Old trading sites, spawning areas, and restoration projects
Meet representatives from Ta'an Kwachan, Campagne/Aishihik,
& Kwanlin Dun First Nations on traditional lands
throughout the day
Tour fish ladder & hatchery
Lodging Hotel Carmacks, Carmacks

Saturday, August 13

Morning Drive to Mayo
11:00 a.m. Meet Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation representative at North Star Motel
Noon-5 p.m. Launch boat on Stewart River, boat to Fraser Falls
5:45 p.m. Dinner & meeting with local fishers at curling lounge
Be ready to discuss who you are and your views on the Yukon

	River king salmon fishery
Lodging	North Star Motel, Mayo
Sunday, August 14	
8 a.m.	Breakfast at curling lounge
9:30 a.m.	Pick up bag lunch, tour fish camps
Afternoon	Drive to Dawson
Evening	Dinner with local miners at Klondike Kate's
Lodging	Eldorado Hotel, Dawson
Monday, August 15	
Morning	Mining tour, courtesy of the Klondike Placer Miners Association
Afternoon	Boat to Moosehide with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation representative, meet local Elders
Evening	Debrief dinner
Lodging	Eldorado Hotel, Dawson
Tuesday, August 16	
10:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Air North, Dawson to Fairbanks, <i>confirmation code 564004</i>
Lodging	Pikes Waterfront Lodge, <i>confirmation code PWL 1957926</i>
Wednesday, August 17	
Early morning	Take hotel shuttle to Fairbanks airport
7:55 a.m.-9:00 a.m.	ERA, Fairbanks to Anchorage, <i>confirmation code CCQMPZ</i>
10:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m.	ERA, Anchorage to Aniak, <i>confirmation code CCQMPZ</i>
12:45 p.m.-1 p.m.	ERA/Hageland, Aniak to Holy Cross, <i>confirmation code CCQMPZ</i>

IMPORTANT: You must have your current, unexpired passport with you.

Airlines

Air North: 800-661-0407, 867-668-2228
Alaska Airlines 888-327-2755 or 800-252-7522
ERA Aviation Fairbanks Office 800-866-8394, 907-266-8394
Warbelow's 888-459-6250, 907-474-0518

Hotels

Alpine Lodge, Fairbanks 907-328-6300
Eldorado Hotel, Dawson 867-993-5451
Hotel Carmacks, Carmacks 867-863-5221
North Star Motel, Mayo 867-996-2231
Pikes Waterfront Lodge, Fairbanks 877-774-2400
Westmark, Whitehorse 867-393-9700
Yukon Inn, Whitehorse 867-667-2527
Yukon Motel, Teslin 867-390-2575

Other

YRDFA office 877-999-8566 or 907-272-3141
Jason Hale home office 907-746-7355

Jason Hale cell 910-233-9888

Program Evaluation

Yukon River Educational Exchange Program Evaluation Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association November 23, 2011

The Funding Exchange, Inc./Alaska Funding Exchange (AFE) was contracted by Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) to conduct an evaluation of the Yukon River Educational Exchange (YREE) program. Specifically, AFE was asked to address the following questions with regard to the program:

- How have participants used the knowledge they gained as a result of the Yukon River Educational Exchange project?
- How have they shared or spread the knowledge they gained?
- What suggestions do they have for improving the program?

Sharon Charnell Gherman served as Program Evaluator for this project.

Methodology

In completing this evaluation, AFE examined YRDFA documents including the most recent YREE grant proposal and program reports. AFE also interviewed Jason Hale, YRDFA Communications Director and surveyed program participants.

A survey was designed for YREE participants. Survey forms were sent via U.S. Mail to a total of 56 program participants. Survey participants were given the option to complete the survey by pre-paid return mail, online or via telephone. Approximately four weeks after the initial survey was mailed, unresponsive survey recipients were contacted by YRDFA staff via telephone to encourage their response.

Of the 56 surveys mailed, 5 were returned for incorrect address. A total of 22 surveys were completed and returned, giving an overall response rate of 43%, which is acceptable.

Program Background

The Yukon River Educational Exchange was created in 2002 to enable members of communities along the Yukon River in Yukon Territory, Canada and Alaska, USA to understand drainage-wide needs and concerns for use of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon and fall chum salmon. Program objectives include increased communication, understanding and appreciation for the perspectives and needs of the various people in the Yukon River drainage.

Each year, five fisheries leaders from either Alaska or Canada (alternating each year) spend eight days traveling to Yukon River communities in the other country. Participants meet with Yukon

River Panel representatives and discuss international fisheries management and U.S./Canada relations.

Participants learn and share information about their different cultures, fishing practices, and the importance of salmon in different areas in the Yukon drainage. During the trip they gain knowledge about fisheries management and develop relationships by observing and communicating with their peers on the other side of the border.

The objectives of the Yukon River Educational Exchange program have been to:

1. Plan and execute a trip bringing five Alaskans (or in alternate years, five Canadians) with strong ties to Yukon River fisheries to representative fishing spots in the other country to gain and share knowledge, both during and after the trip.
2. Build cross-border understanding and cooperation among Yukon River drainage individuals and communities.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the program by surveying all past participants.

Note about Survey Results

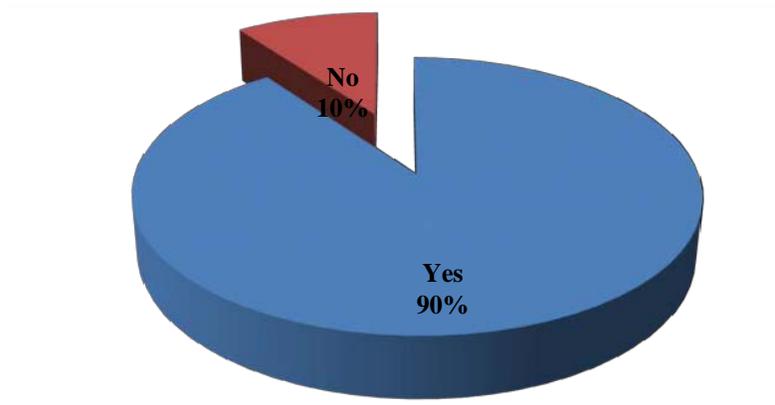
Please note that in the following survey, responses with multiple answers were counted in each category to ensure accuracy. Therefore, the number of responses to an individual question may total more than the total number of respondents.

A copy of the survey data summary and the individual answers are included with this report.

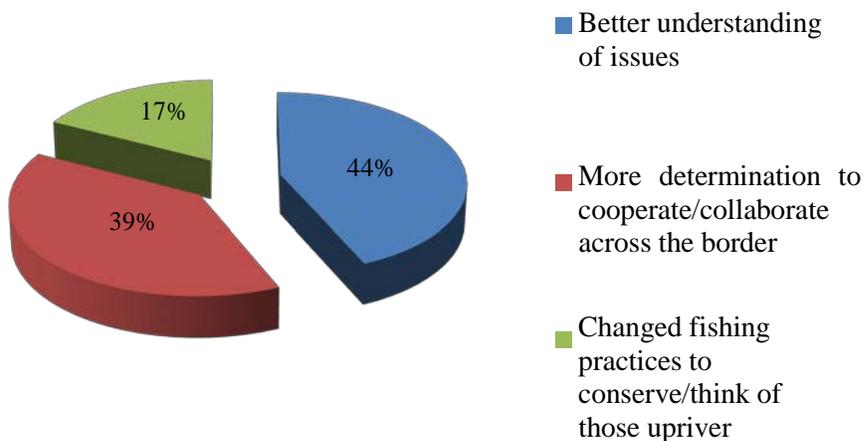
Survey Results

1. Did the information or insight you gained during the trip change any of your practices or ideas? If so, how?

1a. Did the information or insight you gained during the trip change any of your practices or ideas?

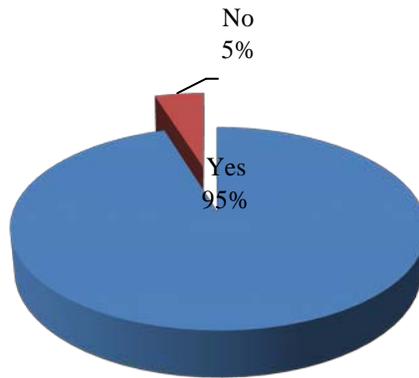


1b. If yes, how?

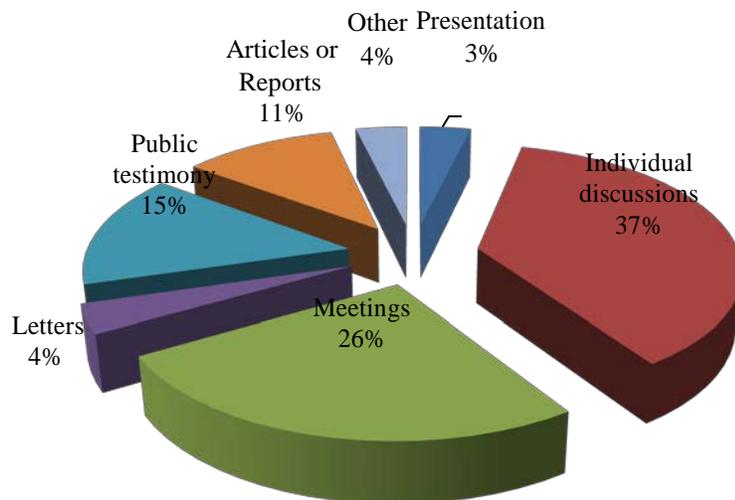


2. Have you shared your experiences with others in fisheries or government? If yes, what type of sharing took place – a presentation, individual discussion, personal testimony at a government hearing, written articles or reports, etc?

2a. Have you shared your experiences with others in fisheries or government?

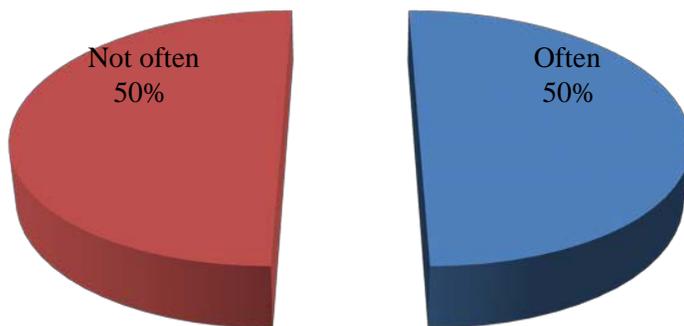


2b. If 'yes', how?

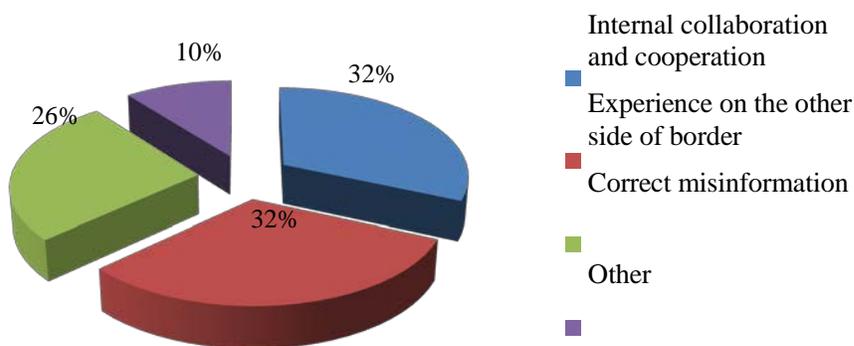


3. Since the trip, how often are you asked about fisheries on the other side of the border? What types of questions are you asked and what have you told them?

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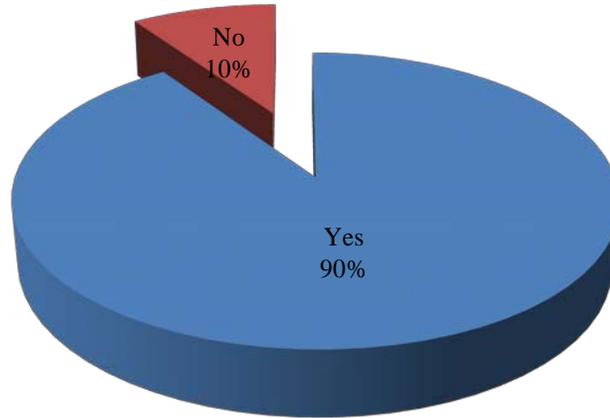


3b. What types of questions are you asked and what have you told them?

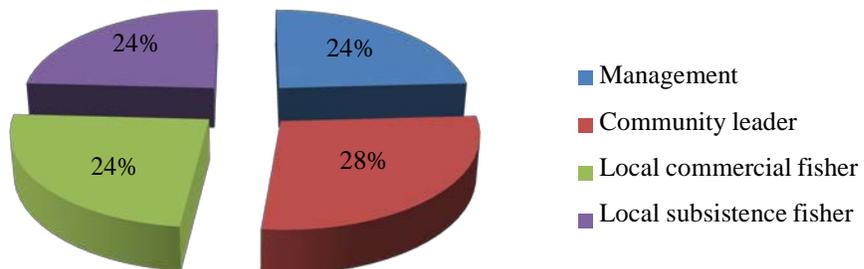


4. Are you still involved in your community or in fisheries? If so, what is your role?

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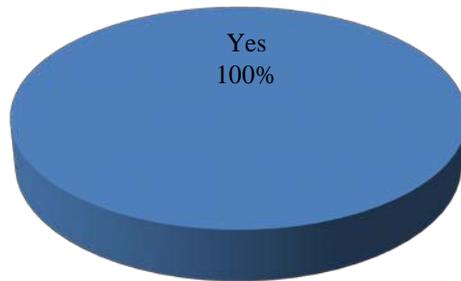


4b. If 'yes', what is your role?

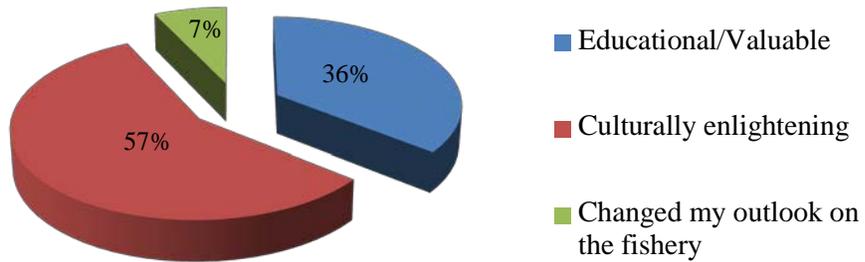


5. Was your experience on the other side of the border worthwhile? If so, how?

5a. Was your experience on the other side of the border worthwhile?

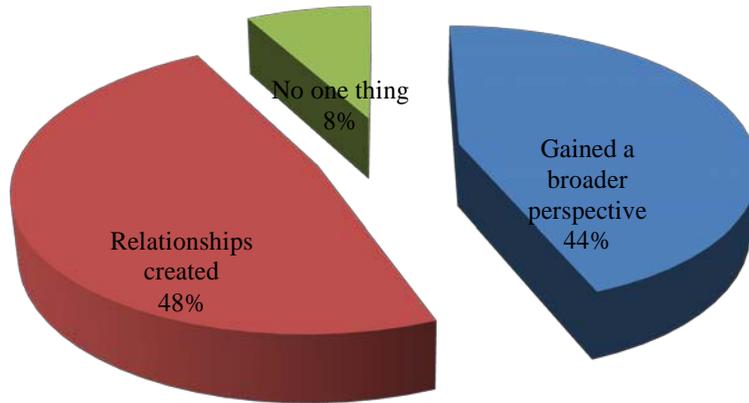


5b. If 'yes', how?



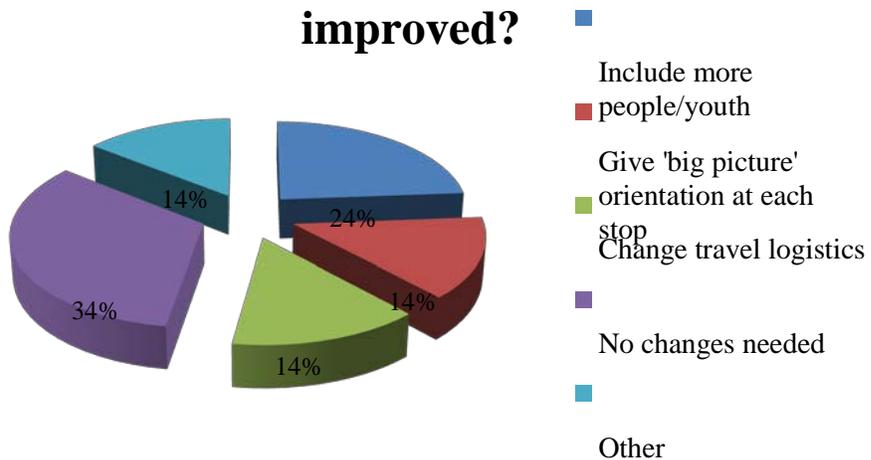
6. In retrospect, what was the most valuable part of your trip?

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7. In your opinion, how could this program be improved?

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Summary of Survey Responses

At the end of each year's Exchange trip, participants have received a short survey in order to obtain feedback about the participant's experience in the program. In the post-surveys taken in this manner, participants overwhelmingly described the trip as "excellent", "exceeding their expectations", and "eye-opening".

This report's multi-year survey sent as part of this evaluation attempted to evaluate the extent to which participants continue to view their Exchange trip as valuable, and to determine if and how the trip has influenced their actions or attitudes about the Yukon River fishery.

How have participants used the knowledge they gained as a result of the Yukon River Educational Exchange project?

Survey participants unanimously continued to believe their participation in the Exchange had been a worthwhile experience, with 90% of them stating that the information or insight they gained had changed their ideas and/or practices in some way. All survey participants stated that the trip had been educational or valuable in some way. Respondents stated they now had a better understanding of the issues (44%), were more determined to cooperate across the border (39%), and had changed their fishing practices to conserve for the sake of those across the border (17%). It is clear from the survey responses that participants consider the Yukon River Educational Exchange program highly valuable, and that the educational experience contributed to enhanced cross-border understanding, changed practices, and new friendships and collegial relationships.

How have (participants) shared or spread the knowledge they gained?

Survey participants were evenly divided when asked how often they are asked about the Yukon River fishery – 50% chose "Often", and 50% chose "Not often". "Often" was not defined in this question, so the response is subjective according to each respondent's interpretation.

When asked what type of questions they were asked and how they answered, however, participants overwhelmingly communicated positive information about the Yukon River fishery (90%). The YREE program has been successful in effectively multiplying YRDFA's educational reach to the communities in the Yukon River drainage, and possibly beyond.

The majority of survey participants (90%) were still involved in either their community or in fisheries. Their roles were almost evenly divided between management (24%), community leader (28%), local commercial fisheries (24%) and local subsistence fisheries (24%). **The responses to this question would indicate that program officials are effectively choosing program participants who will continue to positively affect their communities after the end of the program.**

A small percentage of respondents (8%) felt that no single aspect of the YREE trip was most valuable – they valued all aspects equally. The remaining participants were almost evenly

divided between valuing most the relationships created on the trip (48%) and the broader perspective they gained of the fishery (44%).

What suggestions do (participants) have for improving the program?

When asked how the program could be improved, 34% said no changes were needed and 14% thought more people should be included. 14% felt the trip could have been improved by receiving a ‘big picture’ orientation at each location, and 14% mentioned a preference for a change involving travel logistics.

Recommendations

Based upon survey results and feedback received during interviews, it is clear that the participants viewed the YREE trip as a valuable attitude- and personal action-changing experience. The education participants received and the exposure they gained on the trip gave them new insights that in many cases changed not only their thinking about the Yukon River fishery but also influenced their actions positively.

Program leaders appear to have done a good job of choosing participants with community influence, and the majority of participants have continued to spread their knowledge and contribute their opinions to the local discussion about the Yukon River fishery. It is clear that the YREE program has been successful in effectively multiplying YRDFA’s educational reach to the communities in the Yukon River drainage and possibly beyond.

Relationships that have been initiated via the YREE trips are currently left up to individuals involved to maintain. Program staff might consider providing one or more forums to encourage continued dialogue among participants via email, threaded chats, or newsletters mailings to past participants. This would also afford YRDFA a vehicle through which to update all program participants of changes, news, and announcements.

As suggested by survey participants, the positive effects of the YREE program to date would be increased by seeking funds to include more people in future Exchanges. Care must be taken, however, to balance the increase in number of participants with keeping the group size small enough to facilitate networking and discussion among the entire group.

end of report

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,

(scg)

Sharon C. Gherman
Program Evaluator
Alaska Funding Exchange

Appendix E – Pre-Season Meeting

Agenda

2012 Yukon River Fisheries Pre-Season Planning Meeting

Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage

April 4, 2012

- 8:30 a.m. Opening prayer
 Introductions, purpose, & opening comments
- 9:15 a.m. **Background**
 2012 run outlook & initial thoughts on management – *ADF&G & USFWS*
- 9:55 a.m. Open discussion, questions, and public comment – *moderated by YRDFA*
- 10:30 a.m. BREAK
- 10:45 a.m. **Group Discussions – *Steve Hayes, ADF&G, Fred Bue, USFWS, and Jason Hale, YRDFA***

 Presentation of Topic #1: Restrict to Federally qualified subsistence users
 Discussion at tables on Topic #1: Restrict to Federally qualified subsistence users
 Report from tables on Topic #1: Restrict to Federally qualified subsistence users
- 11:30 a.m. Presentation of Topic #2: Voluntary reductions
 Discussion at tables on Topic #2: Voluntary reductions
 Report from tables on Topic #2: Voluntary reductions
- 12:15 p.m. LUNCH / optional working lunch (provided)
- 1:15 p.m. Presentation of Topic #3: Sale of incidentally caught king salmon
 Discussion at tables on Topic #3: Sale of incidentally caught king salmon
 Report from tables on Topic #3: Sale of incidentally caught king salmon
- 2:00 p.m. BREAK
- 2:15 p.m. **Education Sessions (45 minutes each)**
 Break-out educational sessions #1
 - Salmon science – *Dr. Stephanie Schmidt & Heather Leba, ADF&G*
 - Fall chum – *Jeff Estensen ADF&G*
- 3:10 p.m. Break-out educational sessions #2
 - Harvests and subsistence law – *Caroline Brown, ADF&G*
 - Commercial processor panel – *Jack Schultheis, Virgil Umphenour, Doug Karlberg*
- 4:00 p.m. **Presentation of King Salmon Management Plan Revision & related survey**
- 4:45 p.m. **Meeting Wrap-Up**

Presentation of preseason plan – *Steve Hayes, ADF&G and Fred Bue, USFWS*

Closing remarks

5:30 p.m.

Adjourn

Summary Article

Alaskan Pre-Season Meeting Digs Deep

By Jason Hale, Communications Director

When it was first released, I really enjoyed the movie *Rocky IV*. As you may recall, rough-and-tumble boxer Rocky Balboa (played by Sylvester Stallone) traveled to Russia to knock gloves with a steroid-jacked giant who had killed Rocky's friend in the ring. This was during the cold war, so Americans and Russians were not supposed to like one another. However, Rocky trained hard, dug deep, took abuse and kept coming, and slowly won over the Russian crowd. In turn, American movie goers were won over by the open-minded Russians. At the end a battered but exuberant Rocky made a speech proclaiming that he saw lots of changes of opinion in himself and the crowd during the fight, and if he can change, and they can change, everyone can change.

So it was with pre-season planning for the Yukon River fishery.

On April 4 YRDFFA convened the fourth annual Alaskan Pre-Season Planning Meeting in Anchorage, which brought together representatives of Tribes, agencies, and other stakeholder groups to talk about how the king salmon run should be managed. Like Rocky, we'd been through this three times before, patterns had emerged, and we had some idea of what to expect—hard work, evolving ideas, and a reasonable outcome.

All told, at least 85 people participated in the meeting. This included representatives from 35 Tribes, 3 Inter-Tribal organizations, 3 Regional Advisory Councils, 3 processors, the Yukon River Panel, YRDFFA, and other concerned fishers. In terms of number of attendees, this precisely paralleled the 2011 meeting, which boasted the highest level of attendance for this riverwide meeting since the program began. In terms of number of groups represented, this was the most successful rendition of this meeting to date.

Attendees heard the outlook for the 2012 salmon runs, which was the worst outlook to date, and they gave input into how to manage the run. Broad management approaches and specific tools and scenarios were discussed.

In earlier versions of this meeting, we spent more time sorting out the broad approaches. In that time, fishers have made it clear that if they must be restricted because of poor runs, pulse protection is the most equitable tool in the manager's toolbox. Understanding that, we spent more time on other details. These details, in the form of specific management questions, were introduced to every Tribal Council through a survey included with their invitation to the meeting, to give them a chance to consider and discuss the ideas in advance.

The first specific discussion topic was whether to limit fishing in federal waters to federally qualified subsistence users to reduce fishing pressure from people living outside the drainage or in urban areas, thereby providing a priority for those living closer to the resource. There was not much support for this idea, which was used in 2009 to the consternation of many. As such, it remains in the manager's toolbox but will not be pulled out unless most other options have been exhausted.

The next topic—voluntary reductions—was one we have touched on before, but it remains critical for getting enough fish to the international border and the spawning grounds. In the past, fishers have made it clear that they prefer enforceable management measures to ensure that everyone is treated

fairly regarding harvest of king salmon. Many have been hesitant to commit to voluntarily reducing harvest when there was no guarantee that anyone else would take on the same burden, effectively watering down an individual's efforts. However, much like that Russian crowd, this year I saw opinions on this matter changing. People still prefer enforceable measures, but most attendees expressed a willingness to cut back on their king salmon harvest if the run does not materialize. Several made moving speeches about user responsibility for the resource. Others pointed to other fish species, berries, waterfowl, and beaver as options for replacing any king salmon harvest they voluntarily forgo. The issue was not taken lightly, and everyone acknowledged the importance of king salmon in their subsistence way of life; shared responsibility was brought up often. Managers indicated that based on the run size they will inform people how much of a reduction is needed to get enough fish to the spawning grounds. They will still use other management tools, but when every fish counts, every effort helps.

The final detailed discussion question was: When should sale of king salmon incidentally caught in the commercial chum fishery be allowed? Stakeholders gave pretty clear feedback to not allow king salmon sales in June, leaving those fish for subsistence, border passage, and spawning escapement. They were a little more varied about July and August, when most of the few remaining fish are lower river stocks. As such, managers indicated that sale of incidentally caught king salmon would not be allowed in June, and the situation would be assessed in-season for July and August.

After all this discussion, meeting participants split-up and attended workshops on salmon science, fall chum, harvests and subsistence law, and a commercial processor panel. All workshops offered deeper insights into the fishery, but harvests and subsistence law, headed up by Caroline Brown with ADF&G Subsistence Division, was the most well-attended and resulted in the greatest number of questions. Watch for an article summing up that presentation in the next YR DFA newsletter and e-news.

At the end of the day, managers presented the basic components of their pre-season plan. In addition to the decisions covered above, fishing windows will begin on May 31 in the lower river, just as they used to prior to 2009, to protect some of the early fish that have received more fishing pressure due to pulse closures in recent years. One subsistence fishing period will be closed during the first pulse of king salmon, and based on run size it is likely that additional periods will be closed or restricted. Regarding the sport fishery, retention of king salmon will not be permitted on the mainstem Yukon River to protect Canadian-bound fish, and the bag limit will be reduced from 3 to 1 for tributaries other than the Tanana River. In-season, the Yukon Advisory Group, made up of U.S. members of the Yukon River Panel, will be consulted at critical management decision points as a means of getting timely advice from an informed group of fishers. More user input in management is always a welcome addition, and this is another positive step.

We set out to work with all user groups in the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage to further develop the pre-season management plan for king salmon. It was a big effort involving lots of work and input from a great many stakeholders, and as Rocky might say, "Yo, Yukon River fisheries stakeholders and managers, we did it!"