

Building and Maintaining Public Support of Salmon Resource Management

R&M#01-09

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

1. Introduction:

Objectives:

The purpose of FWS Agreement No.: 701819G019 was to build and maintain public support of, and meaningful participation in, management of Canadian-origin salmon. Funds were used to achieve the following objectives:

1. To build and maintain public support of, and meaningful participation in, salmon resource management, and
2. To establish a dependable communications and education infrastructure that can be built upon every year.

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

Tasks and Accomplishments:

1. **Schedule and host at least one multi-day meeting (YR DFA 20th Annual Meeting & Fishery Symposium) and arrange and provide travel and per diem expenses of select village representatives, association representatives, fishermen, and delegation members. The focus of this meeting will be the discussion of the most critical fisheries issues of the day, including policy and management strategies.**

YR DFA held its 20th anniversary year meeting in Nulato from February 15-18, 2010. With an almost full delegation 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 Nulato, the meeting took place at the Andrew K. Demoski School.

The first meeting day was framed by the attendance of our guests from Senator Murkowski's office and Senator Kookesh who provided updates on legislative issues impacting rural Alaska and listened to the concerns of YR DFA and the public. There was a good turnout from Nulato and the neighboring communities of Kaltag and Koyukuk. People came to meet and hear from their legislators and their offices, as it was mentioned that legislators have not been out to the middle Yukon River very much in the past to hear directly from the people. The end of the first meeting day was highlighted by a presentation on traditional knowledge natural indicators by Catherine Moncrieff of YR DFA. Attendees reviewed the findings from the four year project YR DFA and Alaska Department of Fish & Game Subsistence Division carried out and then talked about how to use traditional knowledge in western fisheries management.

The second meeting day started off with a presentation by Sarah Palmer and Brian Manwaring from the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution. They shared their thoughts and observations about YRDFA and where it has been successful in its work compared to other environmental challenges facing the U.S. This led to attendees sharing stories about how YRDFA has built relationships among the different people who live along the Yukon River and how we can keep doing this into the future. Next, Paula Cullenberg with the Marine Advisory Program of the University of Alaska presented on topics including climate change, outreach efforts from the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and efforts to get more students from rural Alaska into the undergraduate and graduate fisheries degree programs at the University of Alaska.

The YRDFA board and others in attendance worked to pass resolutions that covered many interesting, timely, and relevant topics. The community hosted a covered dish dinner, during which YRDFA hosted a raffle that drew in the community members.

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. A YRDFA AmeriCorp Volunteer carried out both active and artistic activities with the younger children. He also worked with the older students on developing questions for them to ask the YRDFA board members in the meeting forum. Bringing youth into the meeting is always important to have the generations learn from each other. Overall the YRDFA meeting was a success. Attendees looked back at accomplishments over the past two decades with pride, worked hard on current issues, and looked forward to continuing this important fisheries work well into the future.

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, minutes, and YRDFA Board resolutions.

2. Publish and distribute three newsletters to commercial and subsistence fishermen, 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, the 2010 summer season preparedness process, traditional knowledge, state and federal policy updates, and other fishery-related issues of concern on the Yukon River. The Fall issue was 20 pages; the Winter and Spring issues were 16 pages. Traditionally, this newsletter has been 12 pages made up of full page articles. The newly adopted format packs more news stories into each edition and each page.

This grant covered nearly all of the expenses associated with the development, publication, and distribution of this newsletter. See Appendix B for copies of these newsletters.

3. Conduct in-season teleconferences for participation by fishermen, villagers, management agency representatives, and other stakeholders to provide information on

the status of Yukon River salmon returns, harvests, and pending management actions.

Teleconference calls are a means to exchange information on run timing, abundance, and escapement data; discuss management strategies; facilitate open dialogue between users and management entities; and enable salmon resource users drainage-wide, including Canadians, to communicate.

From the first week of June to the first week in September, every Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time fishers, managers, tribal and intertribal representatives, processors, and others dialed in to hear about and discuss the 2009 summer and fall fishing season. Participation increased by 28 percent over 2008 (in terms of number of lines on the call). Since 2006, participation has nearly doubled.

Increased advertising is probably responsible for a portion of this spike in participation. However, the larger culprit is more likely the declining Chinook salmon runs. As fishing conditions worsen, fishers are hungrier for news and more impassioned to share their views with fisheries managers and others.

This grant covered a portion of the staff time required to plan and moderate these teleconferences. See Appendix C for summaries of the 2009 Inseason Management Teleconferences.

4. Host at least three sub-regional teleconferences for people in the Yukon River drainage.

In preparation for the 2010 Chinook salmon fishing season, YRDFA hosted a Summer Season Preparedness Process for Alaskans. More specifically, YRDFA hosted two public teleconferences and an in-person meeting in the spring of 2010 to discuss the 2010 Chinook salmon run and best approaches for handling it. Tribal Councils, local fishers, processors, RAC representatives, intertribal consortiums, and others participated in the process. ADF&G and USFWS were heavily involved throughout the planning and execution process.

Agenda items for the initial teleconference (March 10, 2010) included the 2010 Chinook salmon run projection, implications of this projection for fishers, and exploration of possible approaches to responsibly managing the run with the least possible amount of hardship on stakeholders. Following this teleconference, representatives from every Tribal Council, Regional Advisory Council, processor, inter-tribal consortium, the Yukon River Panel, and YRDFA were invited to attend an in-person meeting (April 8, 2010) to further discuss these topics, share viewpoints, and learn about other subjects of interest. After the meeting, a final teleconference (April 21, 2010) was held to present the preseason management plan.

Despite thorough promotional efforts, which included postcards, promotional mailers, faxes, e-news updates, and phone calls, the teleconferences had marginal participation. However, nearly 70 people participated in the inperson meeting, including representatives from 26 tribes, 30 communities, two Regional Advisory Councils, two CDQ groups, two processors, numerous agencies, and YRDFA. Detailed discussions during this meeting provided managers with valuable insights regarding fishers' preferences, which became the basis for management actions presented in the preseason plan.

This grant covered a portion of the staff time required to carry out this program. See Appendix D for summaries of the teleconferences and meeting, along with meeting minutes.

5. Develop and maintain internet based resources including videos, podcasts, and picture sharing to engage and inform youth in the Yukon River drainage and the general public about Yukon River fisheries.

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

Twitter

Twitter is an online messaging tool, and YR DFA used its new account (<http://twitter.com/YR DFA>) 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

YR DFA'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.

Online Forum

YR DFA created a free online forum at <http://salmontest.conforums.com/> to give fishers the opportunity to discuss pending Board of Fisheries proposals. Despite promotional efforts, this tool did not attract any interest, and YR DFA no longer uses it.

E-News

YR DFA is sending out monthly email newsletters. These brief, pointed emails bring fisheries stakeholders news about upcoming events, new research, policy issues, reminders of deadlines, and other current topics. It goes out to roughly 550 email addresses.

Website

In addition to the new tools mentioned above, YR DFA revamped the home page of its website (<http://yukonsalmon.org>) to share more current news and videos.

Much of this work was completed with the assistance of an AmeriCorps volunteer, who preformed background research on utility and functionality of each of the new internet tools. This grant covered much of the staff time required to develop and maintain these initiatives.

6. Coordinate an educational exchange or similar project 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.

International Exchange

For eight days in August 2009, YR DFA staff guided four fishers and one fisheries manager from various communities in the U.S. portion of the Yukon River drainage to communities in

the Yukon Territory—Whitehorse, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, and Teslin. Participants were exposed to all aspects of the Chinook salmon fishery in that region. 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 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 the Yukon River.

The grant also supported wilderness first aid training for YRDFA's communications director, who guides the trip. YRDFA viewed this as a responsible course of action given the remote nature of the program, and the fact that many of the participants are Elders.

This grant covered a portion of the staff time required to plan and promote this exchange. See Appendix E for an itinerary of the 2009 international educational exchange.

Domestic Exchange

YRDFA planned to carry out a domestic exchange between the lower and upper Yukon River within Alaska. This was intended as a pilot project in the summer of 2009. The plan called for one lower river fisher to travel to an upper river village, and one upper river fisher to travel to the lower river. Unlike the international exchange, these fishers would travel on their own, as opposed to with a guide from YRDFA.

Prior to the 2009 fishing season, YRDFA coordinated an exchange between Eagle and Alakanuk. However, due to the severe flooding that occurred during break-up, this trip was cancelled. Instead, YRDFA organized an exchange between Nenana and Emmonak. This trip was later cancelled due to the unprecedented fishing restrictions put into place in 2009, which precluded participants from being able to witness fishing.

The funds that were intended to support this project were used to bring additional fishers and Tribal Council representatives to the YRDFA annual meeting. As such, the spirit of the exchange did take place, with people from all over the Yukon River sharing viewpoints and bolstering understanding.

This grant covered all of the staff time that went into planning both versions of this exchange.

7. Produce additional educational materials as opportunity, need, and interest arise.

Website Maintenance: YRDFA's website (<http://www.yukonsalmon.org>) contains information about the Yukon River Salmon Agreement, salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, teleconference and meeting summaries, and links to other valuable sources of information. This grant supported staff time to maintain and update this information on a

continual basis. Renewal of the website domain name, web hosting, and technical support are also supported by this grant.

Bycatch Action Alert: Before the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's action on salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery was made into regulation, YRDFA promoted the opportunity to make final comments to the Secretary of Commerce. This promotion was in the form of an action alert mailer, which was sent to nearly 2,000 stakeholders. This grant covered the staff time for design and distribution, along with postage for mailing this action alert. See Appendix F for a copy of this action alert.

Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance & Timing Report: YRDFA printed and distributed this report to Tribal Councils and communities throughout the drainage. Essentially, this report links Traditional Ecological Knowledge with conventional approaches to fisheries research. This grant covered the printing costs. See Appendix G for a copy of this report.

Appendices:

Appendix A – YRDFA Annual Meeting

Agenda



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

**Annual Meeting *DRAFT* Agenda
20th Annual Meeting
Nulato, Alaska
February 15 – 18, 2010
Andrew K. Demoski School**

Monday, February 15, 2010

Travel Day – people are arriving throughout the day.

6:00 – 7:00 P.M. *Dinner at the school*

7:30 P.M. Call to order

Invocation

Roll Call

Introduction of new board members

Welcoming remarks

Introductions of meeting attendees

Review and approve agenda

Review and approve summary of minutes from last annual meeting

Distribution / explanation of materials

Accomodations and meeting logistics

Recess

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

7:30 A.M. Breakfast at School

9:00 A.M. Reports:

Administrative

Financial

Committee Reports: By-laws, Policies, Finance, Fish Size

Resolutions retrospective

Resolutions from 2009

Resolutions 2010 process

Preparation for meeting discussions

Jill Klein, YRDFA

Treasurer

Committee Chairs/ E.D.

Jill Klein, YRDFA

11:00 Break

11:30 A.M. Public Comment / People to be heard

12:00 P.M. Lunch at School

1:00 P.M. Federal and State legislators

Fisheries Disaster Declaration

Legislative update

Senator Murkowski's office

Senator Albert Kookesh

3:00 P.M. Break

3:30 P.M. Fisheries Reports:

Alaska Board of Fisheries outcomes

Chinook and summer chum salmon

chum and coho

Federal proposal process

Summer Season 2010 planning process

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game

ADFG/USFWS Fall

ADFG/USFWS

Fred Bue, USFWS

Jason Hale, YRDFA

6:30 P.M. Dinner at School

Evening activity – Listening to Elders

Live music session

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

7:30 A.M. Breakfast at School

9:00 A.M. Climate change, outreach and education

Paula Cullenberg, Marine
Advisory Program

10:00 A.M. Traditional knowledge and climate change

Catherine Moncrieff, YR DFA
Orville Huntington, Huslia

11:00 A.M. Break

11:30 Public Comment / People to be heard

12:00 P.M. Lunch at school

1:00 School student's presentations

Evan, YR DFA

2:00 Effective collaboration along the Yukon River

U.S. Institute for
Environmental Conflict
Resolution, Sarah Palmer and
Brian Manwaring

3:00 P.M. Break

3:30 YR DFA looking forward: the next 20 years

4:30 2010 Resolutions

6:30 P.M. Community pot-luck Dinner at the school

Evening Activity - Raffle, Dance and Live Music

Thursday, February 18, 2010

Travel day - sack lunches will be available

7:30 A.M. Breakfast at School

9:00 A.M. By-law Revisions

Jill Klein, YR DFA

Nominate primary and alternate 2011 meeting location sites

Closing comments

Adjourn

Annual Meeting DRAFT Minutes 2010

YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

20th Annual Meeting
Nulato, Alaska Andrew K.
Demoski School February
15-18, 2010

February 15, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Burnham. Invocation was given by Pauline.

ROLL CALL:

Board members:

Lester Wilde
Frank Alstrom
Aloysius Unok
Ephrim Thompson
Alexie Walters, Sr.
Paul Beans
William Alstrom
Richard Burnham
Henry Wiehl
Stan Zuray
Philip Titus
Victor Lord
William Derendoff
Jan Woodruff

Alternates:

Aloysius Aguchak
Ole Hunter
Benedict Jones
Shirley Clark
Lester Erhart
Tim McManus
Ted Suckling
Stanley Ned

Quorum was established.

Canadian non-voting representatives:

Ron Chambers
Carl Sidney

WELCOMING REMARKS:

Mickey First Chief and Sheri Agnus, Mayor, welcomed everyone to Nulato.

INTRODUCTIONS OF MEETING ATTENDEES:

Everyone introduced themselves.

OPENING REMARKS:

Co-Chair Richard Burnham welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. This is the 20th anniversary of YRDFA.

Co-Chair Bill Alstrom introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. They have just come from the Board of Fisheries meeting in Fairbanks. They now need to look forward. He hoped the Chinook salmon will rebound and will be available for future generations.

Co-Chair Burnham talked about how tough last spring was both with the flooding and the bad fishing.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Under discussion Victor Lord asked to add a discussion on the seven and a half-inch mesh size for nets proposal that was passed at the Board of Fisheries meeting before the presentation by Senator Murkowski's office. It was suggested to add it under preparation for meeting discussions under reports at 9:00 on February 16, 2010.

The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW AND APPROVE SUMMARY OF MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from the last annual meeting.

Under discussion, Bill suggested postponing the vote until the morning of February 16th to give people a chance to review the minutes.

The motion was tabled.

DISTRIBUTION/EXPLANATION OF MATERIALS:

Jill Klein explained what the Board members had before them in their binders. Co-Chair Burnham stated that there will time for public testimony.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND MEETING LOGISTICS:

Co-Chair Burnham stated that Jason has a list of where people will be staying. The meeting will start at 9:00 a.m.

RECESS:

February 16, 2010

MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes from 2009.

Under discussion, Lester Wilde questioned whether there were minutes from the meeting in Hooper Bay. Co-Chair Burnham stated that work from that meeting was finished in Fairbanks in the spring when they concluded that meeting. Jill Klein pointed out that Page 11 under the yellow tab was a draft summary from the Hooper Bay meeting. Bill recommended that the draft minutes from Hooper Bay be included with the minutes from Fairbanks. That was accepted.

The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS:

Administrative: Jill Klein reported on projects that they did over the past year. These include the summer preparation process funded by the Yukon River Panel. YR DFA initiated a process to work together along the river. They will be doing it again this year. They continued to hire people along the Yukon River to work in various projects. They have continued the teleconferences. This year they will start recording them and they will be on the website. There is now a cap on the number of Chinook salmon that can be caught in the Pollock fishery. It is hoped that the cap and the salmon savings incentive program will work to keep bycatch numbers lower. They will continue to work on this issue. She reported that while they have been able to continue to receive appropriations, they have gotten smaller. New funding sources include the Oak Foundation and the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation. YR DFA has received its first Americorps volunteer this year. She discussed the various methods of outreach they are using, which includes Twitter, Facebook, e-newsletters and others. She discussed partnerships they have with groups on the river as well as those they are developing. Co-Chair Burnham added that YR DFA has been actively working against the issue of hatchery systems in southeast/Prince William Sound. He expected they will be actively engaged in the Area M issue and the chum bycatch.

In response to a question, Ms. Klein discussed what happened at the Area M meeting last week regarding lowering the chum bycatch. She stated that it seems that until they have genetic data people are not willing to make a decision. The Board of Fisheries did not support any of the efforts to try to put on a cap and left things at the status quo. Stan also talked about what happened at that meeting and Virgil Umphenour's efforts. Other Board members also discussed Area M and chum chucking as well as Chinook bycatch in the Bering Sea.

Financial: Ms. Klein stated that the financial report is under the orange tab. As of October 15, 2009 the projected fiscal year budget was just over \$789,000. They have already received some new sources of funding. As a result the budget will go up to between \$800,000 and \$900,000. The main sources of funds are grants. She went over projects and other expenses. Co-Chair Burnham stated they have been trying to generate funds that have no strings attached so they can

pay for projects and then be reimbursed through the grants. Ms. Klein stated that they do send out quarterly reports to Board members.

Committee Reports: Under the red tab there is a list of the subcommittees and their members. The committees meet in the fall. Notes from the meetings are under the yellow tab.

Bylaws: Ms. Klein stated that there are some proposed changes to the bylaws (green tab). They were sent to the Board members 30 days prior to this meeting. They will be discussed Thursday. Most of the changes are housekeeping.

Policies: Ms. Klein stated that there were some housekeeping amendments made at the fall meeting to the Board policies and to the financial policies. There were no changes made to the employee policies.

Resolutions Retrospective: Ms. Klein stated she looked past resolutions to see what the trends were. Trends include asking for funding for various things as well as resolutions regarding appointments to boards such as the Board of Fisheries as well as other trends. Co-Chair Burnham stressed that resolutions can be important.

Resolutions from 2009: (Yellow tab, Page 28) Ms. Klein gave a progress update on the resolutions from 2009. There was some discussion on hatchery fish. It is a problem not just for Alaska. There was also a discussion of genetics being used to identify where bycatch fish come from. There is a study due out in 2012. Ms. Klein stated that they are tracking developments of the proposed offshore oil and gas drilling in Bristol Bay.

Resolutions 2010 Process: Co-Chair Burnham stated ideas for resolutions were to be given to the committee. The committee members are: Stanley Ned, Lester Wilde, Stan Zuray and Jan Woodruff. They will work with Staff. Ms. Klein stated that the resolution process is outlined on the last two pages under the yellow tab.

Preparation for Meeting Discussions:

Board of Fisheries decision regarding mesh size of 7-1/2 inch: Co-Chair Burnham stated that there is a two-year implementation, but by 2011 fishermen will have to have the smaller mesh nets. The Board discussed how they might find funding to help alleviate the transition to new nets. Co-Chair Alstrom stated that this has been discussed by the villages in his area and they are concerned about the impact on local fishermen. Most will not be able to afford the cost themselves. He suggested trading in the old nets for the new ones. Carl Sidney, Yukon Salmon Subcommittee, stated they have voluntarily put restrictions on their fisheries for 12 to 15 years. He was concerned that the new restrictions the Board of Fisheries was imposing would take the next size of fish. He recommended they do what they did last year and just not fish the first pulse. That resulted in some big fish on the Yukon side. Other Board members stated that the change in mesh size will cause problems. There were comments that not fishing the first pulse last year worked and should be tried again rather than changing the gear size. It was also stated that if there was to be money to replace the nets then they need to make sure that the nets are replaced. There was support for a net trade in. It was pointed out that part of the problem is the

bycatch issue. There were public comments taken on the subject. Comments included needing to work together on the problem and that the solution needs to include the Pollack trawl fishery. There was support for not fishing the first pulse and concern about changing the mesh size. There were also comments regarding the need for more research including what happens in the ocean. Co-Chair Burnham felt that any plan to replace nets needs to take into consideration the variety of sizes of nets people are using. George Yaska suggested that if they are successful in getting funds from Congress for this that it not go through the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. There was a suggestion that there be more sonar towers to count the fish going up the river to Canada.

FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATORS:

Federal Disaster Declaration: Representatives from Senator Murkowski's office discussed the Federal disaster that was declared for the Yukon River. Edward Hild, Senator Murkowski's legislative director, stated he was there to listen and learn and to take what he learns back to Senator Murkowski. The disaster request was granted by the Secretary of Commerce in January. That does not guarantee any funds. It is up to Congress to find the funding for the disaster. The Senator has received a request from AVCP and YR DFA. The request is being reviewed by her staff and the Department of Commerce. She is committed to working with the rest of the Alaska Delegation, the Department and the Administration to find funding. He discussed the process that will occur. He will carry back to the Senator the discussion on who should receive the funding as well as other ideas that he has heard to include a net exchange program and additional funding for research. Bob Walsh, Senator Murkowski's outreach person, stated he liked the idea of the marine habitat research. He will task the member of their staff who looks for grants to start looking for grants to be used, for instance, for the replacement of nets, etc. He stated that the requests for additional sonar as well as the frustrations that have been voiced will not go unnoticed. He stated that anyone with ideas or concerns should contact either the Anchorage or Fairbanks office. Co-Chair Alstrom expressed concern that funds with respect to the net exchange that are appropriated get to the individuals who need them. There was also concern that people who do not subsistence fish would take advantage of the program. Mr. Hild stated that they heard the concern and it would be passed on. In response to Jan Woodruff regarding more funding for research, Mr. Hild stated that they would try to make the research as all-encompassing as possible to include both the river and marine environments. Jill Klein stated that with respect to the disaster funds, she has submitted a suggestion to the Senator's office that if possible funds also be used for educational outreach and training. She also stated that YR DFA has had a very good track record in managing their federal grants and funds and is a good entity to receive funding and help with any distribution efforts as well as to come up with a process and work with other entities that would like to receive the funds and help distribute them. Benedict Jones stated he would like to see a study on the high seas. Alexie Walters suggested that if there is an exchange of nets, that it just be the webbing and hanging twine as many in his area prefer to hang their own nets. It would not be as expensive. Ted Suckling talked about the bycatch numbers. He asked if there was any law enforcement to make sure the high seas fishers do not exceed the cap and that the observers are doing their job. Mr. Hild stated that enforcement is through National Marine Fisheries. He felt that they are more cognizant of what they are catching due to the potential imposition of sanctions. Co-Chair Burnham thanked

Mr. Hild and Mr. Walsh for attending the meeting asked them to thank the Senator for sending them to the meeting to hear the concerns first hand.

Senator Albert Kookesh – Legislative update: Senator Kookesh stated that the senate will be discussing adopting the second verse of the Alaska Flat Song. He is a co-sponsor. He has heard people talking about the mesh sizes and the impact the change will have. He has not seen what it will cost to switch out. He and Senator Murkowski's staff would like to know what the cost will be. They need to know in order to help. He stated that he wanted to get the focus back on subsistence. He stated that they met with the Secretary of Interior and told him that subsistence is broken in Alaska. They also told him that they do not like that the Federal Subsistence Board has people on it who are not subsistence users. The Secretary is now saying the same thing they told him. The Native community is also now looking at subsistence again and making it a priority. He added that he supports the Governor's proposed road to Nome because it starts in Manley Hot Springs and goes through Ruby, Nulato, Koyukuk and Council.

Senator Kookesh discussed school funding and building new schools to replace old ones. Three rural schools will cost around \$100 million. He pointed out that the State gives urban school districts \$120 million a year for building new schools. He informed them that the budget for education in Alaska currently is \$1.1 billion a year. He stated that there is a bill in the legislature to end the exit exam. Under the current system, if a student does not pass that exam, he does not get a diploma. Without a high school degree the student cannot get into a trade school, college, etc. He was in favor of using the exam to measure student progress and school progress, but not in favor of the way it is being used now. With respect to major maintenance, he thought the total will be \$129 million. The eight projects include rebuilding the Nome Junior High School fire alarm system, Nome emergency generator, and renovate the Metlakatla high school among other projects.

Senator Kookesh stated that last here there was no capital budget. This year there will be one. The details are still being worked out.

The student loan forgiveness program for health care professions will be voted on in the next couple weeks. The main emphasis of the program is to get people in the health field back to Alaska.

He thought the Governor's merit scholarship suggestion was a great concept, but he questioned the classes the student had to take as many of those classes are not available in rural schools.

With respect to fishing, he stated that there was money in the budget currently to replace lost federal receipts for subsistence management program (\$80,000). This is to replace funding for two subsistence programs in the AYK region: Nenana test wheel fall season video monitoring and the lower Yukon River cooperative salmon drift test fishery. Other programs include the lower Yukon River cooperative summer salmon drift test fishery (\$18,900), Hooper Bay/Dall Point offshore salmon test fishery feasibility study (\$67,000), and the Pilot Station sonar falls comprehensive sampling (\$24,000). He stated that he has gotten a commitment for one more sonar counter on the river system, and they are working to get a second one. He would like the group's help in where to put these sonar counters. He suggested Senator Murkowski's staff look

at assisting getting the second counter. He left a document that showed the breakdown of the budget for the Department of Fish and Game for this area.

Other legislation Senator Kookesh touched on include House Bill 20, Amendment for Engine Upgrade Loans; Senate Bill 163/House Bill 207, Fisherman's Fund hike; House Bill 41, Fish Board conflicts, which states if a member of the Board of Fisheries has a conflict, they can vote anyway as long as the member declares their conflict. With respect to the Board of Fisheries, he stated that there are two seats up for appointment this year and they would like input from people on recommendations for these appointments. He felt they need to get more rural people and more Alaska Natives on this board. Other legislation included SGR 22, a resolution condemning UCIDA suit advances; House Bill 329 which has to do with transportation. He left a breakdown on these bills.

Senator Kookesh also discussed traditional knowledge and that it needs to be part of the decisionmaking in the state.

Georgianna Lincoln told him that there are a lot of fishermen on the Yukon River and Tanana River who purchase commercial permits every year and do not use them because they do not have an opening. The State should be forced to give them back their money if they do not allow a commercial fishing opening. He will be talking to her more about this idea.

With respect to Village Safe Water, Senator Kookesh stated they had noticed that funding has gone down every year because the state is having problems with its reporting system. Funding to Indian Health Service has gone up because the people who run it are very adamant about getting every penny they can. Twenty-five percent of homes in rural Alaska still do not have running water or sewer systems. In addition there are villages where half have been done and half have not. Those projects need to be finished. His office is pushing for more funding for Village Safe Water.

Ted Suckling felt it was important for the state to contribute to keep the dialogue along the river going and to make sure that the salmon make it back. Senator Kookesh explained that since YR DFA's office was in Anchorage, requests for the capital budget had to come from that legislator. He talked to the senator and the representative for that district and they got it into the capital request through their office. The operating budget does not have the same restrictions.

Carl Sidney stated that people have drifted away from fish camps and through education he hoped they would come back. An earlier speaker had suggested having a curriculum in the schools with a salmon background. He stated that he also stressed traditional knowledge and that it has the same weight as scientific knowledge. Governor Parnell visited Canada a couple weeks and stated that they would try to work together with regards to the salmon.

Senator Kookesh also talked about redistricting and reapportionment. He encouraged people to get counted in the villages. The Bush Caucus has objected to students being counted in Fairbanks and Anchorage where they have dorms as being part of those communities instead of their home communities. He stated that they were in danger of losing two house seats and one

senate seat from rural Alaska after 2012. One possible solution was a constitutional amendment to enlarge the legislature.

One comment was that the people in the area do not hear enough from their legislators. Pat suggested putting a sonar counter across from Koyukuk. Senator Kookesh stated he wanted Fish and Game to hear from the people where the best places to put those counters are.

In response to Pete's question regarding federal and state water boundaries, Rich Cannon stated his understanding that the Board of Fisheries action would apply to all waters of the Yukon River. The Federal Subsistence Board will be taking action on similar proposals. If they take a different action, they will apply to federal land.

Senator Kookesh stated that a 90-day session is really short and the first thing that gets cut off is public testimony. He thinks they should go back to 120 days.

Co-Chair Burnham presented a sweatshirt from YRDFA to Stan Shepard who helped in the kitchen at lunchtime.

FISHERIES REPORTS:

Federal Proposal Process: Rich Cannon discussed the federal process involved with Yukon River fisheries management. The call for regulatory proposals through the federal system is open through March 24th. There will be a public comment period May through June 2010. The proposals will be discussed at the Regional Advisory Councils meetings in September/October 2010. The Federal Subsistence Board will consider the proposals in January of 2011.

Rich Cannon also touched on proposals that have been deferred that the Federal Subsistence Board will take up. These include proposals on mesh size (7-1/2 inch) and mesh depth (to 35 meshes deep). They will be taken up February 23rd through 26th at a joint meeting in Fairbanks with Eastern Interior and Western Interior Councils. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council will discuss these proposals at their meeting March 2nd through the 4th in Bethel. The federal staff analysis of these proposals is on the Office of Subsistence Management website. In response to Lester Wilde, Mr. Cannon stated that the federal staff conclusion on Proposal 09-12 (7-1/2-inch mesh) was to approve the change but to do it in concert with the Board of Fisheries action. He stressed that the input from the federal councils and others will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board before they take any action. With respect to Proposal 09-13 (35 mesh depth), the staff conclusion was not to support that proposal.

In response to Co-Chair Alstrom, Mr. Cannon stated that when state and federal decisions do not coincide federal regulations would only apply to federal public waters. Stan Zuray stated that Eastern Interior initially submitted the 7-1/2-inch proposal and at a later meeting they voted to change it to 6-inch, and he wanted an explanation of the process by which it went back to 7-1/2-inch. In response to Mr. Zuray, Mr. Cannon explained that will be included in the analysis for the proposal. With new studies and information the Eastern Interior Council put in a request to modify their proposal. Because it had already gone to the other Councils and had been given a

lot of attention the decision was they needed to take the 7-1/2-inch proposal up and make a decision on it.

Chinook and summer chum salmon: Eric Newland, Yukon summer season assistant area manager, and Katherine Howard, Yukon summer season research biologist, discussed some run trends and stock status with Chinook and summer chum salmon on the Yukon River. Mr. Newland stated that the YRDFA teleconferences are helpful for getting harvest rates and tracking of pulses. One trend was that in the period of 1998/2000 there is a shift in harvest with the subsistence harvest staying stable but the commercial harvest cut back. Two of the largest spawning escapements are the Chena and Salcha on the Tanana River. 2000 through 2009 they have made escapement goals or been close to making those goals in the Chena River and the Salcha. With respect to the Canadian escapement at Eagle, they did not make the goal in 2007 or 2008. With respect to run size, in 2005 there was a near average run size and escapement goals were met. In 2007 there was a below average run with most goals met. The subsistence fishery occurred on a normal schedule and there was a limited commercial fishery. In 2008 there was a below average run and restrictions started. Subsistence harvest in 2008 was impacted. In 2009 there were preseason meetings along the river. It was decided not to do any commercial fishing. The second big item was to delay implementing the windows until after some of the first fish came into the river and the windows were reduced by half on the first pulse. The federal system allowed only federally-qualified rural subsistence users to harvest Chinook salmon in the federal areas. When commercial fishing occurred for summer chum, incidental Chinook catch sales was prohibited. Over the last 10 years, the run size of Chinook has been variable.

With respect to summer chum, Mr. Newland stated 50 percent of spawning has been in the Anvik system historically, but in the recent past there have been reduced runs into the Anvik. There seems to have been a shift to upriver stocks. With respect to harvest, there was a drop off in subsistence harvest in the mid 80s and around 1997 there was a drop in the commercial harvest. Since 2006 there has been renewed interest for summer chum and commercial harvest has increased. Escapement has been met every year except 2000 and 2001.

Alaska Board of Fisheries outcomes: Mr. Newland pointed out the news release under the blue tab in the meeting book.

Proposal 81: Clarifies the subsistence fishing schedule in Subdistricts 4B and 4C. The Board of Fish supported changing the fishing schedule so it will be open from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays when there have been fishing closures longer than five days.

Proposal 82: Modify the subsistence fishing schedule in Subdistrict 4A. The Board of Fish supported allowing a fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods each week during commercial fishing seasons without interruption.

Proposal 87: Innoko River schedule. The Board of Fish supported changing the subsistence fishing schedule to seven days a week.

Proposal 90: Reducing commercial gill nets to no more than 6-inch mesh size. The Board of Fish amended this to restrict mesh size to 7-1/2 inches for the Yukon River drainage for both commercial and subsistence gill nets. This will go into effect in 2011.

Proposal 92: Prohibit the sale of Chinook salmon harvested during chum directed commercial fishing periods in the Yukon River drainage. The Board of Fish amended this to give the Department the emergency order authority to do so.

Proposal 94: Impose a windowed fishing schedule for both subsistence and commercial fishing in the entire Yukon River that would remain in effect all year. The Board of Fish amended this proposal to provide the Department with emergency order authority so that it may close subsistence salmon fishing in the Yukon River in the event that preseason forecasts or in-season assessment indicates an insufficient abundance of king salmon to meet escapement objectives on specific components of the run.

Proposal 183: Modifying the Yukon River summer chum salmon management plan by allowing commercial harvest on run sizes less than 1 million summer chum salmon specified in the plan. The Board of Fish modified the plan to add the option to allow a harvest up to 50,000 summer chum in a directed summer chum fishery when the run size is between 900,000 and 1 million summer chum salmon.

Proposal 194: Modifying the Yukon River fall chum salmon management plan by allowing commercial harvest on run sizes less than 600,000 fish. The Board of Fish modified the plan by reducing the threshold required to allow a directed fall chum salmon fishery from a run size of more than 600,000 fall chum salmon down to 500,000. In addition, the threshold required to allow a directed Coho salmon fishery in the Yukon River Coho salmon management plan was changed from a run size of 550,000 fall chum salmon to 500,000 fall chum salmon.

Proposal 199: Allow commercial harvest of Coho salmon late in the season. The Board of Fish said if the Department determines that there is a harvestable surplus of Coho salmon above escapement needs and those necessary for subsistence uses, and that a directed Coho salmon commercial fishery will not have a significant impact on escapement or allocation of fall chum salmon, the Department may open a directed Coho salmon commercial fishery late in the season.

Summer Season 2010 Planning Process: Mr. Newland stated they do not have the subsistence information yet for 2009. When they get that information, they will be able to evaluate what worked and what didn't work. YR DFA is planning to do the summer preparedness meetings this year and the Department will work with YR DFA to get ready for this season. At this time they did not have a formalized projection. To develop the management strategies for 2010 the idea is to have these meetings and then by May the Department will have its outlook and flier together.

Mr. Newland touched on the Pilot Station sonar and the issues they have encountered there with the sonar and their test fishery. They will be looking at upriver at areas between Russian Mission and Marshal. They are looking at operating a down-looking sonar. They are also considering using a barge to house the sonar to get out in the river and get a different look at how the fish might be moving by. They will look at how the test fishery operates to see if there's a

species-specific avoidance there. They will be looking at some new sites this year to help track the fish better starting at the mouth. He felt they do try to use traditional knowledge in the projects at Pilot Station and OITF. They will be working with local people to find sites. He added that they will be adding the Mountain Village test fishery to the summer suite of test fishery projects.

In response to Aloysius Unok, Ms. Howard stated that one of the main focuses of this summer's sonar program is to look for a suitable site in the lower Yukon River that is better than the one they have at Pilot Station. In response to Ted Suckling with respect to the decline in the Anvik River, Mr. Newland stated there is a lodge there but they did not consider that the major issue for the decrease. Mr. Suckling stated he was wondering if the jet boats might be disturbing the spawning fish. Ms. Howard stated that was something to think about. She added that the overall returns they are getting for summer chums are doing well and there have been high escapements. They have not figured out what is going on with production in the Anvik.

In response to Lester Wilde, Ms. Howard stated that they were seeing the return per spawner in the range of 1.5 to 2 per spawner in recent years. Mr. Wilde questioned if the Department had a plan for coming up with a better more realistic return rate. He stated that the current method doesn't always seem to work. Ms. Howard stated they are working to get better escapement estimates and working with the Canadian managers to get more escapement information from Canada so they can have better numbers on how many fish are actually reaching the spawning grounds.

In response to Co-Chair Alstrom stated that Pitka's Point would be an ideal location for a sonar counting site. He also had several questions. In response to Co-Chair Alstrom regarding the barge-mounted sonar station, Ms. Howard stated that the idea was to get a downward-looking sonar. Mr. Newland stated he did not know how deep the water was at the Pilot Station sonar site. He will have Bruce email him with the answer. Ms. Howard stated that if people had specific locations to suggest, they could let them know. There was concern expressed about moving the sonar station further up the river as it would take the fish longer to reach it and for them to get an idea of the run size. It could be too late to make any decisions on fishing.

Stan Zuray expressed concern about the quality of fish passing the border into Canada, i.e. percentage and size of female fish. Currently it is the total number of fish that pass rather than the percentage of female fish. He felt they need to start looking at escapement in terms of quality rather than numbers. Ms. Howard stated that a lot of this is dictated by the Yukon River Panel and what is agreed upon as far as an escapement goal. The quality has not been addressed up to know because there are not enough research projects going on at the escapement sites looking at how many females, etc.

In response to Pat concerning the information the Board of Fish had for them to modify the regulations, Mr. Newland stated the Department would like to turn out numbers as quickly as possible but the crew doing the subsistence surveys is in the field until the end of October. They enter data through November and December. Because the actions taken in 2009 were so substantial, they were waiting for that data to come out.

In response to Mr. Zuray, Ms. Howard stated that they know Pilot Station under-counted the number of fish in 2009. When they get the final numbers and genetic information from the subsistence harvest as well, they will combine that information to get an understanding of how far under-counting Pilot Station was. The reason the official Pilot Station number is not changed is because that is the number that that project used. There will be a footnote stating the problems with the 2009 figures.

In response to Aloysius Unok, Mr. Newland stated that when the fish go by Pilot Station they will come up with an estimate. Those fish will be exposed to fishing if open. The fish could be going to many places such as the Tanana or Canada. The key is to get some fish by everybody to meet the goal in Canada and to meet the goals at the Chena and the Salcha. This is based on the numbers they see at Pilot Station. They look at genetics to look at stock composition as well.

George requested more sonar sites. He was not advocating eliminating the Pilot Station sonar as he felt they still need that site. There are more than 2,000 miles of river and they cannot rely on just one sonar.

Lester Wilde commented that they have sheefish going up the river that are the same size as the salmon. He wanted to know if the people are trained to tell what type of fish are going past by looking at the blips. Mr. Newland stated that the sonar does not distinguish between different species. The way they do it is through the test fishery to come up with an estimate for each species.

In response to Shirley Clark, Mr. Newland said that purchasing new sonars is expensive and then operating them 12 to 14 hours a day does cost. He added that they have a hard time getting through the data throughout the winter because they do not have the permanent staff to do so. It will be a challenge. It would be nice to get better assessment, a better idea of what is coming into the river so they can make better informed decisions. He could not give her a specific figure.

It was stated that the Department was too dependant on sonar and test nets down in Emo (ph), but rarely listen to the local people when they go out and do their subsistence harvest. The test fisheries do not use the same type of gear as the subsistence fishermen. It was asked how they would change the gear to the same type as the subsistence fishermen. Ms. Howard stated that has been proposed for the Chinook run test fishery. They are looking at a regular sized 7-1/2-inch mesh net. With respect to locations for the sonar it was stated that the fish will follow the channel but not in the center. Mr. Newland stated that the difficulty they face is they operate the test fisheries on a daily idea and they want to have comparable data between days and between years, but they also need to have the flexibility to respond and be able to change sites when necessary. It is an issue.

Benedict Jones requested a clarification of state water and federal water. He also asked if federally-qualified fishermen were Natives or included non-Natives. Mr. Newland stated he would sit down with Mr. Jones after the meeting to answer on state and federal waters. With respect to federally-qualified users, that refers to those individuals who reside in the communities along the river.

Fred Bue, USFWS area manager, introduced himself. He is new to the job and is not as conversant with the regulations as he will be. Federally-qualified users are people living along the river in rural areas adjacent to federal management units.

Lester Wilde thanks Mr. Newland for getting the Hooper Bay test fisheries started last year. Mr. Newland stated that at this time he did not know if he will be going to Scammon Bay or Hooper Bay. Logistically Hooper Bay was more ideal. While they have not been getting much information out of the test fishery, it still is a feasibility study. Mr. Wilde stated that the fish are very dependent on the winds which would affect the test fishery.

In response to a question, Mr. Newland stated that three or four years ago they were using the same technology. Things haven't really changed. There are also sonar sites at Eagle and Anvik for the chum salmon that go up the Anvik River. The federal side has a sonar site at Chandalar. There was also experimental sonar being used at Chena.

In response to Co-Chair Burnham, Mr. Newland stated he had talked to Philip Kobloski (ph) regarding a laser technology for finding fish from an aircraft. Someone will have to come up with the funds in order to be able to do this.

In response to Jeep, Mr. Newland stated that this year they will probably have more nets in new sites. There will be some changes.

Robert Walker talked about the hardship that was caused last year with the low prediction of salmon and then finding out that more had gone by than originally estimated. He did not want to see it happen again this coming season.

Fred Bue talked about the federal action the previous summer to impose a federally-qualified subsistence users only restriction. He has heard that it only affected a few people. He asked if a similar situation comes up this coming season, would that be a good restriction or not. It is designed to help subsistence fishermen and give them a priority over other users. He would not want to do it if it does more harm than good to the actual subsistence fishermen in the area. Co-Chair Burnham stated it was a tool to have in the toolbox in case it is needed. They will be looking at it in the spring at the meetings they will have.

Summer Season 2010 Planning Process: Jason Hale, YR DFA, stated that it looks like this coming fishing season will not be a good year again according to the unofficial estimates. On March 10 at 1:00 p.m. there will be a teleconference. By then the projection will be out. He expected that the Department will say that based on what the people of the Yukon River told them last year and based on how many fish they think will be coming back, and based on what happened last year in terms of how many fish got across the border because of what was done, they will give their opinion of the best approach as managers and then ask for feedback. April 8th there will be a meeting in Fairbanks. April 21st there will be a wrap-up teleconference for everyone to hear the finalized plan.

In the evening there was elders' discussion and a music session.

February 17, 2010

Effective collaboration along the Yukon River: Sarah Palmer and Brian Manwaring, U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, were introduced by Jill Klein. The question is how everyone along the Yukon River can work better together (1) as an organization and (2) how does YRDFA as a whole work with outside groups (state and federal agencies, tribal governments, and tribal organizations along the river as well as Canadian counterparts). Ms. Palmer and Mr. Manwaring discussed their experiences and work in other environmental and natural resource use conflict areas as well as areas where there was not a conflict. They also offered some observations from conversations they have had with people over the past two days. Mr. Manwaring explained that the institute is an independent and impartial federal agency. Their mission was to work with parties such as YRDFA to address natural resource, public lands and environmental issues or disputes, using collaborative process, consensus building and other dispute resolution tools and techniques.

Ms. Palmer congratulated YRDFA for its 20th year. She stated that they were just beginning to learn about where YRDFA is and the complicated landscape in which the members live. She discussed some of their observations. Some of the tools and principles they use are already being used by YRDFA. One is the importance of direct interaction and communication. She congratulated YRDFA for bringing people together as an association to have that space for conversation to happen. The second concept was openness and transparency. The third was diversity of views and inclusivity. By being inclusive and creating a forum for a diversity of views more workable options can be developed that are workable for more people. Being open and inclusive of a diversity of views, it creates strengths and it creates more options. She saw that in action at the meeting yesterday. Another observation she had was what does the Association look like and are there players that are not at the table currently who could be in another 20 years that might create more strength for YRDFA and might create more options around the sticky issues that are happening out in the ocean, might create more options for funding research to understand what happens to the salmon when they are in the Bering Sea. Being inclusive and expanding who sits at the table can bring strength to a process.

Mr. Manwaring stated another principle he felt applies to YRDFA was, is do with, not done to. The value and real strength of a group is to be able to set their own agenda to some degree and to have some power in what they are doing. He stated that this is a very vital point in the history of YRDFA and the Yukon River. This is when good collaborative decisions are the most important. Another key principle of collaboration is timely and accessible understandable information. It also needs to be information that makes sense and is timely enough to be used in decisionmaking processes on a local level. Tools to accomplish this include ones that YRDFA is already using, such as teleconferences and social media. The instruments of information need to be used not only within the group, but also with other groups where there might be a sharing of information as well.

He stated that another principle is coordinated technical resources. They have heard in private conversation over the past day or so that there is a lot of information available, but not all of it is agreed upon. There may be gaps in where that information is. There needs to be some mechanism to understand what information is available and determine what can be agreed upon,

to know where everyone sits with that information. There can be very good data, but if people do not agree with that data, how can you make decisions around it if it is not something people can use as a beacon to really judge a situation.

Another principle is mutually defined objectives. Different people's objectives might be conflicting, but there are mutual objectives as well, i.e. people understand the need for a sustainable resource. They understand the need to maintain that resource for future generations. These objectives give people a place to start from.

The last principle Mr. Manwaring discussed was sustainable (long-term) impact and action. He felt YRDFA was a case study in sustainability. The next question is how to maintain it for the next 20 years and what are the things they can do to maintain the adaptability and flexibility to keep the group grounded and effective moving into the future. He felt this would include the principles they have outlined.

Co-Chair Burnham stated that they have worked long and hard to get YRDFA to where they are starting to build trust along the river. He was not sure they have come as far as he was hoping they would, but he has talked to people outside of YRDFA who saw it when it was first formed to where it is now. There has been growth. While on some really controversial issues they have never been able to get consensus, he felt that they have come closer and closer. There is growth and coming together is happening.

Bill Derendoff felt there has to be better communication with traditional knowledge. He wanted to know how they could start utilizing cultural knowledge. Ms. Palmer felt that was a critical point, how traditional knowledge factors into management decisions. Ms. Klein stated that Ms. Palmer will be presenting on the natural indicators project and how they can use the local knowledge on the river, the natural indicators that people have for when salmon arrive and how abundant they might be, and try to make a model for management to utilize in their forecasts for when fish return and when they might be at which village along the river. Additional proposals for funding have been submitted to try to take that project to the next step.

Co-Chair Alstrom stated that originally upriver people sat on one side and downriver on the other side and it was like a face off. Now it is different. They are mingled together. Things can be worked out through communication and observing how other people in different parts of the river live. Lester Wilde stated he has seen a lot of changes over the years and now people trust each other more.

Carl Sidney stated his hope that one day this sort of meeting could be held in Canada at the headwaters of the Yukon. He hoped the day would come when they could disregard the border for the sake of the salmon, to be able to manage it, enhance it, protect it and sustain it for the future generations. He also asked about how incorporate traditional knowledge so that it has the same weight or in some cases more weight than scientific knowledge. He asked that they somehow incorporate the people across the border into the next 20-year vision for the future of the salmon.

Benedict Jones stated he has seen the river change since 1951. In 1951 there was a lot of subsistence fishing. The river itself has changed since then due to erosion. The size of Chinooks has gotten smaller. He also thought the ocean is changing environmentally, too, as well as the streams in the Interior due to lack of food for the fish.

Alexie Walters expressed appreciation that the door has been opened for communication between the different regions of the river. He stated they need to work together like a family from the mouth of the river to the headwaters. By working together they may be able to get things done.

Peter stated that being able to have people along the river with different ways of life come together and work together to create cooperative agreements about how to handle the salmon resource was commendable. He talked about the pros and cons of the proposed road from Fairbanks. One con was the negative impact it could have on any resources in the area.

Ted McManus stated that the salmon are declining in size and numbers. They need to keep the sustainability up into the future. They need to work together to keep YR DFA going.

CLIMATE CHANGE, OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:

Paula Cullenberg, Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program, University of Alaska, gave a PowerPoint presentation. She addressed the status of climate change in communities around Alaska and impacts to salmon fisheries, the North Pacific Council outreach efforts, and educational efforts to get more young people from communities like along the Yukon River to get more involved in fisheries and education. She stated that they do workshops and classes outside of the campus system. She touched on some that they have done. They also hold young fishermen summits and she hoped the next time they hold one YR DFA would consider sponsoring someone. MAP also links science to communities. They also bring researchers to communities to share information.

With respect to climate change, she touched on the politics, what they know and what they can do about it. In Alaska they know that change happens. On the Congressional level Senator Begich has introduced seven bills relating to the Arctic. For Congress, the Arctic includes the Yukon River watershed for example. One bill is called the Arctic Climate Change Adaptation Act which basically recognizes that a lot of the communities are being impacted by climate change. This includes such things as erosion, flooding, thawing permafrost, fire, fisheries impacts, etc. Hopefully the bill will pass and there will be some funding attached to it.

On the national level, two weeks ago NOAA created the NOAA Climate Service. People can go to www.climate.gov to find out what NOAA is doing. For Alaska they are just starting to hire a new Alaska region climate services director. On the state level, the State of Alaska has had the Alaska Climate Change Subcabinet. They have written a report called Adapting to Climate Change. Eventually it will go to the legislature. The University has a program called SNAP which shows models to look at various things like the amount of rain for every community in the state.

With respect to salmon and climate change, there are some university people studying fresh water aspects of salmon. There are many things that impact salmon, some of which are being studied and some which are not being studied. There are a lot of unknowns.

They are developing some workshops and some meetings to talk with communities (both geographic communities and groups such as fishermen) about how they can adapt to climate change. The first step is to identify changes. The second step is to figure out how vulnerable the community is and how able is the community to respond positively to the changes. The third is to figure out what the community ultimately wants and what steps they can take to get there.

As fishermen, the three areas she suggested thinking about were: 1) whether or not they are observing and monitoring changes in a way that can be documented; 2) are there fishing practices that can be changed to adapt to change; and 3) is the fisheries management system flexible enough to change.

She stated that the program is willing and available to come out to a community to talk about these issues, to help them identify changes they have seen and ways to adapt.

Ms. Cullenberg next discussed the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council's outreach committee. The committee is designed to tell the Council how to do a better job of interacting with Alaska communities. The Council is planning to come to YRDFA's meeting next year to talk about the chum bycatch issue. She encouraged YRDFA to encourage them to come to the meeting. In June of 2011 they plan to meet for the first time in their history in rural Alaska in Nome. She stated that the Council does have an advisory panel. They have started to stream their meetings on the internet although there is no process set up for testifying or providing live feedback. There is interest around the state in developing an educational program for the Council process to explain how it works.

Ms. Cullenberg next discussed what university programs are going on related to youth. There is a curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade called Alaska Season Rivers. There are also some rural ocean science fairs around the state. At the high school level there is the national ocean science fair which is a high school competition and meets in February in Seward. Mountain Village sent a team this year. There is also the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program, ANSEP, which is in quite a few high schools around the state. It is designed to start working with kids who are interested in science and math at the junior high level. At the college level there are one-year, two-year, four-year and graduate programs. There are a lot of internships available. Currently there are 27 students studying fisheries technologies, 55 students are in the under graduate program and 126 students in graduate programs. She stated that 70 percent of these students end up working in Alaska.

Co-Chair Burnham stated that he thought science can pick up the pieces of information that people are seeing about climate change and bring it together to paint a big picture of what it may mean overall. He would like to see more money spent researching those changes in the Bering Sea.

In response to Jeep, Ms. Cullenberg stated the predictions are that there will be more fire danger due to climate change. There is information on the SNAP web page about wildfires and what it might look like in the next 100 years. She recommended they communicate their concern about fire danger and the community's needs to the State.

It was stated that the rural villages have seen a lot of the climate changes in the last 20 years or more. It was stated that out in the ocean it is not just the salmon that are being affected. Barrow is now starting to see salmon in their area. Ms. Cullenberg stated that there is research going on in the Bering Sea. She felt YR DFA has the ability to influence the North Pacific Research Board's priorities by letters or asking to be on their citizen's advisory panel.

There was some discussion of changes people have noticed, including how ice on the river in the winter is not as thick as it used to be. Another comment regarded the change in the distribution of berries.

Ted Suckling thought it would be important for YR DFA to have a representative on the Council's outreach committee. Ms. Cullenberg stated that the committee does not speak for YR DFA or any other rural group; they are just discussing how to do outreach better and how to get input. The meetings are open. Jill Klein stated that Becca Robbins Gisclair is on the advisory panel to the council.

Lester Wilde commented that they are noticing on the coast that the water is rising and the temperature of the water in the ocean is rising. Elders suspect that salmon are not entering the Yukon River due to the warmer water temperatures at the mouth. He would like to see a study on the temperature of the coastal plain, particularly at the entrance of the Yukon River.

In response to George Yaska, Ms. Cullenberg stated that there have been studies of ocean acidification. It looks like it is happening faster in colder waters.

Ms. ____ updated the group on what was happening with Koyukuk's emergency plans and how they are working with the State of Alaska with the Immediate Action Work Group. They have been doing water monitoring with the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council in partnership with Laudén. Koyukuk is one of the communities threatened by flood, erosion and fire. They received funding to develop a fire plan which is currently in draft form as well as funding to do an emergency operation plan, evaluation plan, and a continuation of organization plan. They have received funding for a community plan. The community decided to build an evacuation shelter. They have selected a site to eventually move the community to. She also discussed other plans that have been developed or are in the process of being developed.

Co-Chair Burnham made a presentation to Clara Demientieff for her help with the meals. There was a presentation to Elisa Agnes and Brianna Stickman for the newsletter articles they wrote which will be included in the next YR DFA newsletter.

There was a presentation by school students. There was a question and answer sessions with the students.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND CLIMATE CHANGE:

Catherine Moncrieff is an anthropologist working with YRDFA and has been working for the past seven years on traditional ecological knowledge projects. She reported on a project they just finished regarding natural indicators and then what future ideas are for how to start using the knowledge in fisheries management. The project was called natural indicators of salmon run abundance and timing. She thanked the elders, the fishers and the tribal offices that helped with the research and shared their knowledge. The objectives of the project were to document traditional knowledge of salmon, to learn about natural indicators of salmon arrival, and then work with the tribal councils in the research design, interview questions and selection of participants. They also gathered information about personal and family fishing histories. Another objective was to collect information on contemporary fishing practices. In all of the study communities, discussions about natural indicators of salmon led to information about fishers' concerns. These concerns included that today previously reliable natural indicators may be less reliable, possibly due to climate change. Another issue was the current regulatory program of subsistence windows. They were specifically concerned about the dictates of fishing by the calendar and the clock rather than the traditional practices that have long indicated the best times for fishing based on weather, run timing, run quality and run abundance. Ms. Moncrieff stated the next step is what to do with this information. Understanding the mechanisms underlying the people's observations and relationships may provide managers with useful information. Further research is needed to understand the relationships between plant growth and how their timing is related to salmon arrival; heavy snowfall and salmon abundance; salmon size and water levels; and salmon abundance and size. She felt they could learn the most from the available information through a multi-disciplinary team made up of many fields of science, Native leaders, knowledgeable elders and active fishers to understand the information from different perspectives and to talk to each other about these relationships. In addition they should continue to be aware of climate change impacts and observations and consider YRDFA's role in the climate change issue.

In response to Jeep, Ms. Moncrieff stated that this was a four-year study. This report is documentation of the natural indicators that people have used.

There were statements by various Board members of observations that they have made.

In response to Lester Wilde, Ms. Moncrieff stated that they have applied to several funding sources. She would like to get a group of people together and she mentioned several names and groups she would like to see included. The group would look at different information for each of the natural indicators and then look at the salmon records to try to make some correlations so they could perhaps develop a model that Fish and Game could use in their pre-season projections.

In response to Jeep, Ms. Moncrieff stated that when they make a report on a study, it is public information. It is given to whoever funds the study as well as to the libraries. Jeep sees it as a valuable tool Fish and Game could use. Carl Sidney expressed concern that the information could be misinterpreted. Ms. Moncrieff stated one way she would try to alleviate a misinterpretation is to make sure that there are some elders and active fishers on the team.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Fred commented that YRDFA has been a backbone for the people from the villages who do not have a voice. He talked about the Pilot Station sonar serves the whole Yukon drainage. He felt there should be more sonar stations on the Yukon River. He also talked about the bycatch on the high seas. He talked about the lack of fish last year. He encouraged YRDFA to approach Fish and Game and request more sonar stations to get more accurate data for both commercial and subsistence fishing. He would like to see a sonar station by Koyukuk.

George Yaska stressed the importance of talking to their legislators. He has been talking to Jill Klein about increasing the participation at YRDFA with the tribes. He will be making a presentation to the tribes and the Tanana Chiefs Conference at the convention in Fairbanks in March.

Patrick Madrose appreciated what YRDFA was doing. He supported getting a sonar station between Koyukuk and Galena. He stressed working together to solve differences.

Orville Huntington gave an update from the Alaska Federation of Natives Board of Directors. They are looking at trying to develop something with the Department of Commerce to stop the waste of salmon on the high seas in the Pollock fishery. He is also working on the climate change study. He appreciated the work YRDFA was doing.

Fred stated that the change in mesh size will cost him half his fish net next year. He wrote a letter to the editor, Fairbanks Daily News, pointing out the fact that the Pollock fisheries' net is like a big sock and the size is about three football fields and it scrapes the bottom of the ocean. The Board of Fisheries looks the other way and penalizes the people along the Yukon for their net size. He stated that the people of the drainage and YRDFA need to put their heads together and determine what direction they want to take.

Bergman spoke about what to do about fishing. He felt the 7-1/2 inch mesh nets would kill the king salmon and there will be nothing but small fish left. He suggested a petition signed by everyone in every village to stop it.

Albert Evans stated his belief that Mother Nature is the one that is causing all the problems with the fish. Climate change is the reason. It has changed before and will change again.

Mickey discussed the Arctic Council. It is the eight arctic nations and they discuss climate change. Indigenous peoples are participants on the Council although they are not voting delegates. Because of climate change, new fishing areas are opening up. When the Council came up with a declaration, they were going to leave fish out. Through his efforts of telling them about the Yukon, the fish were left in. He appreciated YRDFA for getting all the people along the river talking to each other and that the discussion had gone from fighting over allocation to talking about the fish and how to help it. The nonprofit organizations need to collaborate and focus on climate change and the environment. Working together will get things done.

Joann Malemute spoke on behalf of Katy Kangas about fishing last summer. She is angry about the size of the mesh being decreased. Fishwheels catch five to six times the amount she catches, so why don't they regulate the fishwheels instead of the fish nets. Ms. Malemute stated that some of the tributaries where the fish lay their eggs are no longer assessable to the fish because they are dammed up by beavers.

Percy Alden stated that he thought YR DFA was doing a good job and commended all the Board members. They have built a working relationship which is very healthy. He stated they have to use their traditional knowledge in a good way. The current system does not work for people. He agreed with the comments about moving the sonar site and suggested around Tanana.

Michael Jimmy talked about the Pollock fleet and the bycatch between 2002 and 2007. Between those dates they caught over 404,000 Chinook salmon.

YR DFA Looking Forward: The Next 20 Years:

Jill Klein pointed out that there was a letter from Nick Tucker in the binders. There is also a letter from the Governor. Nick Tucker is suggesting a new arm to YR DFA to work with the tribes.

Jill Klein stated that while the Board members works well together, there are times when there are some divisions. For example at the Board of Fish meeting it was very separated in terms of upriver and lower river. There also are some key players that are involved in fisheries management that are not sitting at the table with the Board. Ms. Klein has also talked with Carl Sidney who will be stepping down from the Yukon Salmon Committee and who would like to stay involved in YR DFA. There are some options they can look into regarding other organizations such as a memorandum of understanding or agreement about how they all work together along the Yukon River. Another option would be to create a new kind of working group on the river where YR DFA would have a seat at the table.

Co-Chair Burnham suggested direction to Staff to look at some of these options and present them at the fall Board for them to look at. Ted Suckling was concerned whether it would be more burdensome and confusing to what they are trying to achieve as YR DFA by itself. Stanley Ned stated that they need to start looking at the adverse impacts to other species of fish on the Yukon River.

Stan Zuray moved to direct Staff to write down the different options they have heard on the issue of working groups and have it ready for the Board at the next fall Board meeting. There was a second.

Under discussion, Victor stated that he also heard people bring up the sonar issue. He thought that could also be a working group, but he was concerned that they had the whole summer in front of them and it needs to be looked prior to that. Co-Chair Alstrom stated he was in favor of the motion. Lester Wilde stated that Staff needs to take all the suggestions that were made and make sure all of the suggestions are addressed at the next meeting. Jeep pointed out that the Nick Tucker is asking them to create another arm of YR DFA. Co-Chair Burnham stated the

intent of the motion is to take letters like Nick Tucker's as well as other recommendations that have been made at the meeting by other people and compile them so the Board can look at them at the fall meeting and look at the pros and cons of how to address them.

The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

Al requested to speak to the co-chairs regarding going into an executive session.

RESOLUTIONS:

Staff presented a list of resolutions.

1. Host Community Resolution: Since this resolution was not written up yet, it was suggested that if this type of resolution was similar for thanking other communities, then the name of the community could just be inserted.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the resolution thanking the Community of Nulato for hosting the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Salmon Bycatch Resolution: Staff presented a template for the Board to review. It was suggested to the committee members to state in more importance the status of the Chinook runs on the Yukon River and to ask for the Secretary of Commerce to reject the bycatch cap of 60,000 Chinook salmon as proposed by the State of Alaska and adopted by the North Pacific Council. It was suggested to amend the resolution state that the people who are counting the bycatch be trustworthy, because there is no guarantee of knowing who is counting the fish and whether they are counting all the bycatch. The proposer stated he knows the count is not an accurate count. He would like to amend it to add -have trustworthy counters on each of the trawlers. There was concern expressed whether the board can question whether or not they are being truthful. Ms. Klein stated that she and Todd met with NOAA in Juneau. NOAA is in charge of the sampling program. There is a group reviewing the sampling procedures and protocols on how they sample so she thought they could make some kind of statement. Observers sample only what they can get their hands on. It is not a true random sample that is statistically created to really reflect the numbers of salmon. There are some issues from a scientific perspective whether it is the best sample. They are trying to come up with a better sampling program. Jeep expressed concern that the board was not including a specific number for the cap. It was stated that the lowest cap the North Pacific Management Council had to consider was around 28,000 to 32,000. Ms. Klein reminded them that in the past YRDFA supported a 32,000 cap. The Co-Chair Burnham suggested going with what YRDFA supported in the past and inserting 32,000 into the resolution.

It was moved by Alexie and seconded by Frank to adopt the resolution with the 32,000 number inserted. The motion passed unanimously.

3. A Resolution Supporting Chinook Habitat and Full Life Cycle Research:

This resolution would include a specific request to the Yukon River Panel to work on a quality of escapement method of managing for and assessing of acceptable border passage.

It was stated this resolution resulted from a proposal from someone who wanted YRDFA to ask for not just research on, for example, Pilot Station sonar or the spawning grounds, but to include all the way from the marine environment. Another proposal related to the quality of escapement management. The committee combined the two proposals into one. The quality of escapement management relates to the number of male and female escapement rather than just a total number of fish. In response to Ms. Klein it was stated the resolution could be sent to the Yukon River Panel, ADF&G and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stating that YRDFA supports habitat and full life cycle research as well as developing a quality of escapement method of managing for and assessment of acceptable border passage. It is important that the quality of escapement be reasonable. In response to the Co-Chair Burnham it was stated that it is more a mode of management and a methodology change. Instead of going by a number, they would go by other data, i.e. male/female ratio. In response to Bill, it was stated that the ratio would be developed by the Yukon River Panel. It will probably take years to fully develop. It was felt that current management methods are outdated and do not make sense; it is no longer used in Washington or Oregon. It was pointed out that through a treaty with the Canadians they are obligated by law to pass 45,000 Chinooks through the border plus another 10,000 for their subsistence uses, so it would also require a change to the treaty. There was concern that meeting a ratio would be detrimental to subsistence on the Alaska side. It was stated that there would have been years in the past where the escapement was reached under the current system but would not have been under the proposed ratio method. However, the proposed method would increase the quality of escapement. It was felt that if this proposed method had been in effect when the runs first started decreasing, while it might have caused a slight reduction in the commercial fishery, they might not be where they are at right now. Jan stated that the person who presented the habitat part of the resolution was requesting that YRDFA support more research into the ocean habitat. Mr. Lester Wilde stated that the resolution needs some explanation regarding how putting quality salmon on the spawning grounds have to do with the management of the salmon. Jill stated her understanding that the resolution was also about getting data from the spawning grounds. The only way they can assess anything is if they have the data. She thought it also was related to the net mesh size change and seeing if it makes any difference on the spawning grounds. She will work on the language. The question is whether the Board conceptually supports this resolution. The Co-Chair Burnham stated that there has been recognition, including by the Yukon River Panel, that the spawning grounds need to be looked at to see what is there. He did not think they could come to a consensus on the next step which could require changes in the treaty. He felt YRDFA could support the need to look at the spawning grounds. Bill recommended tabling this resolution until it is rewritten so they can understand what the stipulations are. He liked the concept. Jeep expressed concern that YRDFA would not be acting on this resolution until next year.

4. Chum Wanton Waste in Area M: This resolution would request the State of Alaska to review past fish ticket information to see if there is chum wanton waste taking place in the Area M fishery.

The Co-Chair Burnham stated that conceptually they were trying to force the issue on managers to look at the idea that wanton waste is still taking place and that fish tickets are a way to get at looking at it. He asked if there was a consensus on the concept. After the wording is drafted, they will take another look at it. There was consensus supporting the concept.

Ms. Klein stated none of the resolutions were finalized yet. The Board decided to go through them and see if there is consensus on the concepts. After Staff has finished working on them, then the Board will look at the final product.

5. A Resolution Asking the State of Alaska to Require Board of Fish Members to have a Background in Salmon Fishery Issues: Ms. Klein thought the intent was to have better decisionmaking. The committee does not know logistically how this would be possible and how to put it into a resolution.

Carl commented about the decision by the Board of Fish regarding reducing net size to 7 and ½-inch mesh and not thinking about the impacts and hardships it would cause the people of the Yukon River. This includes the cost of the nets and causing problems for people to go out and get fish. He did not feel the Board of Fish has any grassroots background because they do not realize how much hardship it is causing people. He also did not know how much information they had. The big 7 and 8-year olds were decimated by big mesh and now they are moving down and taking the next size. He did not feel the Board of Fish members used their heads when they made this decision.

The Co-Chair Burnham stated the problem he sees is that the Governor picks the members who are then finalized by the Legislature. Usually they say they have some background in fishing. Politically, if the Governor wants the person and they say they have some background then they will be put on the Board of Fish. It is more of a political process rather than scientific. Carl suggested putting the resolution forward to the Governor's office would make them aware that it is a bothersome process.

Ms. Klein stated that there was another resolution (Number 12) with respect to Board of Fish members that could possibly combine with this point. It says a letter of support, so she was not sure it was to be a resolution. It says that YR DFA would support Board of Fish members coming from the Yukon River Drainage or working on behalf of Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim fisheries. Something could be stated in there about being knowledgeable about salmon fisheries among other points. She added that currently there some momentum for Art Nelson being appointed to the Board of Fish.

The Co-Chair Burnham stated he could support the concept of the knowledge of people that are put on the Board of Fish and telling the Governor that YR DFA wants people who

have knowledge about these fisheries that they are going to be making decisions on. He was not sure how to put it in the form of a resolution.

Mr. Lester Wilde felt that the statement made by Carl is valid and should be part of the resolution and that the resolution be addressed to the Governor.

Lester Wilde moved to accept the concept.

There was a suggestion that YRDFA implement some kind of impact study on what the cost is going to be for people to switch their nets out in each community.

Fred raised a concern that some members of families were not considered qualified subsistence fishermen because they were not federally-qualified users. He asked that the Board address that issue. More people were moving to the cities because they cannot afford to live in the Bush any more. He would like them to be able to come home and use the fish and game like they always did. He would like to see a study on this.

The Co-Chair Burnham stated that he supported a resolution regarding the background of people that would be put on the Board of Fish. There was consensus supporting this.

6. A Directive to Staff to Try to Come up with the Number of Nets Needed: This directive is to work through fishermen and/or the tribal council in each village to get an accurate number of nets as soon as possible.
7. A Resolution Regarding Determining the Number of Nets Needed, the Cost to Purchase These Nets and to Create a Process for Fair and Even Distribution: Ms. Klein stated this refers to YRDFA will work collaboratively with others through this process. The resolution would state that YRDFA would like to be the group to work on the net distribution.

There were no objections to putting this forward in resolution form.

George Yaska who sat on the resolution committee stated they addressed numbers 6 and 7. He stated that they need to get this information gathered in the next week and then forward it on to Senator Murkowski's office as that appropriation process is occurring right now. Senator Murkowski has asked for this information. Co-Chair Burnham added that it was incumbent on everyone at the meeting as well as Staff to try to get to the tribes and villages to get that information as quickly as possible. Ms. Klein added that anyone can call Staff if they have that information already. Fred stated that there have always been about 40 fishermen in Galena. This would be 40 fish nets at a cost of \$800 apiece. Stan asked that a list of villages and names and phone numbers be started right now. Lester Wilde pointed out that it is not necessarily \$800 each for the nets. It depends on the type of net. The price range is probably from \$800 on up depending on the net. Fred stated that there are also unqualified Federal users who have moved to a city who also have fish nets in the villages. They will also have to be changed out, but they are not represented. Co-Chair Burnham stated that they knew there will be a few

who would fall through the cracks that will have to be covered. They know this will be an issue. Stan stated that the question they need to ask people in the villages is if they have any nets larger than 7 and a half-inch mesh that they want to be exchanging. They will need the length, the depth and number of nets. In response to a question, Co-Chair Burnham stated that this is for all fishermen including commercial and subsistence. George Yaska suggested working with Tanana Chiefs and AVCP. They have a group fax and email method for contacting their members.

Recording ended at this point.

February 18, 2010

RESOLUTIONS (CONT):

Co-Chair Burnham asked that they first pass the resolution regarding getting information on nets from the communities. Staff will then get some information from people present prior to their departure.

1. Resolution Thanking Host Village: This resolution was passed February 17, 2010.
7. A Resolution Regarding Determining the Number of Nets Needed, the Cost to Purchase These Nets and to Create a Process for Fair and Even Distribution:

Ms. Klein stated that the first paragraph explains YRDFA and includes both Canada and Alaska. She then read the proposed resolution. Copies are proposed to be sent to the Congressional Delegation, State of Alaska, Governor's Office, Tanana Chiefs, AVCP, Yukon Delta CDQ Group, Fish and Game and Fish and Wildlife Service.

In response to a question, Co-Chair Burnham stated that the resolution relates to the whole Yukon drainage.

George suggested –Whereas a Federal emergency disaster declaration was made. Stan recommended adding CATG to those getting a copy. It was suggested to add Yukon River and its tributaries; another suggestion was to say drainage instead. Jan requested adding city councils to the distribution.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the following resolution. The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

The Resolution will read:

Whereas Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association works on behalf of the Yukon River drainage fishing families and others who depend on wild salmon for subsistence and commercial fisheries when possible in both Alaska and the upper Canadian headwaters; and

Whereas the Alaska State Board of Fisheries recently took action to restrict the size of nets along the Yukon River to a maximum mesh size of seven and a half inches and will require a majority of fishermen along the Yukon River to buy at least one to two new nets for summer fishing season in 2011; and

Whereas Yukon River fishermen have discussed a net exchange as an effective tool for people to trade in their old nets that are larger than seven-and-a-half-inch mesh for a new net in order to target current fishermen and also to ensure old nets are disposed of properly; and

Whereas a Federal emergency disaster declaration was made by the Secretary of Commerce due to low Chinook salmon commercial fisheries in 2008 and 2009; and

Whereas YRDFA would like to see a fair and equitable distribution of new nets to the fishermen along the Yukon River drainage; and

Whereas YRDFA has a successful record of managing Federal grants with strong administrative support, we would be able to take on any responsibility as necessary and valued by the public to assist in distribution of the nets and will work collaboratively with others through this process; and

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA will work riverwide to determine the number and size of new nets as needed, the amount it will cost to purchase these nets, and requests to be involved in determining a process for affordable, efficient and fair distribution.

2. Salmon Bycatch Resolution: This resolution was passed on February 17, 2010.
3. Chinook Salmon Escapement Data Gathering:

Ms. Klein stated that they changed the title. The introductory paragraph remained the same. She then read the rest of it.

Lester Wilde moved to adopt the following resolution. It was seconded.

Under discussion, George requested to add to the third whereas: It is not only important to deliver the required numbers to the spawning grounds; it is also important to deliver larger older male and female.

The question was called. Motion passed unanimously.

The Resolution will read:

Whereas it is important to deliver salmon to the spawning grounds in order to insure the sustainability of the salmon runs; and

Whereas it is not only important to deliver the required numbers to the spawning grounds, it is also important to deliver older larger male and female fish to the spawning grounds to sustain the high quality of Yukon River Chinook salmon; and

Whereas mesh size changes have taken place on the Alaskan side of the border and to effectively understand the impacts of this gear change on preserving older age class and bigger fish; and

Whereas additional sampling should take place to gather age, sex, length data and other quality data at the escapement projects in order to know more about the quality of escapement on the spawning grounds; and

Whereas ASL data from the spawning grounds can be used in management decisionmaking;

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA recommends that the Yukon River Panel address the quality of escapement by gathering data and creating a method to utilize this data in assessing acceptable border passage.

4. Area M Wanton Waste:

Ms. Klein read the proposed resolution.

George stated they need to ask the State of Alaska to review both the submitted information and the historical fish ticket information to compare. The point is there was no time where they did not catch chum in that directed sockeye fishery. The concern is the number of submitted fish tickets showing zero chum salmon reported.

There was a question whether –fishing families‡ should be changed to, for example, users. It is addressing subsistence, commercial and personal use. It was suggested to use –fishing families and others‡ in both this and the previous resolutions. This will be done.

It was moved and seconded to pass the following resolution.

Under discussion, Lester Wilde asked if the word fishing was required in the resolution when describing other users of salmon. He recommended striking the word fishing. George asked if they were talking about just the South Peninsula fishery rather than the Area M June fishery. He recommended keying in on the South Peninsula. Ms. Klein stated she will get the exact language for the area.

The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

The proposed resolution currently reads (to be edited later):

Whereas Yukon River chum salmon travel through the Aleutian Islands, also known as Area M, on their migratory route returning back to Western Alaska and the Yukon River,

and whereas chum salmon are important to people along the Yukon River who rely on it for both food and limited income as well as feeding to sled dogs as part of their subsistence activities; and

Whereas we have an agreement with Canada to deliver an agreed upon number of fall chum to the Canadian mainstem Border and Porcupine River drainage in Canada; and

Whereas there is no limit on the number of chum salmon caught in the directed sockeye fishery in Area M, and in 2009 there were _____ chum salmon harvested, which was the highest in _____ amount of years; and

Whereas previous Board of Fisheries have implemented conservation measures in order to protect chum and sockeye salmon returning to their natal streams in Western Alaska and were then removed by more recent Board of Fisheries, and chum catches have been unregulated;

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA asks the State of Alaska to review fish ticket information submitted by Virgil Umphenour to the Alaska State Board of Fisheries to review both the submitted information and the historical fish ticket information on chum harvests and potential under-reporting of chum harvest in Area M.

Lester Wilde asked if it would be possible later to put some of the resolutions into proposal form. Co-Chair Burnham stated this could be discussed at the fall board meeting. Mr. Wilde felt it would strengthen them to be put into proposals.

5. A Resolution Asking the State of Alaska to Require Board of Fish Members to have a Background in Salmon Fishery Issues:

Ms. Klein stated she combined two Board of Fisheries proposed resolutions into one. One was requiring board members to have experience with salmon fisheries and the other one required people from the AYK region and rural Alaska be appointed to the board. She then read the proposed resolution. Ms. Klein stated that the Board could discuss whether they wanted to include any name(s) or no names at all. George stated that while he wants to support Art Nelson, he did not want to insult the qualifications of those who are currently on the Board of Fisheries and the people that appointed them. Stan stated that if a name is mentioned then they should also try to mention some of the other names being discussed, such as Mike Smith. He did not feel they were insulting present board members. Jan suggested they be more neutral and not include names, but word it to say they would like someone from the regions that have knowledge about the lifestyle. Stanley suggested submitting the name of someone from the upper Yukon also, such as George Yaska. George declined but supported Mike Smith from Tanana Chiefs. With respect to staying neutral, he recommended changing the title of the resolution. He wanted to stay away from the implication that there are not qualified people on the Board of Fisheries. Stan stated that Carl submitted the resolution originally because he did not feel there were qualified people on the Board of Fisheries with respect to the Yukon

River issues. Bill stated he agreed with Jan that the resolutions should not include any names.

Stan stated there has been a lot of work by the Board in collaboration with the ADF&G and others. Not a single advisory committee in the state was allowed to look at the changes that went before the Board of Fisheries at the last minute. And then for the board to accept those changes even though there was testimony that there was consensus from the mouth of the river to the border that those plans not be changed, there was some frustration that the board was not being professional and looking at things clearly. That is why there is a resolution like this. He felt the resolution was respectful considering what the Board of Fisheries did.

Co-Chair Burnham stated that when resolutions of any kind get too specific there will be trouble getting unanimous consent on them. This includes putting in names, although he felt there are people who are qualified. With respect to Board of Fisheries members being qualified or unqualified, a lot of times it is in the eyes of the beholder as to who is qualified. He stated they should respect that people make reasonable efforts to find qualified people.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the proposal without the names.

Under discussion Jill pointed out she had changed the third whereas to read –Whereas there are currently a limited number of Board of Fisheries appointees. She asked if that would address the concerns about offending anyone. George suggested saying we strongly support appointees from rural Alaska and the AYK region. He also suggested –We respectfully request Alaska Board of Fisheries follows its either rules and regulations or meeting protocol and –the advisory council process for review. Stan supported this concept. Jill suggested changing the title to include the Board of Fisheries process and then add a statement about the Board of Fisheries process. George recommended keeping the title Board of Fisheries appointments and delete appointee qualifications. He felt the other issued may need to be addressed separately. He wanted to add –Be it resolved that YR DFA strongly supports people who have an intimate knowledgell.

The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

The proposal reads:

Whereas the Alaska State Board of Fisheries members are appointed by the Governor to make decisions on fishing regulations that impact fisheries statewide; and

Whereas there have been limited numbers of Board of Fisheries appointees from rural Alaska, and especially from the Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim region who have the intimate knowledge of fisheries and a subsistence life style dependent on healthy wild salmon populations; and

Whereas a recent decision at the Alaska Board of Fisheries to change the maximum mesh size along the Yukon River were highly controversial and complex and needed the utmost scientific review and understanding in addition to local knowledge from rural Alaska; and

Whereas the AYK region is experiencing the most hardship with respect to low salmon returns and restrictions on subsistence, and little to no commercial fisheries; and

Whereas there are many qualified people from rural Alaska and others that work on behalf of AYK fisheries; and

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA asks the Governor of the State of Alaska to take the utmost consideration of potential Board of Fish members to ensure they are suitable candidates to make decisions on behalf of salmon fisheries in the AYK region of Alaska.

6. Subsistence Harvest Data:

Whereas the Alaska Department of Fish and Game carries out post-season subsistence surveys on an annual basis in the Yukon River Drainage; and

Whereas subsistence salmon harvest data is important to know about in order to learn about the impacts of management decisions on people who live a subsistence lifestyle and fish for Yukon River salmon to feed their families and the remaining dog teams along the Yukon River that are used for subsistence activities; and

Whereas subsistence harvest data is necessary to utilize in winter meetings where people discuss fisheries management strategies and need to use in fisheries regulatory and management decisionmaking; and

Whereas the public has not been receiving timely information about subsistence harvest in communities along the Yukon River; and

Whereas the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is responsible for gathering data and carrying out analysis and should carry out this mandate in a timely manner;

Therefore be it resolved that ADF&G carry out analysis of post-season harvest surveys in a timely manner to deliver it to the public.

Jill asked if they wanted to define what a timely manner was. Co-Chair Burnham felt that while timely is vague, the group knows they want to hurry up the release of information.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the resolution as written. The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Water Temperature Monitoring

Jill Klein read the proposed resolution.

Lester Wilde suggested including all the mouths entering into the river as there are five or six mouths that enter the river. Co-Chair Burnham felt that the mouth of the Yukon would include all of them. Lester agreed.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the resolution.

Under discussion, George stated they were discussing near-marine estuary of the Yukon River Delta. He suggested adding it to the resolved section, replacing –coast of the. Lester Wilde stated that if they wanted to cover the main mouths of the river that would be the North Mouth, the Bagumarek Mouth (near Kotlik), the Middle mouth and the South Mouth. The main thing is to get the temperature out where the mouths are that the fish need to swim through. Stan added that the concern is whether the water in those estuary areas getting so warm that it is deterring salmon from coming into the river. While including the whole river is important, it waters down the idea that Lester brought out. He suggested that before the –Be it resolved adding –whereas this warm estuary water could be diverting salmon and not allowing salmon to come into the river. Lester stated that that was what the elders wanted, a study at the mouth before the salmon enter the river. The elders believe that warm temperatures coming out of the tidal plans are causing the salmon to detour and follow the cold water north. He stated they wanted to check the temperature at the mouth at low tide, because when the tide comes in, that water is still warm. When the time comes in, it pushes the warm water into the river. George suggested adding –and investigate the relationship between the water temperature and in-river migration to the –Therefore clause. Jeep questioned what would be done with the information if they find out the water is warmer and felt the resolution was a waste of time. Co-Chair Burnham stated that if they do not find answers to questions then you are always wondering if that might be one of the causes.

The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

The resolution now reads:

Whereas water temperatures in the Yukon River greatly impact salmon returning to rearing and spawning in the mainstem and river tributaries; and

Whereas scientific knowledge states that salmon depend on temperature of the water to return to their natal streams; and

Whereas climate changes are taking place and even slight increases in water temperature may deter the sustainability of Yukon River salmon; and

Whereas gathering and tracking temperature at the coast of the Yukon River and all along the Yukon River will be useful to use in monitoring the long-term health of the salmon and the habitat they depend on; and

Whereas local people living in the Yukon Delta communities should be involved in efforts to take temperature data; and

Whereas this warm estuary water could be diverting salmon and not allowing salmon to come into the river;

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFFA supports increased water temperature monitoring at the near-marine estuary of the Yukon River Delta and investigation of the relationship between the water temperature and in-river migration and that this information be made available to the public on an annual basis.

9. Supporting Collaboration between Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association and Doyon, Limited

Ms. Klein explained that this resolution came before the meeting. There was discussion where Doyon was approached for financial contribution to YRDFFA. Doyon would like to support YRDFFA, but would like to see a resolution from YRDFFA about YRDFFA's relationship with Doyon and supporting collaboration between the two entities. The first few paragraphs are about the Yukon River.

Whereas the YRDFFA's mission is to promote healthy wild salmon fisheries in the Yukon River Drainage; and

Whereas preservation of wild Yukon River salmon fisheries is important to residents throughout the drainage and YRDFFA supports both subsistence and commercial fisheries; and

Whereas Yukon River communities depend on wild healthy salmon for food, cultural activities and also a source of limited income; and

Whereas YRDFFA understands the need for economic development in the Yukon River region, provided that the highest standards for environmental protection are adhered to in order to provide for sustainable communities with strong economies; and

Whereas Doyon, Limited is a regional Alaska Native corporation with 17,550 shareholders and one of the largest private land owners in America, owns surface and subsurface lands over a large portion of the Yukon River drainage in Alaska and has a fiduciary obligation to develop its interests in gold, oil, gas, timber and other minerals on its lands on behalf of its shareholders, many of whom reside in the Yukon River drainage; and

Whereas Doyon, Limited's mission is to continually enhance their position as a financially strong Native corporation in order to promote the economic and social well being of their shareholders and future shareholders, to strengthen their Native way of life, and to protect and enhance their land and resources, which includes support for

subsistence and commercial fisheries in the Yukon River drainage, as well as job creation and other opportunities related to natural resources development; and

Whereas Doyon remains expressly committed to meet state and federal standards of protection, but it has also committed itself to higher levels of protection which is reflected by one of the best industrial environmental and safety records in Alaska;

Now therefore be it resolved that YR DFA is fully supportive of collaborative work between YR DFA and Doyon that addresses salmon fisheries along the Yukon River in order to sustain the fishing way of life for people along the Yukon River; and

Now therefore be it further resolved that YR DFA shall use their best efforts to work with Doyon in a collaborative, nonjudicial and private forum to resolve any perceived concerns or objections which YR DFA may have with their natural resources development projects on Doyon lands.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the resolution.

Under discussion Co-Chair Burnham stated although they have been trying to seek funds to help augment YR DFA's abilities to function, etc. and they have received monies from other entities, the way the resolution is written it is almost like a contract and is trying to secure very specific views on how YR DFA may view Doyon in the future. It makes him uncomfortable. He was concerned there were too many strings associated with the resolution. Mr. Lester Wilde agreed. Jan also had great reservations about the strings attached to this resolution although she would like to see YR DFA work more closely with organizations such as Doyon. She added that some things that Doyon chooses to do are highly controversial even among their shareholders. Stanley did not support the resolution. Bill did not support the resolution. George pointed out that the resolution does not say YR DFA cannot opposed Doyon. They ask the Association to use their best efforts to work with them first before bringing opposition to any of their projects. Co-Chair Burnham applauded Staff's efforts to secure funds wherever they can. He did not think they would get consensus on the resolution. Mr. Lester Wilde did not support the resolution. Ted stated he and Jill talked to the president of Doyon about the donations they could possibly make. They know YR DFA's mission. He was concerned when he heard the stipulations Doyon wanted. Co-Chair Burnham cautioned that they do not preclude themselves from ever working with Doyon. He would like to continue to look at how YR DFA may be able to get some funding in a way that will satisfy both organizations' mandates. George asked if there was support for the resolution is the second resolve was eliminated.

Jill stated that Staff has identified other corporate entities and other organizations that YR DFA might be able to approach for funding. Doyon and Chalista were the two that came to mind as working on similar issues and represent similar people. There is a statement in the bylaws stating YR DFA will always work on riverwide issues and never work on one issue at the expense of another. She stated that Staff was planning to also approach Chalista and ask for their support. They were striving for a balance. Stan

stated he felt comfortable with the proposal. The key is the words best efforts, which is what Doyon is asking of YRDFA. He was in favor if Doyon was willing to work with YRDFA and give them support and funding.

The question was called. There was not consensus.

Jill Klein stated that she would like to continue to try to work with all of the corporations. Lester Wilde stated that they have worked hard to eliminate the upriver/downriver concept and to work together. There were other comments regarding creating divisions between upriver and downriver as well as resolutions like this jeopardizing the integrity of YRDFA.

Co-Chair Burnham thanked the resolution committee and Staff for their work.

Jill Klein went over the staff directives:

1. Write a letter to the Governor to conduct a review of the sonar technology through the National Academy of Sciences; to review the latest acceptable sonar technology and other best management tools that might be acceptable and how best to use this on the Yukon River for salmon enumeration.
2. Continue to increase awareness of Chinook run problems in villages so people understand the need for restrictions (outreach and education).
3. Get the number and size of nets that are needed for the new mesh size change.

BYLAW REVISIONS:

Jill Klein stated that the bylaw changes were housekeeping and nothing substantive. It can be addressed at the next meeting.

2011 MEETING LOCATION SITES:

Lester Wilde nominated Mountain Village. Bill nominated Scammon Bay as a secondary site.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

Co-Chair Burnham thanked the principal at the school and the people of Nulato for allowing them to use the school for the meeting, for expressing their views and for supporting the meeting in other ways. He thanked the people from other villages for also participating. He also thanked Henry for his service on the YRDFA board. He complimented and thanked the YRDFA Staff for their work.

On behalf of the lower river villages Bill extended their thanks to the community of Nulato. He also thanked the staff for their work to make the meeting possible. He

thanked the people from the surrounding villages for attending the meeting and all the participants.

Stanley Ned thanked YRDFA Staff for doing a good job. He thanked George Yaska for trying to find money for YRDFA. He thanked the community of Nulato for hosting the meeting. He thanked the Canadians who came down and attended the meeting.

On behalf of the people on the Coast, Lester Wilde thanked the people of the Nulato.

Al thanked the people of Nulato as well as the Board members and Staff.

Ted thanked the people of Nulato as well as the Staff.

Carl apologized for not being present the first two days. He expressed his thanks to the YRDFA Board. He thanked the community of Nulato for hosting the meeting.

Carl thanked the community of Nulato for their hospitality. He recognized the Board members and announced this would probably be his last meeting of YRDFA on behalf of the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee. He hoped they would continue to work together for the benefit of the salmon and salmon habitat. He introduced Ron who is a new member on the subcommittee. Ron thanked the community for their hospitality.

Ole Hunter thanked everyone for coming. He thanked the people of Nulato for their hospitality.

Benedict Jones thanked everyone for coming to Nulato and also the people of Nulato for hosting the meeting.

Angie thanked everyone for coming to Nulato and also thanked the people of Nulato for hosting the meeting.

Al apologized for wanting to go into executive session on the 17th. He thanked the people of Nulato for their hospitality.

Larry Smelk (ph), vice mayor of Nulato, thanked everyone for coming.

Jill Klein thanked the community of Nulato for hosting the 20th annual YRDFA meeting. She thanked the board members for their participation. She thanked the participants from the other communities for their participation. She also thanked the Staff as well as the Restoration and Management fund from the Yukon River Panel Treaty Implementation Funds who funded the meeting. She also thanked those who contributed donations to the raffle.

Jeep thanked the community of Nulato for their hospitality as well as those who made the meeting possible. He liked YRDFA going into the villages to hear the people's points of view.

Alexie Walters, Sr. thanked the people of Nulato for hosting the meeting.

Ephrim Thompson thanked the people of Nulato for their hospitality.

Robert thanked them for the opportunity to come and learn. He thanked his host family as well as the people of Nulato for their hospitality.

Shirley Clark thanked the people of Nulato for their hospitality.

Bill thanked the people of Nulato for the good time they had at the meeting as well as the entertainment that was provided. He also thanked all the Board members.

Co-Chair Burnham thanked the musicians who played in the evenings. Bill thanked the ladies who danced for them the evening of the 17th. He thanked Benedict for his songs, the musicians and the people who participated in the dancing.

ADJOURN:

Lester Wilde moved to adjourn the 20th annual meeting of YRDFFA. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

YRDFA Board Resolutions 2010

Resolution 2010-01: Thanking the people of Nulato. The YRDFA Board Members, meeting delegates, and YRDFA staff thank the Nulato School and staff, City, and Tribal Council, cooks, drivers, dancers, Elders, and people of Nulato.

Resolution 2010-02: Chinook salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. YRDFA requests that the Secretary of Commerce reject the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's approved management action, and use his emergency regulation authority to implement a hard cap of 32,500 effective immediately.

Resolution 2010-03: Quality of Chinook salmon escapements. It is important that adequate numbers of older, larger male and female fish make it to the spawning grounds. Therefore, YRDFA recommends that the Yukon River Panel gather data (including ASL) and develop a method for utilizing these data to ensure that border passage requirements are met not only in terms of the number of fish, but also in the quality of fish.

Resolution 2010-04: Area M. YRDFA asks the State of Alaska to review fish ticket information submitted by Virgil Umphenour on chum harvests to the Alaska State Board of Fisheries in addition to historical fish ticket information. This additional review should examine harvest information and potential under-reporting of chum harvests in Area M.

Resolution 2010-05: Board of Fish representation. YRDFA recommends that during screening and selection of potential BOF board members the governor consider whether candidates are suitable to make decisions on salmon fisheries in the AYK region of Alaska.

Resolution 2010-06: Net replacement. The recent Board of Fisheries decision creates a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches beginning in 2011, which will require that many fishers purchase new nets. A net exchange would provide new nets to fishers who turn in their old nets, ensuring that active fishers can replace their nets and that old nets are properly recycled.

Resolution 2010-07 Subsistence harvest survey data. Accurate subsistence harvest information is critical to making management and regulatory decisions, but is often not available in time for winter meetings. Therefore, YRDFA requests that ADF&G analyze post-season harvest surveys in a timely manner to deliver findings to the public for use in planning for the following season.

Appendix B – YR DFA Newsletters

(*Yukon Fisheries News* – Fall 2009, Winter 2010, Spring 2010 editions – attached)

Note: newsletters can also be found on the YR DFA website at
www.yukonsalmon.org/news/newsletters.htm

Appendix C – Inseason Management Teleconference Summaries

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Calls #1&2 – May 26, 2009 & June 2, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Nunam Iqua, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Shageluk, Kaltag, Nulato, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Rampart, Minto, Nenana, Eagle, Whitehorse, Teslin, Old Crow

Other Organization/Entities: AVCP, Interior Alaska Fish Processors

Call #1 Summary – The first teleconference of the season was held on May 26. During the call, the preseason outlook and management strategies were outlined and discussed by ADF&G and USFWS. YRDFA then gave an update on Chinook salmon bycatch. A representative from the state of Alaska discussed the North Pacific Fishery Management Council process and bycatch from the state's perspective, then answered questions.

Subsistence Reports: No salmon have been reported in the river. Sheefish and whitefish fishing is occurring in the lower river up to Marshall. St. Mary's reports an abundance of sheefish and whitefish so far. Middle river villages are collecting smokewood and preparing for the king and summer chum runs. In the Tanana River there are reports of some Grayling begin caught and an early run of whitefish. On the Canadian side of the river, Teslin is reporting freshwater fishing activity.

The Yukon is free of ice. Teslin reports that the lake ice went out and they are expecting water levels to rise. They also report an overabundance of snow this past winter. The Porcupine River is experiencing high water, as is Eagle on the US side of the river. Eagle is also seeing some drift in the water. Nenana reports low water on the Tanana, but there is high water around Rampart, Ruby and Galena. Water levels are dropping from Nulato to Marshall, and holding around St. Mary's, with some debris. In Kotlik, water levels are low.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: Subsistence fishing efforts are light due to high and fast water and there have been no confirmed salmon catches to date. Ice breakup in the lower river was on May 26, which is later than usual, so the ice going out has also been later than usual. Partial test fishing in Pilot Station began on May 30 with the right bank sonar up and running as of May 31. High water has delayed the start of the left bank. On June 1, nets for the test fishery went in the water at Big Eddy. Middle Mouth set nets should be operational by June 4 or 5.

Run and Harvest Outlook: Management decisions will be made consistent with preseason projection, moving to inseason management of the runs once salmon abundance increases. The 2009 run of Chinook salmon is expected to be below average to poor, with primary concern for the projected poor run of Canadian-origin kings. It is likely that subsistence conservation measures beyond those used in 2008 will be required in an effort to share the subsistence harvest

and meet escapement goals. A directed king commercial fishery in the mainstem is unlikely. There is the possibility of a small king harvest on the Tanana River.

An average run of summer chum is projected for 2009 that will provide for escapement needs, subsistence use and a commercial harvest. The available surplus for a directed fishery could range from 500,000 to 900,000 summer chum, but the actual harvest will most likely be constrained due to the potentially poor Chinook salmon run.

Due to flooding, ice jams and shorefast ice, the reduced subsistence schedule will be delayed so there is time to target whitefish. Most likely the schedule will begin on June 8. There will be no fishing on the first pulse of Chinook salmon. This will be implemented by pulling one to two subsistence periods as the first pulse moves upriver. These restrictions will be announced by short notice news releases on VHF, radio and YRDFA teleconferences.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: A federal Special Action goes into effect June 3, limiting the subsistence harvest of kings in federal water in Y-1, -2 and -3 to federally qualified rural subsistence users only.

Similar Special Actions will be implemented upriver as the run progresses. Qualification is based upon the user's permanent home (that would be listed on a permanent fund dividend, hunting, fishing, or driving license). If a person is not living in a Yukon River community, they are not eligible for harvest this year. People can still go to camps and help, just not fish.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Clarification was requested on the Special Action. The Action only applies in federal waters. A news release was sent to the Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 districts, which included a map of federal waters. USFWS also noted that there will be regional law enforcement for this Action. Consequences for violations may be fines or gear confiscation, but will probably be based on the specific instance. A couple of callers suggested that information be sent out to the Tribal Councils and cities to ensure everyone in the river is informed, and also to advertise in Anchorage and Fairbanks newspapers so people don't come out to the river and can't fish.

An update on customary trade was requested. USFWS explained that the Federal Subsistence Board rejected the request for a special action to disallow trade from rural users to others because it was not an emergency. The request can go through the regular FSB cycle in 2011. Customary trade this year will be like it has been, which means only fresh unprocessed fish can be sold.

A fisher asked about the possibility of reducing or closing the mouth of Andreafsky River as fish rest there on their way upriver. ADFG responded that the mouth is closed and markers will be put up soon. Fishers don't fish at the mouths of the Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers, so it is not as much of an issue there. Clarification was requested on Innoko River regulations, to which ADF&G explained there were no reductions in the schedule because they are trying to protect Canadian bound Chinook salmon, which aren't in the Innoko. A number of callers discussed the fact that people were planning on fishing outside of the regulations. It is troubling for the people who do follow the regulations to see others not doing so. ADF&G reiterated that they understand people need fish, but hope that others do follow the rules in recognition that the salmon need to be protected. ADF&G is trying to work with people so they understand the necessity, and they are working on enforcement along the river. If violations are seen, they can be reported anonymously by calling 1.800.478.3377. Finally, a question was asked that if the first pulse was closed, what would happen with the test net fishery. ADF&G will continue fishing with the test nets in order to get timing and abundance data. Any salmon caught will be given to local people.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #3 – June 9, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Nunam Iqua, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Shageluk, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, the Rapids, Rampart, Minto, Nenana, Beaver, Ft. Yukon, Venetie, Eagle, Whitehorse, Teslin, Old Crow

Other Organization/Entities: Interior Alaska Fish Processors, Tanana Chiefs Conference

Subsistence Reports: King salmon are being caught in Nunam Iqua, Emmonak, Mountain Village, and St. Mary's. Reports from St. Mary's are that the fish are silver bright and big. Summer chum salmon have been seen in Nunam Iqua and Emmonak. People are fishing for sheefish and whitefish in some locations from the mouth up to Fort Yukon. Many villages in the lower Yukon and GASH region are still cleaning up after the recent flooding, preparing fish camps and fishing gear.

Water levels are generally high, and are either holding steady or slowly dropping. In Whitehorse and Teslin, the river is rising. There is little or no debris in the water from the mouth up to Canadian headwaters. Kotlik reports that the ice in the bay is now gone.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: The first reported king salmon was caught on June 7. Subsistence fishing efforts have been light, but have started to increase as salmon begin entering the river. The lower Yukon test fishery project became fully operational on June 7. The cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) through June 8 is .50, which is below the ten year average of 1.50 for this date. Test fishing at Pilot Station began on May 30. The sonar became fully operational with right and left bank coverage on June 6. The first Chinook salmon was caught in the test nets at Pilot on June 9th and the first chums on June 8th. The Dall point assessment project has been delayed because of shore ice, but ADF&G staff should be in Hooper Bay by the end of the week.

Run and Harvest Outlook: Management decisions will be made consistent with preseason projection, moving to inseason management of the runs once salmon abundance increases. The 2009 run of Chinook salmon is expected to be below average to poor. A directed king commercial fishery in the mainstem is unlikely. There is the possibility of a small king harvest on the Tanana River. The reduced subsistence salmon fishing schedule, developed with input provided by fishers throughout the drainage, was put into effect in District 1 on June 8. It will be implemented in the remaining districts chronologically with the upriver salmon migration. The reduced subsistence fishing schedule will begin in Y-2 on June 10 and in Y-3 on June 14. There will be no fishing on the first pulse of Chinook salmon. This action will be implemented by pulling one to two subsistence periods as the first pulse moves upriver. These restrictions will be announced by short notice news releases on VHF, radio and YRDFA teleconferences.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: A federal Special Action went into effect June 3, limiting the subsistence harvest of kings in federal water in Y-1, -2 and -3 to federally qualified rural subsistence users only. Similar Special Actions will be implemented upriver as the run progresses.

The crews for the Andraefsky and Gisasa weirs arrived last week. More updates on the weirs will be forthcoming next week as these projects become operational.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Clarification on the reduced fishing schedule in Y-2 was requested. Y-2 is open 24 hours a day until June 11 at 2pm, at which point it closes until Sunday at 8pm. It will open again from 8pm Sunday to 2pm Monday and there are no gear restrictions. ADF&G is not anticipating any gear restrictions anywhere at this time, except for the coastal district, which will be limited to 6 inch mesh. A caller from the Y-4 district wanted to know when the first date to drift would be.

ADF&G responded that drifting would be allowed from June 10 to July 14, and that subsistence is currently open 7 days a week in Y-4 until the reduced schedule is implemented around June 17. Another caller asked if there will be time reductions for summer and fall chum fishing.

ADF&G does not expect there will be time restrictions for fall chum, but they are a possibility for summer chum. ADF&G will wait and see how the chum and Chinook salmon runs develop before making those decisions. Finally there was a question about licenses and enforcement. It was clarified that while permits and licenses are needed for commercial fishing, none are needed for subsistence.

Many questions were asked about ADF&G assessment projects. During the call, we learned that the Marshall test fishery will not operate this year because it is used more for the commercial king fishery. Since there will not be a directed fishery this year, ADF&G decided not to run the project and save some fish. In the lower river test fishery, a question was asked about how the CPUE is calculated, and if the low CPUE this year was a concern. The CPUE is calculated with the test fish caught, not subsistence fish. While so far the CPUE is well below the ten year average for this date, it is above the CPUEs in 2007 and 2008. ADF&G will make an assessment of the data when more fish have come in. ADF&G responded to one questioner that there is a 3 day time lag for the fish to get to Pilot, and that they are not concerned with the lack of kings seen yet, as they should be arriving in the next 24 hours. Another caller wondered if ADF&G was concerned that big female kings were being caught. Again, ADF&G said they were not concerned, partly because of the small sample size and partly because they expected to see a lot of 6 year old salmon this year, which typically have a higher proportion of females.

One caller related that in past years when kings have come in before chums it's meant a heavy run of kings, which is what he is hoping to see this year. A few lower river callers have finished their subsistence Chinook fishing. Many have not even begun fishing yet. One caller expressed his desire to be able to take some of these early kings. ADF&G responded that that is what they hope will happen with the delayed implementation of the reduced fishing schedule. There were a couple of questions about the first pulse and how it is identified. Typically ADF&G sees these early fish, then 3-4 days of high salmon counts followed by reduced counts. Historically the first pulse is around June 8 to 15. Whether or not the first pulse will be sufficient to meet Canadian escapement needs is difficult to predict. Last year the first pulse was 10,000 fish, which wouldn't be near enough. ADF&G will wait and see how this run develops and what proportion of the first pulse is Canadian. Another caller reminded everyone that river-wide it was agreed to let the first pulse go through, and that it is important to do so. There needs to be informed enforcement along the entire length of the river during the first pulse.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #4 – June 16, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Hooper Bay, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Anvik, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Wiseman, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, the Rapids, Rampart, Minto, Manley, Minto, Nenana, Circle, and Eagle.

Subsistence Reports: Fisherman on the lower river reported catching healthy bright kings with firm meat. Kings are reported to be early in Kotlik this year. A few fishermen on the lower Yukon have met their subsistence needs, but many have not started because of needed repairs to fish camps. Chums and kings are being caught in the lower river. Grayling reported 1 king caught and white fish are being caught in Marshall, Koyukuk, Tanana, and Minto. Water level in the lower Yukon is high with low debris. G.A.S.H water levels are normal. Levels in the Koyukuk river are moderate-high and dropping. Water from Galena to Rampart is high with no debris and water is also high on the Yukon flats with little debris.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: Subsistence salmon fishing effort increased over the past week as more Chinook and summer chum salmon began to enter the river. Test nets on the lower Yukon indicated on June 15 that the first pulse has arrived and is later than previous years. The strength of the pulse will be better known after it has passed Pilot Station.

The cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) through June 15 is 2.36, which is below the ten year average of 6.68 for this date. Pilot Station sonar reported approximately 5,200 king and 51,000 chums which are both below average. High waters have hampered the sonar, making it difficult to get accurate salmon numbers. Chinook tested on the LYTF through June 14 indicated that 88% of fish were age 6, which is 24% percent higher than average.

Run and Harvest Outlook: Management decisions will be made consistent with preseason projection, moving to inseason management of the runs once salmon abundance increases. The 2009 run of Yukon River Chinook salmon is expected to be below average to poor. Data from the Frasier, Stikine, and Copper Rivers, as well as Cook Inlet indicated low 2009 Chinook returns throughout the state. In response to the predicted poor return, pre-season management strategies designed to conserve the greatest number of Canada bound Chinook salmon are being implemented. There will be no fishing during the first pulse of Chinook. An 18 hour subsistence period was closed in area Y-1 on June 15, and similar closures will be implemented as the pulse moves up the Yukon.

Summer chum numbers are difficult to estimate due to the limited amount of assessment information currently available. ADF&G anticipates numbers enough for escapement, a normal subsistence harvest, and a surplus to provide a commercial harvest. However, commercial chum harvest will likely be affected by the low numbers of kings because kings are incidentally harvested in chum salmon-directed fisheries.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G

website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: A federal Special Action went into effect June 16, limiting the subsistence harvest of kings in federal water in Y-4, to federally qualified subsistence users only. Similar actions have been implemented in Y-1, -2, and -3 and will be implemented upriver as the run progresses.

Local Input & Closing Comments: ADF&G reported that subsistence fishermen along the Yukon have been following subsistence fishing guidelines and regulations, and that enforcement will follow the progress all the way up the Canadian border.

Clarification was requested on what it means that subsistence fishing is open to federally qualified users. USFWS responded that federally qualified users are rural residents that have their permanent address in a Yukon River village or Stebbins; this would exclude people that now live outside rural communities that normally migrate to rural Alaska to subsist. This rule applies only to fishing on federal waters. The concern was raised that it will be difficult to meet the needs of elders who rely on children living in urban areas to help with subsistence fishing. Stances on this topic varied, with some people arguing that there must be an exception made for elders, while others felt that was unnecessary as eligible fisherman within the village would and should take care of the elders needs.

Residents were concerned with the effect of incidental catch in the high seas pollock fishery on the subsistence salmon resource. USFWS responded by explaining the numbers which show that incidental catch is a contributor to the problem, and mentioned that there are other factors contributing to the low returns of Chinook salmon such as the changing freshwater environment and changes going on in the Bering Sea. It seems there is more of an ocean connection due to the broad poor returns of Chinook salmon throughout Alaska this year.

A number of people had questions about the current fishery regulations. One resident was curious why the length of subsistence periods were different in the upper and lower districts. ADF&G explained that the fish in the upper districts are more spread out, upper river districts are longer, and there are less drift net sites in the upper river so people there are given more time to fish than in the lower river.

Fishermen also asked for clarification on the schedule and when more information would be available about upcoming closures. ADF&G responded that they would try to make the news releases clearer and provide a timeline for when decisions would be made. ADF&G would make a decision by June 17 on whether they would close another period in Y-1. It was asked if ADF&G anticipated more restriction beyond what has already been implemented. The response was that it is still too early in the run to know. A couple people stated that they must follow the preseason management plan that they had agreed upon at the preseason meeting in Fairbanks. Fishermen were curious as to the status of the first pulse, wanting to know whether or not the fish in the river are Canadian bound kings. ADF&G said that they have not received genetic test results from the first run of king salmon. There were also some questions about where the first pulse was and how the run timing was looking. ADF&G expected the first fish to be in Anvik soon. Run timing is currently looking similar to last year, which was also a little late. The quarter point of the run will probably be around June 18. ADF&G thought the first pulse was building in Emmonak.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #5– June 23, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: USFWS – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Hooper Bay, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Pitka's Point, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, the Rapids, Rampart, Fort Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Teslin, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: In the Canadian portions of the river, there are few whitefish in the Porcupine River and the water level is low with little debris. Teslin has high water and there are whitefish. On the Alaskan side, water is dropping with little debris on the Yukon flats and whitefish are present. Kings are being caught as far up as Ruby, but most were small males. The kings have been in the Rapids for 4 days. Water on the Koyukuk is high in sediment, dropping, and there is a mix of whitefish, pike, and salmon, mostly chums. In the middle reaches of the river, the water is slightly above normal and is dropping. Some of the kings being caught in Kaltag were blushed. In the lower river, camps are still being repaired from the spring flooding. Sheefish are being caught along with the king and chums. Kotlik is catching mostly sheefish and the kings are ~35% are jacks, and a lot of the kings have holes and one was full of puss. Along the coast, in Hooper Bay ~50% of subsistence needs met, and they're seeing mostly chums now. This week has been raining throughout most of the Yukon, and subsistence fishermen are saying the weather is bad for drying.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: Subsistence salmon fishing effort increased over the past week in Districts 3 and 4a. Harvest reports ranged from fair to poor. The Dall Point Test Fishery, which is a new drift gillnet test fishery project, began operations on June 20. The Lower Yukon test fishery on June 20, using 8.5 inch gear, had a cumulative CPUE of 5.60 which is below the average of 12.01. Pilot Station Sonar recorded, through June 22, a total of 26,400 kings, which may be as high as 27,000, but is still below the 56,000 fish average. 148,000 chums were recorded which is below the expected number of 358,000 to this date. Numbers recorded at the Pilot Station Sonar are considered conservative due to high waters. A more accurate assessment is expected as water levels drop. The Anvik River sonar became operational on June 18 and the Rapids test fish wheel project came online on June 14. The first king salmon was recorded on June 21.

Run and Harvest Outlook: The 2009 king run appears to be similar or weaker than the 2008 run. Pulse strength usually increases in numbers for 3-4 days, but this year that has not happened. This unusual pattern appears to be symptomatic of a weak run. As the fish pass Pilot Station sonar, run strength will be more clearly understood. Due to limited amount of assessment information currently available it is still difficult to estimate run abundance and timing for summer chum salmon, however the run is anticipated to provide for escapement, subsistence, and commercial fishing. If run strength develops as anticipated the surplus could range from 500-900,000 chums. Commercial chum fishing will be affected by the poor king run.

A reduced schedule has been implemented in Y-1, Y-2, and Y-3 consisting of two 18 hours periods a week. Consistent with the with the preseason management plan, 2 fishing periods were closed in districts Y-1, Y-2, and Y-3 to protect the first pulse. After the two period closures, these districts will return to their reduced fishing schedule, with gear size restricted to 6 inch mesh. Subsistence fishing

periods in Y-4a are currently being as the first pulse moves through the district. Similar actions will be implemented in upriver districts and sub districts chronologically with the run of the first pulse. Subsistence fishing is open 24/7 until a reduced schedule goes into effect. **Fisherman upriver should be on stand by for short notice news on the VHF and radio regarding implements on the subsistence schedule.**

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information, or contact Emmonak ADF&G at 1-866-479-7387 (available 24 hours).

USFWS Input: Federal restrictions of qualified subsistence users applies only to areas that are in Federal waters. Neither the federal inseason manager nor the Federal Subsistence Board can take special action to allow a proxy for fishers who normally receive fishing help from non-federally qualified users. In order for such an exception to be made, a proposal must be put before the Federal Subsistence Board during their meeting in December of 2010 or January of 2011.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): DFO will not be operating the mark/recapture program this year due to flood damage at their camp. This was to be the last year of the mark/recapture program. DFO staff members are currently working at the Eagle sonar program which will be used to assess the Upper Yukon Chinook and fall chum salmon runs into Canada. DFO discussed how the timing pattern of the 2009 Chinook run may influence total season return. It has been difficult to determine what timing pattern this year's Chinook salmon run is following. Within a few days the run may be 50% complete if the run is following average (1995-2008) run timing and approximately 30% complete if the timing is similar to 2008. When various timing information are applied to recent Pilot Station counts, the trend is for declining total season run projections. There have been some Chinook salmon run failures on the Pacific coast this year (i.e. Fraser and Stikine Rivers) and DFO is concerned that the Yukon run could be much lower than the preseason projections.

Local Input & Closing Comments: Many fishermen were not prepared for the 6 inch mesh gear restrictions, and there was some confusion about why it was being implemented. ADF&G stated that it was a part of the preseason management plan that could be used if the Chinook salmon run developed as poor as it has so far. The necessity of these restrictions will be reevaluated in the future. Gear restrictions allow fishers to still fish for summer chums, but as most people in the upper districts do not own 6 inch gear they requested more time restrictions instead. While the regulations may differ, the overall goal is to apply fair regulations in both the upper and lower river districts. People were concerned and confused about enforcement regarding ADF&G patrols and the subsistence fishing schedule. ID cards are not necessary, but ADF&G stated that a main concern is for everyone to wear or have a PFD and troopers are citing people for not doing so. To keep current with the changing subsistence schedules, ADF&G faxes updates to all the villages and makes announcements on the VHF or radio, but people can also call the ADF&G office. There were a number of questions about the daily numbers from the ADF&G test projects and comparisons of this year's run timing and strength to last year's. ADF&G clarified that the overall numbers are lower so far in 2009, even though there was less subsistence harvest this year. On the topic of bycatch in the pollock fishery, it was suggested that those kings be given to subsistence users on the river. USFWS replied that the fish taken as bycatch are young, small and of low quality. A participant representing the Teslin Tlingit Council spoke about their voluntary community closure for the Chinook salmon season and wondered if anyone else on the river planned to do the same. A fisherman from the lower Yukon responded that even though there is no formal system to restrict subsistence catch, people on the Alaska side of the drainage have restrained or limited their subsistence harvest voluntarily.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #6 June 30, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Huslia, Allakaket, Wiseman, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, The Rapids, Rampart, Nenana, Steven's Village, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: Many families on the Lower Yukon have met their subsistence king needs, although some are still well below where they want to be. Others have refrained from harvesting their usual amount of kings to protect the run. Many people in District 2 have reported doing well on subsistence, with many chums being reported. The kings are good and bright, but some fishermen noticed some blushed fish. Middle river communities have harvested few fish to date and all are anticipating the next subsistence opener. First kings were caught in Huslia, Nenana and Stevens Village. Upper river communities are getting ready to fish. White fish are being caught in Old Crow and the water is lower than last year. Water levels in the upper Yukon are dropping with small amount of debris while rising in the middle river and along the Koyukuk.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: Catch rates at the LYTF are still well below average for this date. There was a large increase in king and summer chum passage at Pilot Station on June 26-28, but total passage estimates are below average. The summer chum run appears to be slightly later than average, with the midpoint of the run expected to be on June 29. Age-6 kings continue to predominate in all large mesh harvests. 87% of fish harvested in the Lower Yukon Test Fisheries were age 6, which is 22% above average. 9% were age 5, and 56% of the fish were female, which is 5% above average.

The 2009 Yukon River king run appears to be similar to the 2008 run. A reduced subsistence schedule and some gear restrictions have been implemented, and subsistence fishing periods are being closed to protect early portions of the king run.

The current projection for the summer chum run is 1.2 – 1.4 million fish to pass Pilot Station. Commercial fishing periods were held in Y-1 and Y-2 on June 29, concurrent with the subsistence period to target summer chum salmon. Although the majority of kings have migrated upstream of these districts, there is still a conservation concern for the run. The Board of Fisheries met and approved an emergency petition that amends the Yukon River Summer Chum Salmon Management Plan to state that any incidental harvest of kings in the commercial fishery cannot be sold. Live kings may be released, or they may be retained for subsistence purposes.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information, or contact Emmonak ADF&G at 1-866-479-7387 (available 24 hours).

USFWS Input: 330 chums and 0 kings have passed East Andrafski Weir. Gisasa River Weir counted 260 summer chums and 0 kings. Based on the current projected king run size of 120,000 to 130,000 fish, conservation measures for kings are still needed. A large factor in providing for the summer chum salmon commercial opportunity was to ensure that kings were not sold commercially but were provided for subsistence needs. The Department's coordination with processors and catcher/sellers to not have king salmon sold during the first Y-1 and Y-2 openings was necessary and appreciated.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): Based on genetic information, the Canadian component at Pilot Station as of June 29 is estimated to be approximately 37,500 fish. Canadian commercial, sport, and domestic fisheries will likely be closed for the season. Yukon First Nations have been advised that there is unlikely to be enough fish for an unrestricted First Nation fishery; 1/2-3/4 fishery is more appropriate given the preseason outlook.

Local Input & Closing Comments: Fishermen were worried about not being able to meet their subsistence needs this summer. ADF&G asked for input on management strategies for the Subdistrict Y-4A, which was unable to harvest much of the early fish before the first pulse closures. The second pulse of fish should be around Russian Mission and Holy Cross around June 29-July 1.

There are still concerns as to how accurate the assessment numbers are, given discrepancies between the sonar and the test fisheries. ADF&G acknowledged that there may be something going on and are looking into the test fisheries, but also cautioned that there is an aggregate of assessment data looked at when making management decisions, not just one project. While some fishers expressed frustration that they are not allowed to fish and that the assessment numbers may be wrong, ADF&G responded that all indicators are pointing to another poor run with a need for restrictions. There was a lot of confusion, and some disagreement, by Y-1 and Y-2 subsistence fishermen because the commercial periods were scheduled to overlap with the subsistence periods. ADF&G responded that they were trying to reduce the overall fishing time and mortality of kings, which is why they scheduled the periods together. There was confusion expressed over the new regulation that during the commercial chum salmon openers, kings were not allowed to be sold. Some fisherman from those districts reported an excess of bycatch and were concerned that they might be dumped overboard. ADF&G responded that during the preseason management meetings, most fishers expressed the belief that if subsistence harvests were to be restricted it would not be fair to allow incidentally caught kings to be sold. Two local fish processors offered to accept donations of king bycatch which could be processed and distributed to people that needed them.

People were curious what would happen to subsistence fishermen who fished against the regulations. ADF&G responded that it was an unfortunate event given that most fishermen have been complying with restrictions and some villages are voluntarily reducing their harvest. Enforcement is investigating the incident of illegal fishing and enforcement efforts on the river are ongoing.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #7 July 7, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Hooper Bay, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Wiseman, Galena, Tanana, The Rapids, Rampart, Circle, Eagle.

Subsistence Reports: Chums are still running and are getting smaller in size on the coastal villages, and the subsistence fishermen in Hooper Bay have met the majority of their needs. Most communities on the lower Yukon have met their subsistence needs for kings except for a couple communities, and many people are planning on harvesting fall chums. Commercial summer chum fishermen in the lower river released many kings during the last commercial opening. Subsistence harvests have been low to moderate in the G.A.S.H region where many fishermen expressed gratefulness for the extra 12 hours added to the subsistence opener. People on the Koyukuk just started harvesting kings starting on July 4 and most people have not met their needs for kings yet. In Galena a couple of families are $\frac{3}{4}$ done harvesting kings, but most have not even reached the $\frac{1}{4}$ mark, and some families are not going to harvest kings and will wait for the fall chums. Kings in the Yukon Flats region were reported as healthy. The first kings were caught in Circle on the 2nd of July. Water level in the Canadian portion of the Yukon is dropping, there is no salmon yet and no debris in the water.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The king run is tapering off in the lower river. Pilot Station passage estimates for Chinook for July 5 is approximately 108,000 and the current projection is for 115,000-125,000 fish to pass Pilot Station Sonar. There have been fishing closures in subdistricts 4-b-c-d and closures have been announced for District 5, consistent with the preseason management plan. The subsistence schedule is now back to a reduced schedule for Subdistricts 4-a and Districts 1, 2 and 3.

Pilot Station Sonar has recorded approximately 1,026,000 summer chums and current projection for the summer chum run is 1.2 – 1.4 million. Commercial summer chum fisheries began on June 29. Although the majority of kings have migrated upstream of these districts, there is still a conservation concern for the run. Live kings may be released, or they may be retained for subsistence purposes.

Age-6 kings predominate in all large mesh harvests. 86% of fish harvested in the Lower Yukon Test Fisheries were age 6, 9% were age 5, and 54% of the fish were female. The chum salmon age composition from the LYTF was 47% age-4 fish and 50% age-5. Females were 54%. *Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects* – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information, or contact Emmonak ADF&G at 1-866-479-7387 (available 24 hours).

USFWS Input: 1,193 summer chums and 4 kings have passed the East Andreafski Weir as of July 5, which is below average for both species. Gisasa River Weir counted 4,471 summer chums and 21 kings as of July 5 which is also below average for that date.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): Based on genetic information, the Canadian component of king salmon that have passed Pilot Station as of July 5 is estimated to be approximately 51,000 fish. The escapement goal for Canadian-bound kings is 45,000. Based on these numbers, Canada will be in the Yellow Management Zone. Within this zone, the management response will likely involve the closure of the commercial, domestic and recreational fisheries and potential restrictions to First Nations fisheries. Yukon First Nations have been advised that there is unlikely to be enough fish for an unrestricted First Nation fishery; a 1/2-3/4 fishery is more appropriate given the preseason outlook.

The Eagle sonar program became operational on July 5 and will be used to assess the Upper Yukon king run into Canada. There were 193 kings counted during the first two days. The Klondike River sonar program is now operating but there has been no fish counted yet. This is a stock with early timing.

Local Input & Closing Comments: Fishermen were concerned about the Pilot Station sonar estimates because changes were made to some of the initial king salmon estimates. ADF&G explained that they had to adjust the estimate due to the commercial fishing openers which affect how the sonar and test fishing operates. Another question was about the possible range for the king count numbers at the Pilot Station sonar, which ADF&G has characterized as conservative. ADF&G answered that the number could be 16,000 more or 16,000 less fish than what is actually reported. This range is taken into consideration when ADF&G makes management decisions.

Subsistence fishermen in District 4 were grateful for the 12-hour extension on the subsistence opener. People in District 3 wanted to know if management could make adjustments to the fishing schedule to allow their district more harvest opportunity.

ADF&G requested input on relaxing the subsistence schedule, starting in the lower river. There were mixed opinions on this issue. Those who supported relaxing the schedule pointed out that most of the kings have passed through the lower river already, it would increase fishing efficiency, and some portions of the lower river still have not met their needs. Those against relaxing the restrictions argued that all stocks need to be protected, there are still many Canadian-origin fish in the river, people in the middle and upper river have not met their needs and relaxing the restrictions will take from those people, and restrictions are helping to increase size and numbers of kings. Further, a DFO representative reminded people that escapement goals must be met, it has been 3 years since the Canadian domestic fisheries has been open, and last year less than 3,000 kings were taken in Canada.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #8 July 14, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, St. Mary's, Marshal, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Nulato, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Rampart, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Whitehorse, Teslin, and Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: Subsistence harvests for kings on the lower Yukon are slowing down because the number of kings is declining in that region. Quality is poor and most families have met their king needs and are waiting for fall chum since the summer chum run slowed down. Most subsistence fishermen of the GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross) region have not met 50% their subsistence king needs, kings are of mixed quality, and they are waiting for fall chum to make up for the poor king harvests. Water on the Koyukuk River is high in silt, the summer chum run is strong, fish quality is good, king needs were not met but harvests were higher than last year, and subsistence fishermen are at 25% of their chum harvest. The second pulse of kings has just passed the Rapids and is observed to be at a faster pace than the first pulse. Fishermen on the middle Yukon to the Yukon Flats have reached roughly 50% of their harvest needs and some of the fish they caught were blushed, red, or scarred. Fish in Eagle were reported to be smaller males with good quality. Whitehorse and Teslin have not seen any fish yet but are waiting to fish.

Management Updates: *ADF & G Assessment and Management Strategies:* The Pilot Station sonar count through July 13 is 120,690 king salmon which is below the average of 138,570 for that date; this year's projection is for 125,000 kings. 1,253,805 summer chums have passed Pilot Station as of July 13 and the number is near the expected number for this date and the current projection for the summer chum run is 1.2 – 1.4 million fish. 600 kings and 54 summer chums passed the Chena River Counting Tower which are both below average of 2,156 kings and 110 chums for July 12. Rapids Test Wheel counted 2,244 kings which is above the July 12 average of 1,525. Eagle Sonar counted approximately 4,900 kings as of July 13 and the number is above the projected average of 2,521 fish for that date. 20,397 summer chum have passed the Henshaw Creek weir which is above the average of 10,492 fish.

The 2009 Yukon River king run appears to be similar to the 2008 run. A reduced subsistence schedule and some gear restrictions have been implemented, and subsistence fishing periods are being closed to protect early portions of the king run. The passage levels for summer chums are enough to meet escapement goals, subsistence needs and to allow for a directed summer chum commercial fisheries. Six commercial summer chum openers in Y-1 and Y-2 were scheduled through July 14, and the department scheduled the periods when the king numbers were low. One-36 hour and three-24 hour commercial fishing periods will be open in Subdistrict Y-4a. All commercial set gill net gear is restricted to 6 inch or smaller. In Districts Y-1 and Y-2 133,000 summer chums and 2,500 kings were caught in the summer chum commercial fisheries. Age 6 kings predominated the large mesh Lower Yukon Test Fisheries. 86% of fish harvested were age 6, which is 20 percentage points above average. 9% were age 5, and 60% were female, which is 7 percentage points above average (sample size of 981). The LYTF using 5.5 inch gear

recorded a sample of 960 summer chums which were 48% age 4 and 49% age 5, and 48% of the chums were female. Age 4 chums are 4 percentage points above average.

The lower river is transitioning to fall season management this week. Management estimated a fall chum run of 650,000 which is enough for subsistence harvests and for commercial harvests of 100,000 fish. Subsistence fishing will begin returning to the pre-2001 schedule in the lower river. The commercial fall chum management strategy will spread the harvest throughout the run, holding back 50% until after the average midpoint when Coho salmon will add to the mix. Commercial fishermen are now able to sell their kings during the fall chum openers and gear is restricted to 6 inch or smaller.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information, or contact Emmonak ADF&G at 1-866-479-7387 (available 24 hours).

USFWS Input: 4,325 summer chum and 312 kings have passed East Fork Andreafski Weir as of July 12 which is below the average of 2,770 kings and 53,400 summer chums for that date. Gisasa River Weir counted 13,669 summer chums and 439 kings. Based on the current projected king run size of 125,000, conservation measures for kings are still needed through the remainder of the king run in the upper portion of the river.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): Based on preliminary genetic analyses, about 54,000 of the kings which have passed Pilot Station are believed to be Canadian-origin. As of July 13, 4,938 kings have passed the Eagle sonar, which is above the 2005-08 average of 2,521 fish. The 2009 spawning escapement goal for the Upper Yukon River is >45,000 Chinook salmon. The numbers of fish expected to reach Canada fall into the Yellow Management Zone which involves the closure of the commercial and domestic fisheries, and non-retention of Chinook salmon in the recreational fishery. Yukon First Nations have been advised that it is expected there will likely not be enough fish for an unrestricted First Nation fishery this year; a half fishery to three quarter fishery is more appropriate given the preseason outlook and inseason information to date. This will be updated as more information is available from the Eagle sonar program. At this point in time the Eagle sonar count is higher than was expected.

Local Input & Closing Comments: A person asked if the test fisheries in Marshall could be used as a check on the Pilot Station Sonar. Management responded that they did not use the Marshall test fisheries this year because there was not a directed commercial fishery, and stated that they will consider setting it up next year if they have funding for it. A subsistence fisherman had concerns of windows being different in different districts and that it was unfair because some districts met their subsistence needs while other did not. Management responded that they did their best to accommodate each district and reminded them about the pre-season management goals related to escapement. Another caller pointed out that subsistence fishers will likely target more fall chum than normal because of the lower than normal king harvests. This caller asked managers whether they had considered this when planning for commercial fall chum harvests. Management replied that they had taken this into consideration. A fisherman of District Y-3 asked management about their district quota for commercial king fishing. Management responded that the quota is still available, but there is no market for the kings in district Y-3 because there are no fish buyers in that district.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #9 – July 21, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Hooper Bay, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Koyukuk, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Rampart, Fort Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Dawson, Teslin, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Fishermen on the upper portion of the river in Canada have not harvested many kings, although 200 kings were harvested in Dawson. Teslin had a change in policy and decided to fish limited openers this summer. Residents on the Porcupine River started catching kings last week and are having good fishing. Water levels on the Yukon Flats are low and the fish are strong and healthy. Many fishermen of the upper portion of the Yukon Flats are satisfied with this year's fishing season so far, but some of the fishermen of the lower portion have not done as well and believe that most of the fish have passed by them. Most subsistence fishermen from Rampart on down the Yukon have reported to be done king fishing. Most are done because they are satisfied with what they have, but a few have not finished because there were not enough fish. Most fishermen of the coast and Lower Yukon have completed their king and summer chum salmon harvest and are waiting for the fall run of chum and silvers.

Management Updates: *ADF&G Assessment:* Pilot Station Sonar counted 122,275 kings on July 19, which is below the average for this date. Total passage projection is for a return of 125,000 kings. The first pulse of kings has reached Eagle sonar, and 28,400 fish have passed as of July 20. Run timing at Eagle sonar appears to be earlier than expected, but the counts to date are encouraging. As of July 19, 1,283,206 summer chums had passed the sonar which is below the average of 1,606,455 fish. These numbers are considered to be conservative. The Lower Yukon Test Fisheries ended on July 15 with a CPUE of 11.51 which is below the average of 29.79. Summer chum drift test fisheries ended on July 15 and concluded a cumulative summer chum CPUE of 4,877.21.

Beginning on July 16, management has switched from the summer season into the fall season. Test fisheries operations for the fall season started in Mt. Village on July 17 and on July 16 in Emmonak. As of July 21, 5,300 fall chum have entered the mouth of the Yukon. The lower Yukon Cooperative Test Fisheries CPUE as of July 19 was 13.43. Mt. Village Drift Test Fisheries CPUE as of July 19 was 48.17. Pilot Station sonar began estimating the fish that pass the sonar as fall chum as of July 19, and approximately 2,362 fish have passed.

Low passage numbers are expected during the transition from the summer chum run to the fall chum run. Past seasons have demonstrated that there is a good relationship between the summer and fall chum runs within the same year. With the summer run nearly complete, this relationship was used to project a fall chum run of 650,000 fish. Summer chum will continue to be monitored as they arrive at their spawning grounds.

Fall season harvests during the commercial fisheries in Districts Y-1 and Y-2 have totaled 7,621 fall chum, 55 Coho, and 132 kings. Summer season harvests for these districts were 156,000 summer chum and 2,600 kings caught incidentally and not sold. A commercial fisheries period was opened in subdistrict 4-A for summer chum roe and the buyer has now ceased operations.

Run and Harvest Outlook: The fall season will be managed initially as though the fall chum run size will be near 650,000 fish. Inseason management is anticipated to start near the historical mid-point of the run of August 8 at the Pilot Station sonar. Fall season subsistence fishing will be open 24 hour a day 7 days a week for Districts Y-1, Y-2, and Y-3, except for 12 hours before and after a commercial opener. Subsistence fishermen further up the river will continue on the current schedule until the fall chums reach those sections of the river. Fall chum numbers allow for a 50,000 commercial harvest from the first half of the run, and more assessments can be made as information becomes available and when Coho becomes a more significant part of the harvest.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: Management commented that due to the inconsistencies with the LY test fisheries, Pilot Station Sonar, and assessment project information they are supportive of the additional aerial surveys ADF&G is planning this year. Post-season review will try to understand the reasons why various estimates or counts were higher or lower than the overall assessment of the return for both Chinook and summer chum salmon.

The E. Fork Andreafsky River Weir has counted 950 kings and cumulative count of 6,933 summer chums. These numbers are below the average of 3,670 kings and 53,394 summer chums. The Gisasa River Weir counted 1,470 kings and a cumulative count of 21,570 summer chums as of July 19 which is below the average of 1,859 kings and 70,074 summer chums for that date.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans: DFO discussed how the timing pattern of the 2009 king run may influence total season return. The Eagle sonar program will be used to assess the Upper Yukon Chinook run into Canada. At this point in time, the Eagle sonar count is higher than expected, but they are still in the Yellow Management Zone. If the daily counts at the Eagle sonar program hold up, the Canadian-origin run into the Upper Yukon River drainage might exceed 54,000 which would move their management to the Green Management Zone. In the Green Management Zone, First Nation Fisheries will be unrestricted and there will be opportunities for the commercial, domestic and sport fisheries. Management will be approaching this cautiously as more information becomes available from the Eagle sonar program.

Local Input & Closing Comments: There were questions about management's switch to fall chum and how management distinguishes between summer and fall chum when making their counts at the Pilot Station sonar. Management stated that through past genetic testing and conversations with fishers, July 19 seems to be a consistent date where the transition takes place. The number of fish in the river during this time is low. The fall chum that pass the sonar before the switch date are pretty well balanced by the summer chum that pass after the switch. Many residents on the Yukon were concerned with the accuracy of the Pilot Station sonar and the competence of the Lower Yukon test nets. The opinion was voiced that the Marshall Drift project should be reinstated as it acted as a good check on Pilot Station. Management replied that the high water and other environmental conditions did cause the sonar to underestimate fish passage for the first three weeks of June and made it difficult to make assessments from the test net fisheries. That is why the assessment numbers are considered to be conservative. There were also concerns about potential contamination of fish because of flooding this year, as well as natural predation on the salmon and its affect on the run. Some discussion ensued on these points.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #10 – July 28, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik, Nulato, Huslia, Alakaket, Galena, Ruby, The Rapids, Rampart, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Whitehorse, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Subsistence fishing efforts on the lower Yukon have lessened. Summer chum are mostly done, and fall chum are slow to enter the river. There were plenty of whitefish in Marshall. In the G.A.S.H region, only 25-50% of chum and king needs were met, water levels are low, and summer chum and kings were low in quantity and poor in quality. Fishermen in the lower part of the middle Yukon did very poor during the last two openings and the fish that were caught were of poor quality. Many people are waiting for the fall chum. Water levels on the Koyukuk are low and there are a lot of summer chums. It's thought that the majority of kings went by when the water was high and muddy, so many people have not met their subsistence king needs. Middle Yukon fishermen are done harvesting kings; quality and quantity are both declining, the temperature is too hot to hang fish, and water levels are low. Some are harvesting chums for dog food because of their poor quality. There are few fish in the lower Yukon Flats area and water levels are going down. The Upper Yukon Flats have just come off their closed period and are beginning to fish again. Most people are between 25 and 50% done. Fishing is good on the Upper Yukon in Canada. Fishermen on the Porcupine River are happy that the restrictions were lifted and they are about 50% done with their catch so far.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The king salmon run is basically over in the lower Yukon and the first pulse of kings is tapering off at the Eagle sonar. The Eagle sonar preliminary passage estimate for kings as of July 26 is 50,953. The interim management escapement goal of 45,000 kings to Canadian spawning grounds has been met, and it is expected that the harvest sharing agreement for Canadian aboriginal fisheries will also be met this season. The high numbers in Eagle sonar and other fisheries projects has indicated that the management strategies to protect the early portions of the run have been effective. King salmon numbers reaching their spawning grounds throughout the drainage looks healthy in most rivers except for the Andreafsky and Gissasa Rivers, which are below their average to date.

The summer chum run allowed for a full subsistence harvest and a directed commercial fishery. Most spawning rivers had healthy returns, except for the E. Fork Andreafsky, Gissa and Anvik Rivers, which are all below the expected escapements for this date. The Chena and Salcha Rivers, as well as Henshaw Creek have exceeded their expected counts. Exploratory aerial surveys are currently being used to assess primary locations of summer chum salmon escapement in the lower river.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: The cumulative passage of the E. Fork Andreafsky River Weir through July 26 is 1,806 kings and 8,303 summer chums, both below average. The cumulative passage of fish at the Gisasa River Weir as of July 26 is 1,900 kings and 25,206 summer chums, also below average.

DFO Input: The Klondike River sonar program has been in operation since July 6, and the count as of July 26 is 3,863 kings. The Big Salmon Sonar program was operational July 18th and the count to July 26th is 795 fish; the average count to this date is 276. At the Blind Creek weir, 2 fish have been counted to July 27th; the average count to this date is 108. It has been difficult to determine the timing pattern that this year's Chinook salmon run is following, Most subsistence fishing occurred after 2 fishing periods were closed to protect early Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. While daily counts at the Eagle sonar program are still strong, they are expected to begin dropping off. A total of 54,000 fish into Canada is the number required to place Canada in the Green Management Zone, which is expected to occur. Yukon First Nations were advised last Wednesday that they may proceed with a normal fishery. While currently closed, there may be opportunities for the commercial, domestic and sport fisheries.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: No pulses of fall chum have entered the river yet. A persistent offshore wind may be delaying their migration. As of July 26 approximately 16,000 fall chums have passed Pilot Station sonar, which is well below the average. However, it is not uncommon to experience a lull between summer and fall chum runs, and the fall chum run is characterized by erratic fluctuation of fish entering the river. The projected number of fall salmon is highly variable until the midpoint of the run (usually around August 8). Past seasons show a relationship between fall and summer chum in the same year, a fall chum run size of about 650,000 salmon is projected based on the summer chum run. This should be sufficient to provide for escapement and subsistence needs, with a small surplus available for commercial harvests. The current strategy is to spread out the harvest during the first half of the fall run. One commercial opening per week is expected in Districts 1 and 2 with a portion of the harvest saved for upriver allocations. A small number of early coho salmon were observed in the fall chum commercial fishery, but the run is not anticipated to start building until around August 8.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

While all callers were happy to hear that the border passage goals would likely be met this year, some fishermen expressed concerns that Canadian fishermen may be allowed to harvest kings commercially while many Alaskan subsistence fishermen did not meet their needs. Other callers also expressed their concern that the goals were met at great hardship to Alaskan fishermen. DFO responded that they will be following the harvest sharing provisions of the Yukon Salmon Agreement which allows a Canadian harvest of 20-26% of the Chinook salmon Total Allowable Catch (TAC). The TAC is based on an estimate of the total Canadian-origin run size minus the escapement goal which is 45,000 for the 2009 season. Canada will manage its catch to be consistent with the Treaty provisions and any extra fish will be passed to the spawning grounds. In response to another caller's comments DFO noted that there was no Canadian commercial fishery in 2007 and 2008, and prior to those years the Canadian commercial fishery was often limited because of low run strength. Another caller also reminded everyone of the importance

of getting fish to the spawning grounds and stated –we are not giving fish to Canada, we are giving fish to also brought up that the goal this year was to get enough fish into Canada to meet escapement needs and treaty obligations. A number of people voiced their feelings of being singled out, whether by region or sector of the fishery. Everyone was encouraged to remember a river-wide perspective, and to use the teleconferences as a place to communicate. While everyone has made concessions during these low return years, it's important that everyone continues to work together. A reoccurring concern brought up was the accuracy of the Pilot Station sonar. Suggestions were made of other locations to place the sonar that would perhaps give a better count. ADF&G said that they were currently investigating other potential sites near Pitka's Point and St. Mary's. Also, ADF&G will also look at bringing the Marshall test fishery back, which many callers felt was a very useful project in the past.

A couple of callers were interested in the low numbers of fall chum currently returning to the river. ADF&G responded that while the fish are definitely late, perhaps because the weather is holding fish offshore, they do not believe fish have been missed yet. They'll be watching the run and looking for the first pulse, but if the run doesn't develop, ADF&G will be looking at what to do.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #11 – August 4, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – OSM and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, The Rapids, Rampart, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Teslin, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Subsistence salmon fishing efforts on the lower Yukon are low. There is some whitefish fishing, but mostly people are waiting for the fall chums and coho to pick up. A few sockeye have been seen in Kotlik. Many communities reported that people are berry picking. Further upriver - from the G.A.S.H. region to Rampart, including the Koyukuk River - there is not much is happening by way of subsistence fishing. There's some whitefish to be caught and a few summer chums, getting to be in poor condition. In the Tanana River there is commercial fishing for chums, but no kings are present. There's low effort in the Yukon Flats area, but some kings are being caught. In Eagle, the fish are reported to be bigger this year. Reports from Teslin and Old Crow are that people are catching kings, and some summer chum are trickling in. In general, water levels are low throughout the drainage. The exceptions are in the Tanana River where the water is high, and in Eagle and Circle, where the water is rising. There are smoky conditions throughout much of the interior portions of the river.

Management Updates:

ADF & G Assessment and Management Strategies: The king salmon run is winding down on the Alaska side of the river. At Eagle, just over 65,000 kings have passed the sonar, indicating that the subsistence restrictions put in place to protect the first pulse of kings was effective. The interim management escapement goal of 45,000 kings to Canadian spawning grounds has been met and the harvest sharing agreement for Canadian aboriginal fisheries will also be met. Most spawning rivers had healthy returns of summer chum, except for the E. Fork Andreafsky, Gissa and Anvik Rivers, which are all below the expected escapements for this date. The Chena and Salcha Rivers, as well as Henshaw Creek, have exceeded their expected counts. Aerial surveys are being used to assess primary locations of summer chum salmon escapement in the lower river to see if there is an explanation for the lower summer chum returns in this area.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

DFO Input: The Klondike River sonar program has counted 4,443 fish since July 6, indicating there is a significant run of kings in the river. The Big Salmon sonar count as of August 2 is 4,866 fish which is the highest count to this date since 2005. On July 31, 808 fish went past, which is the highest daily count recorded for all years the program has been in operation. Blind Creek weir has counted 288 fish to date, which is about average. The Whitehorse Fishway is also about average with 10 fish so far.

The second pulse of kings has not materialized at Eagle sonar at the expected level; the timing for the last part of the run was likely altered by the harvest pattern in Alaska. Daily king counts are declining. Canadian fisheries are in the Green Management Zone. Yukon First Nations were advised they may proceed with a normal fishery, and commercial and domestic fisheries were open for 1.5 days last week. The total catch from both these fisheries was 217 Chinook. The

recreational fishery has a possession limit of one Chinook daily and two in possession. The harvest sharing provisions of the Yukon Salmon Agreement allows Canada to harvest 20%-26% of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) when the Canadian-origin TAC is less than 110,000 Chinook salmon. Based on stock assessment and preliminary Alaskan catch information, the projected Canadian guideline harvest range for the total run is from 9,000 to 11,700 Chinook salmon. Canada will manage its catch to be consistent with Treaty provisions; any extra fish will be passed through to the spawning grounds.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: A small pulse of fall chum entered the river this past week and passed Pilot Station sonar on Sunday and Monday. Preliminary estimate is that it was a relatively small pulse, containing 30-40,000 fall chum with very few coho salmon. Cumulative passage estimate at the sonar is 53,000 fish, which is well below average. Low commercial catches the past two weeks support the assessment's project accuracy. It is not uncommon to experience a lull between the end of the summer chum and the beginning of the fall chum run. Based on the 2009 summer chum run, total fall chum run size is projected to be 650,000 fish. This should be sufficient to provide for escapement and subsistence needs, with a small surplus available for commercial harvests. Around August 8, management will switch to inseason assessment – basing management actions on what is actually being seen in the river. Assessment is currently based on late run timing.

The preliminary fall season commercial harvest total for Districts Y-1 and Y-2 through August 2 is approximately 25,000 fall chum, 1700 coho and 165 Chinook salmon. If the fall chum salmon run does not significantly improve this week, it will be prudent to suspend additional commercial periods until an adequate amount of salmon are available.

Local Input & Closing Comments: This week's teleconference had only a brief discussion session. A few of the comments were about Canada. One caller from the village of Koyukuk requested a letter from Canadian First Nations recognizing the Koyukuk Tribal Council for being the first to put forth the plan to close fishing on the first pulse of Chinook. Another caller wanted to review the numbers of Chinook caught in the Canadian commercial and domestic fisheries. DFO responded that about 200 Chinook had been harvested by 8 commercial fishermen in the first opening and 17 Chinook by one domestic fisherman and stated that it was unlikely the Canadian catch would reach the TAC allowed under the treaty.

The rest of the discussion centered on ADF&G projects. There was a question whether ADF&G's aerial surveys had located any summer chum. ADF&G responded that the surveys are on-going, but they should have more information during next week's teleconference. Another caller wanted to know where the sockeyes that enter the Yukon are heading and whether their populations are increasing. USFWS shared that each year a handful of to a couple hundred sockeye are counted through the weirs at Andreafsky and Gisasa Rivers. In general, sockeye salmon are relatively rare within the Yukon River drainage. There was also discussion on the Pilot Station sonar, with multiple callers reiterating the importance of improved accuracy. Several suggestions were given for potential relocation sites, including around Pitka's Point, around Russian Mission and Dogfish Village or around Paimiut. ADF&G responded that they appreciate the suggestions for new sites and are evaluating a site near Pitka's Point, as well as looking at other ways to improve counting fish during high water events.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #12 – August 11, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – OSM and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, the Rapids, Rampart, Fairbanks, Circle, Eagle, Whitehorse, Teslin, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Water levels are low or dropping along most of the river. Few people on the Alaskan side of the border are subsistence fishing. Some whitefish, sheefish, and a few chums are being caught, but subsistence efforts in many communities have turned to berry picking, and moose hunting on the lower river, while people wait for the fall chum. In the Tanana River, commercial fishing for summer chum is ending. On the Canadian side of the border, Chinook salmon are being caught and fishing is reported as much better than last year. The Chinook salmon are of good quality.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are essentially over in Alaska. The current commercial summer chum period in District Y-6 will be its last. Approximately 68,600 Chinook salmon have passed the Eagle sonar, indicating that the subsistence restrictions put in place to protect Canadian bound Chinook salmon was effective. The interim management escapement goal of 45,000 Chinook to the Canadian spawning grounds and the harvest sharing agreement for Canadian aboriginal fisheries has been met.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: Chandalar sonar is up and operational. So far just over a thousand chum salmon have been counted.

DFO Input: The Klondike River sonar program has counted 4,615 fish to date; daily counts have declined and the run appears to be over. The Big Salmon sonar count to August 9 is 8,126 fish which is the highest count to this date. The average is 3,445. Blind Creek weir has counted 651 fish as of August 10, which is above the average of 560. The Whitehorse Rapids Fishway count as of August 11 is 90 fish, below the average of 286. Fish appear to be building in numbers but moving slower than expected through the fishway. An aerial survey of the Miner River, believed to be the main Chinook salmon spawning tributary within the Porcupine drainage, was conducted last week. This is the first year of aerial counts and 319 Chinook salmon were counted.

Daily Chinook salmon counts at the Eagle sonar are declining. The number of fish entering Canada is higher than expected, attributed to the conservation measures implemented on the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River. Canadian fisheries are in the Green Management Zone. Yukon First Nations are proceeding with a normal fishery; their recorded catch so far is 1,074 Chinook salmon with fishing still taking place and some communities having yet to report. The commercial and domestic fisheries were open for 2 days last week. The total catch for the week was 160 Chinook and 2 chum salmon with 8 fishers reporting. The sport fishery is open with limits of one Chinook salmon daily and two in possession.

The harvest sharing provisions of the Yukon Salmon Agreement allows Canada to harvest 20%-

26% of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) when the Canadian-origin TAC is less than 110,000 Chinook salmon. The projected Canadian guideline harvest range for the total run is from 9,000 to 11,700 Chinook salmon. Canada will manage its catch to be consistent with Treaty provisions, though it is expected the total catch will be well under the TAC; any extra fish will be passed through to the spawning grounds.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: The first small pulse of fall chum should be around the Kaltag area. Over the weekend, fall chum had started entering the river in increasing numbers as the winds shifted from southeasterly to northerly. More recent indicators from the test fisheries show they may be dropping off again. Many of the fish are entering through the Middle and North mouths, which is more typical later in the run. The cumulative passage estimate at the sonar as of August 9 is 64,400 fish, which is well below the average of 352,000 fish. The sizes of pulses of fall chum make the run difficult to predict due to erratic entry timing. At this time, the magnitude of the run appears weak. It's important to note that the run has been late the past two seasons and recent increases in catches indicate this year's may also be late. Age composition of test fish samples indicate more fall chum are in the water as compared to summer chum. Because August 8 is the average midpoint of the run, management is shifting to inseason assessment. Commercial fishing is being delayed in the lower river districts until abundance increases, as the run appears to be exceptionally late and the abundance is extremely low. The preliminary fall season commercial harvest total for Districts Y-1 and Y-2 through August 9 is approximately 23,000 fall chum, 5,096 coho and 236 Chinook salmon. No changes are anticipated in the subsistence fishing schedule this week.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Questions began with one lower river caller wanting to know when commercial fishing would be open again in Y-1. ADF&G responded that it wouldn't be until enough fall chum have come in to support an opening. In response to another caller's question, ADF&G went on to explain that in order for there to be a commercial fall chum fishery, there has to be a projected surplus of fall chum above 600,000. Another caller wanted an update on the number of Chinook salmon past Pilot Station, which ADF&G gave as 122,474 fish. A Y-4 caller requested that the subsistence period in Y-4 be open 7 days per week as no one in the district got enough Chinook salmon. ADF&G agreed to consider changing from the current 5 days per week to 7 days.

An update on last week's request by the village of Koyukuk for a letter from Canadian First Nations recognizing the Koyukuk Tribal Council as the first to put forth the plan to close fishing on the first pulse of Chinook salmon was requested. DFO responded that they had forwarded the teleconference summary to the First Nations, as few were on last week's call. The North Yukon Renewable Resource Council also shared that they and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government were writing letters to the Koyukuk Tribal Council. A Canadian caller wanted to learn more about a resolution that was discussed at the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council summit, which had recently occurred in Whitehorse. The resolution was about requesting the US government to shut down the pollock fishery. No one from YRITWC was on the call to give the details, but one of the attendees shared that about half of the necessary signatories for the resolution to pass were present at the summit, so the resolution is on hold until the other half can be contacted. YRDFCA will try to make sure someone from YRITWC is on next week's call to give more information on this resolution. A representative from the Teslin Tlingit Council also shared their resolution, passed in July, to voluntarily reduce their community's catch of Chinook salmon this year.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #13 – August 18, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – OSM and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, Kotlik, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, the Rapids, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Subsistence fishing effort is low in most communities. Fall chum and coho are being seen in the lower river; Marshall residents reported decent catches over the week. Holy Cross fishermen also were successful with fall chum fishing. In Galena, fishermen reported an increase in fall chum numbers over the weekend, and fishermen from the village of Tanana believe they are beginning to see the front end of the first pulse. Further upriver few people are fishing while they await the fall chum arrival. The only report from Canada was from Old Crow, which reported there was currently no fishing. Water levels continue to be exceptionally low throughout most of the drainage, except for Old Crow which is reporting high water levels.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The first small pulse of fall chum should be near Ruby and the second larger pulse should be around Anvik. As of August 16, 173,000 fall chum salmon had passed Pilot Station sonar. This is well below the average of 473,000 fish and is the second lowest on record since 1995. Low catches of fall chum salmon have made species apportionment at the sonar difficult. The project has attempted fishing downriver, as well as contracting a local fisherman to drift a 50 fathom net through the area, but neither was effective at increasing catches. The run is being assessed as weak and well below expectations. The projected run size is currently between 300,000 and 400,000 salmon.

The coho salmon run is off to a good start, with higher than average passage estimates at the sonar. As of August 16, 62,000 coho salmon had passed the sonar, compared to an average of 38,000. ADF&G and cooperating fishermen have been conducting additional test fishing to supplement assessment project information, because minimal subsistence fishing is occurring in the lower river with which to compare catches. These additional catches agree with the other assessment projects in that there is an unusually high abundance of coho salmon relative to fall chum salmon.

Management shifted to inseason assessment on August 8, the average midpoint of the run. Preseason projections indicated a small surplus of fish available for commercial harvest, therefore limited commercial fishing was allowed early in the season. Commercial fishing has since been halted because the fall chum salmon run appears late with very low abundance. In accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, which specifies a minimum run size of 300,000 fall chum as necessary to meet escapement goals, subsistence fishing time is being reduced in the lower river. Reduced fishing time should still provide opportunity to harvest the abundant coho salmon. Similar management actions will be implemented upriver as the salmon move upstream. Two 24-hour periods per week in Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 will be allowed.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

DFO Input: The Klondike River sonar program counted 4,725 fish as of August 15, the last day of operation. The Big Salmon sonar count to August 16 is 9,019 fish, which is the highest count to this date. Blind Creek weir count is above average at 680 fish as of August 10. The Whitehorse Rapids Fishway count as of August 18 is 413 fish, which is below average. Fish are holding below the fishway and moving slower than expected upriver.

With the Eagle sonar count at 69,501 as of August 16, Canadian fisheries are in the Green Management Zone. Yukon First Nations recorded catch so far is 1,599 Chinook salmon but fishing is still taking place and some communities have not reported yet. Due to limited effort, the total commercial catch for the season was 364 Chinook and 2 chum salmon with 8 fishermen reporting. The harvest sharing provisions of the Yukon Salmon Agreement allows Canada to harvest 20%-26% of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) when the Canadian-origin TAC is less than 110,000 Chinook salmon. Canada will manage its catch to be consistent with Treaty provisions, though it is expected the total catch will be well under the TAC; any extra fish will be passed through to the spawning grounds.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

There was some confusion and questions about why commercial fishing wasn't being allowed in the lower river, and when it was expected to open again. ADF&G responded that the management plan sets guidelines for opening commercial fishing when the projected fall chum salmon run size is greater than 600,000. The current projections are for a run between 300,000 to 400,000 fish. Unless the fall chum salmon abundance increases significantly, ADF&G is not anticipating additional commercial periods.

With the unexpected low returns of fall chum, the subject of chum salmon bycatch in the Area M sockeye fisheries was raised as a potential contributing factor. ADF&G is aware of the fishery and has been watching it. At the time of the call, ADF&G knew that this year's total chum catch was well above the years when there was a chum cap. However, they did not know how the catch broke out between the June fishery and the post-June fishery; each fishery may pertain differently to western Alaska summer and fall chum stocks. There is a large genetic study underway that is collecting samples all along western Alaska coastal fisheries and the Area M fisheries to help answer some of the questions regarding intercept fisheries. Other callers expressed a desire to discuss the subject more at a later date.

One fisher reported catching fall chum mixed in with the summer chum catch, and wanted to know if those fish would have been counted as summer chum. ADF&G responded that they were and that post-season, through genetic sampling, they would try to determine species composition more accurately. Details of the operations at the Pilot Station sonar were requested. ADF&G shared that the sonar runs 9 hours a day with 6 hours of test fishing. During the previous pulses of fall chum, the sonar was running 24 hours per day. The sonar has been counting high numbers of coho salmon. Another caller wanted to know where all the coho salmon travel to. While the Tanana River is the single biggest destination, they also go to the Andreafsky and are spread throughout many smaller streams which contribute small concentrations to the overall run.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #14 – August 25, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – OSM and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, Kotlik, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Holy Cross, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Tanana, the Rapids, Rampart, Minto, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Dawson, Teslin, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Subsistence fishing effort is low throughout the river. Families that are fishing are catching a few fall chum and coho. The village of Tanana reports a good run of fall chum going through currently. Whitefish were reported in Holy Cross, and other communities are preparing to go fishing for whitefish and sheefish. In Canada, Chinook fishing is winding down with little fall chum fishing yet. Water levels continue to be exceptionally low throughout most of the drainage. Rampart, Tanana and Fort Yukon all reported water levels rising.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: Three pulses of fall chum salmon have entered the river to date; the first small pulse of fall chum should be near Beaver and Fort Yukon, the second pulse is expected to be near Ruby and the third pulse should be around Holy Cross. Cumulative fall chum salmon passage is estimated to be at a record low of just under 209,000 fish as of August 24. The average for this date is 589,000 fall chum. Based on the sonar passage estimate and historical average run timing, the current fall chum salmon run is assessed as weak with a projected total size of 300,000 fish. The age composition from the 6-inch drift net test fishery through August 18 shows a slightly higher than average amount of age-4 fish. However, based on the record high parent year escapement in 2005, this year's age-4 component was expected to be much higher if production was good.

The coho salmon run is looking strong. A cumulative passage estimate at Pilot Station sonar of 152,000 as of August 24 is well above average. The run should be at approximately 65% passage, based on average run timing. Results from additional test fishing to supplement assessment project information agree that coho salmon abundance is high relative to fall chum. Based on the current low abundance of fall chum salmon, and in accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, subsistence fishing time is being reduced along the Yukon River. This action is being taken in an effort to achieve the drainage wide escapement goal of 300,000 salmon while still allowing opportunities to harvest the abundant coho salmon. Restrictions in Districts Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 are already in effect. Portions of District Y-4 will go onto a reduced schedule this week, and similar management actions will be implemented as the salmon move upstream. Although late pulses of fall chum salmon have occurred in past years, it is unlikely there will be additional commercial fishing periods in the lower river to target coho salmon because of the low fall chum abundance.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

DFO Input: The Eagle sonar season estimate is 69,653 Chinook salmon. The overall total run size of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is below average but the number of fish entering Canada is higher than expected. Chinook salmon assessment projects in Canada are wrapping

up, with the following final counts: 4,725 fish at the Klondike River sonar program; 9,621 fish at the Big Salmon sonar; and 716 fish at the Blind Creek weir. 43% of sampled fish at this project were female. The Whitehorse Rapids Fishway count as of August 24 is below average with 708 fish. Of these fish, 324 are hatchery-origin and 384 are wild. Of the hatchery fish, 8% were female while 19% of the wild-origin fish were female. Fish are still holding below the fishway. The recorded First Nations catch for the Upper Yukon River is 2,832 Chinook salmon and for the Porcupine drainage it is 185 Chinook and 35 chum. One community has yet to report and fishing may still be occurring. The commercial and domestic fisheries were open for a total of 3.5 days. There was limited commercial effort; the total catch was approximately 364 Chinook salmon and 2 chum salmon with 8 fishers reporting. It is expected that the total Canadian catch will be well under the Total Allowable Catch provided for in the Yukon Salmon Agreement; extra fish will be passed to the spawning grounds.

Eagle sonar estimates are being used for assessment of the Upper Yukon River fall chum return and the Fishing Branch River weir should be in later this week. Currently the Upper Yukon and Porcupine First Nations fisheries are open for fall chum, but as the run appears to be weak fishery restrictions may be announced as more information becomes available.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

On the topic of reduced subsistence periods, there was a request from a caller in Koyukuk that the windows schedule end by mid-September to give fishers enough time before freeze-up to harvest whitefish. Questions about potential commercial fishing periods led ADF&G to clarify the requirements specified in the Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan. Under these guidelines, the fall chum run projection needs to be for a run of at least 550,000 fall chum in order to hold a coho commercial period. The fall chum run is currently expected to fall short of that amount; therefore it is unlikely there will be any more commercial periods scheduled.

A number of questions were asked about ADF&G's assessment projects, including operation of the sonar at Pilot Station and the accuracy of counts there given its distance from the mouth of the Yukon. ADF&G explained how the sonar operates and how the data gathered over the course of a day is used to achieve total daily counts of salmon. Compared to the length of the river, the distance from the sonar to the mouth of the river is not that great, and ADF&G is aware of the fish that spawn below the sonar which do not get counted there. Another caller wanted to know how long Eagle Sonar would be operational. DFO responded that usually runs until about October 6th. A caller from Kotlik shared the results from test fishing conducted over the weekend at the North Mouth, which was sponsored by Kwikpak.

ADF&G announced that post-season subsistence salmon harvest surveys will be starting in early September, with surveyors traveling to each community over the next two months. People were reminded to send in their subsistence calendars. It was also decided that another teleconference call will be held next week and will be the last of the season.

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference Call #15 – September 1, 2009

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – OSM and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, Kotlik, Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Holy Cross, Grayling, Wiseman, Ruby, Rampart, Dawson, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Little fishing activity is happening. In the lower and middle river, people are turning to moose hunting and continuing to berry pick. Where people are fishing, they are reporting catches of cohos, some fall chum and whitefish. Reports from Ruby are that people are still catching some silvers, chum and whitefish and have put away about half the number of fish they want. Fish are currently going by the village of Rampart. Water levels are variable, but generally are low and rising in most places that reported this week.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The fall chum run is currently assessed as weak, with a projected total size of 300,000 to 325,000 fish. As of August 31, the cumulative fall chum salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar was estimated at a record low of 212,000 fish, well below the average of 657,000 fish. The sonar may be a conservative estimate, based on annual reconstruction of previous runs. Additionally, unusually shallow water on the left bank sonar site during August and early September appeared to be causing salmon to migrate further offshore which has been compensated for by extending the range of the sonar so that fish detection is not a problem. However, species apportionment, due to very low test fish catches, may be missassigning the counts between species. Other test fisheries and subsistence reports indicate a higher percentage of fall chum salmon than what is shown from test fishing at the left bank sonar site. Fishermen in the lower river have also observed salmon holding in sloughs in the delta, which is not typical and may be due to very low water conditions or acclimating to warmer than normal water temperatures before proceeding up river.

The coho salmon run is above average. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate of 188,000 through August 31 is well above the average of 137,000 coho salmon for this date. Additional test fishing on Flat Island in the southern mouth is being done to supplement assessment project information. These additional catches agree with the assessment projects that the coho salmon abundance is high relative to fall chum salmon.

The Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan specifies a minimum drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000 fall chum. Therefore, based on the current abundance of fall chum salmon, subsistence time is being reduced along the river in an effort to meet escapement goals while still allowing opportunity to harvest the abundant coho salmon where available.

Subsistence fishing time in Districts 1, 2, and 3 has been reduced to a schedule of two 24-hour periods per week. Beginning Thursday, September 3 these districts will return to their 7 days a week schedule. As of September 2, District 4 and Subdistricts 5A, 5B and 5C are on a reduced schedule of two 32-hour periods per week. Subdistrict 5D and District 6 can expect a reduced schedule later this week. The Innoko and Koyukuk River drainages will not be restricted. Personal use salmon fishing in the Tanana River is closed as of noon on September 2 until

further notice. Although late pulses have occurred in past years, no additional commercial periods to target coho salmon are anticipated due to the low fall chum salmon abundance. *Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects* – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: The Chandalar sonar camp last day of counting was August 23 with a cumulative count of 6,183 chum salmon. The camp closed early this season due to crew and safety concerns.

DFO Input: Eagle sonar estimates are being used for assessment of the Upper Yukon River fall chum return. The Fishing Branch River weir is in place and should be operational in a few days. A catch per unit effort program has been initiated near Old Crow. Currently it looks unlikely that there will be a commercial or domestic fall chum fishery. There are no plans, however, to restrict First Nations fisheries at this time. DFO will be waiting for more information to come from the Eagle sonar for future management decisions.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

As many assessment projects are winding down, participants wanted to know who will monitor and manage the fish after the lower river projects end. Callers also wanted to make sure that ADF&G kept everyone informed through village faxes and other means, as this was the last teleconference of the season. ADF&G will continue monitoring and managing the run until it is over. Announcements will be released on the internet and faxed to villages. By the time the assessment projects end, the bulk of the fish should be in the river and ADF&G plans to relax subsistence fishing to 7 days a week again. Also, ADF&G is looking into having fishermen test fish and keeping Mountain Village test fishery running later than planned. A coho salmon commercial fishery is unlikely because of the weak fall chum run and the likelihood of chum bycatch. With the poor projected fall chum run, the priority is for escapement then subsistence.

A question was asked of what happened to the fish and why did they not come back in decent numbers. Was it possible that fish were missed in the counts at the sonar, as some subsistence catches were good? ADF&G shared that there is no clear answer as to where the fish went. There was an exceptionally strong parent year for these fish, so overescapement could have been a factor, as could water conditions, other harvests and the condition of the river water over the winter. As for fish being missed as they went up river, ADF&G responded that in general fishing has been slow, except on the pulses when there were a lot of fish. The upriver assessment projects are also in agreement with Pilot Station where the front half of the run was very weak. There was another question about the Area M fishery and incidental take of fall chum. Genetic samples are being taken from fisheries throughout western Alaska, an analysis of which will give a much better idea of the extent of incidental take in the Area M fishery. However, this data will not be available until 2012. There was also a question of where fall chum go in the river and if they migrate up the Andreafsky River. ADF&G said that not many fall chum head up the Andreafsky or spawn in the lower river; most go to upper portions of the Koyukuk and Tanana Rivers, other upriver tributaries, and into Canada.

A number of callers shared their thoughts on the fall chum run. One lower river caller said that water had been so low but now finally is some high water. He thinks fish are still coming in and will continue to do so with high water. Another caller commented that the run seems quite late this year and wondered if global warming could be a possible factor. ADF&G agreed that it's quite late, and late runs tend to be weak. While recent years have been late, and some have picked up at the very end, it would be an exceptionally late year if that were to happen this year.

Appendix D – Summer Season Preparedness Teleconference and Meeting Summaries

Yukon River Summer Season Preparedness Teleconference Call #1 – March 10, 2010

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: The Yukon River Panel

Communities/Tribes involved in the call: Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Mountain Village, Marshall, Holy Cross, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Wiseman, Galena, Ruby, Rampart, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Eagle

2009 Season Review – ADF&G

Most Chinook salmon escapement goals were met in 2009, despite the poor run, and enough fish were passed into Canada to meet US obligations under the Yukon River Salmon Agreement. Prior to the 2009 fishing season, the Yukon River Chinook salmon run was projected to be below average to poor, with a primary concern for a poor run of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. It was anticipated that conservation efforts would be needed. Based on input from fishers and other stakeholders, ADF&G developed a preseason plan to share the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals. Management actions would include reducing fishing schedules by half, beginning the subsistence fishing schedule 7 days after ice out at Alakanuk, and pulling two subsistence fishing periods during the first pulse of Chinook salmon. The Coastal District would only be restricted to a 6-inch mesh size maximum. The Koyukuk, Innoko, and Tanana River drainages, which do not harvest Canadian-bound Chinook salmon, would be managed independently and placed on historic subsistence fishing schedules. The federal manager would implement a Special Action(s) to limit the harvest of Chinook salmon in federal public waters to federally qualified rural subsistence users only.

2010 Preliminary Pre-season Outlook

ADF&G Input: The 2010 Chinook salmon run is expected to be below average to average. Directed commercial fishing for Chinook salmon on the mainstem is unlikely, although there may be limited opportunity on the Tanana River. The projected run size should provide for escapement and subsistence needs. State and federal managers are not anticipating a need preseason to reduce subsistence fishing time; however if inseason indicators suggest a smaller run than anticipated then reductions may be necessary. Conservation measures may include reduction in fishing time as well as voluntary reductions such as shifting harvest to other species, spreading harvest out over the run, reductions in extended sharing, and keeping fish harvested within the village or local area.

The summer chum run is expected to be near average with a potential run size of 1.25 to 1.5 million fish. This would provide for subsistence needs and escapement goals to be met, as well as for a commercial harvest of 250,000 to 500,000 summer chum. The fall chum run is expected to be average with a run size of 690,000 fish projected preseason. This run size would provide for escapement goals and subsistence needs, as well as a commercial fishery. The coho run is anticipated to be average with limited opportunity for a commercial fishery.

ADF&G is looking into improving the effectiveness of their inseason assessment projects. Down-looking sonars, longer drift nets, and alternative fishing locations will all be tested in 2010, and alternative sites for the Pilot Station sonar will be explored. For the Lower Yukon test fishery, staff will be working with local fishermen to identify better test fishing sites. A new test fishery is also planned for Mountain Village area.

USFWS Input: Based on the preseason projections, USFWS does not anticipate the need for federal Special Actions to limit the harvest of Chinook salmon in federal waters only to federally qualified rural subsistence users. USFWS highlighted the Federal Subsistence Board process. Currently there are two deferred regulatory proposals being deliberated on: a 7.5 inch mesh size restriction proposal and a 35 mesh depth restriction proposal. The deadline for submitting proposals for review next January is March 24, 2010.

Public comment

The public comment portion of the call focused on a few main points concerning accurate run assessment, projected management actions and external factors affecting the salmon runs. Callers encouraged ADF&G to be ready with assessment projects at the mouth of the river for the first fish so that none are missed. Of the assessment projects in the lower river, the majority of questions were asked about Pilot Station sonar. In particular, callers wanted to express their belief that the sonar has not accurately reflected the run in the past, and to encourage ADF&G to move the sonar and have it operate 24 hours a day. While there was support among the callers for moving the sonar to the mouths of the river, ADF&G explained that it would be cost-prohibitive to have multiple sonars operating and that there were a limited number of suitable locations. While nothing will be moved this year, ADF&G is evaluating potential sites. Pilot Station should be operational by June 1st, which should be in time for the first pulse of Chinook salmon.

Other assessment projects that garnered comment were the Lower Yukon Test Fishery and the Mountain Village test fishery. Participants were happy to hear that ADF&G was seeking local input to improve both these operations. More details about the Mountain Village test fishery were requested. A specific date for the start of the test fishery was not available, but it is expected to be in early June. ADF&G was looking at assessing the fishing sites used in the past with the input of local fishers to determine whether they will work for this year's test fishery or if there are better sites that could be used.

A further question about the assessment projects regarded how ADF&G accounts for the mixed-stock nature of fish coming into the river. ADF&G explained the genetic analyses that are performed on fish caught at the assessment project sites. This gives managers a better idea of where the fish going through the projects are heading.

In response to ADF&G's planned strategy of going into the season with no additional restrictions on subsistence fishing, a few callers questioned whether this was the wisest course of action. While the ten-day closure on the first pulse last year was too long for many fishers, it was suggested there be a five-day closure this year. The good escapements into Canada in 2009 and up the Koyukuk River were given as reasons in support of this restriction. Additionally, some callers expressed concern that although the outlook is for a better run than last year, the Chinook salmon stock health is still of concern. Allowing normal subsistence fishing schedules on the run before there is an accurate inseason assessment of the run size could be worse for upriver communities and Canada than a closure. ADF&G responded that at this point, the preseason outlook is that there will be enough fish to support a normal subsistence fishery and meet escapement obligations to Canada, so restrictions don't seem to be necessary, but they will take into consideration the input received on this call. Throughout the season, they will monitor the run and adjust management actions as needed. A couple of callers requested clarification about the windows schedule. It is anticipated that the season will begin with regular windows as specified in regulations.

Another potential restriction discussed was the use of family-based quotas. ADF&G explained that the inseason managers didn't have authority to implement a quota; the Board of Fisheries would have to take that action. Similarly, any restrictions on fish wheels or sport fishing to complement the reduction in net mesh size would have to be brought before the Board of Fisheries, but nothing has been so far.

The final topic covered during the teleconference was external factors that could affect the salmon runs, specifically bycatch. YRDFA policy director gave an update on Chinook salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery. To date, just over 5,000 Chinook salmon have been taken as bycatch. A caller felt it would be useful to know more information about those fish, such as their age, which is currently not known. Another caller expressed concern that the low bycatch numbers speak to overall low abundance of Chinook salmon. In the regulatory process, there is one final comment period through for the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council action on Chinook salmon bycatch. The Council is just starting to take up chum salmon bycatch, most of which is caught during the fall pollock fishing season.

Yukon River Preseason Planning and Communications Teleconference Call #2 – April 21, 2010

2010 Management Plan and Outlooks

ADF&G began the teleconference with a brief review of recent Chinook salmon run productivity, stating that there have been unpredictable runs with good parent escapement years producing poor runs. This was followed by a short recap of last summer's management actions. Due to high water, flooding, and high debris load, ADF&G's assessment of the run was hampered. Some of the restrictions enacted were probably not necessary.

Chinook salmon outlook and management: Drainage-wide projections are for a below-average to average run, which would meet escapement and subsistence needs. No commercial Chinook salmon fishery is expected. The Yukon River Panel has set an Interim Management Escapement Goal range of 42,500 – 55,000 Chinook salmon, which is what must reach Canadian spawning grounds to fulfill treaty obligations. In addition, Alaska must pass approximately 7,000 more Chinook salmon into Canada to fulfill harvest sharing agreements. Currently, ADF&G does not believe there is need for additional restrictions beyond the regular windowed subsistence schedule. If the run develops more poorly than expected, additional restrictions may become necessary; removing a fishing period is the preferred option over reducing time. Fishing will be open 7 days a week until June 7 in Y-1, at which point the regulatory subsistence schedule will be implemented. The regulatory schedule will be implemented in other districts chronologically with the upriver migration.

Summer chum salmon outlook: The outlook for the 2010 summer chum run is for a near average run. The run should meet escapement and subsistence needs with a surplus of 250,000 to 500,000 summer chum available for commercial harvest, dependent on the strength and timing of the Chinook salmon run. It is currently anticipated that the sale of any Chinook salmon incidentally caught in the summer chum commercial fishery will be allowed.

Fall chum and coho salmon outlook: The fall chum run outlook is for a below average to average run. It is expected to meet escapement and subsistence needs, with some commercial fishing possible. The coho run is anticipated to be near average in size, meeting escapement and subsistence needs. A coho commercial fishery is possible, depending on the strength of the overlapping fall chum salmon run.

Visit <http://csfish.adfg.state.ak.us/newsrelease/select.php?dist=YUS> to view the management plan and outlooks.

Questions and Comments

The beginning of the discussion began with general questions about the management plan and ensuring equal opportunity for everyone along the river. One caller requested that ADF&G try to visit the villages before the season and talk about the plan, as they have done in the past. Another caller commented that last year some of the fishers in Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 had the opportunity to fish on the –front runners,¹ but other fishers did not get that opportunity. ADF&G responded that they should have a slightly better handle on how fast the fish move upriver and should be able to apply regulations more evenly. If the run is poorer than expected and major

actions do occur, ADF&G may have to split some of the larger districts up to ensure more fairness. A caller requested that any restrictions be enforced fairly along the entire length of the river. As no major restrictions are planned, mainly ADF&G will be focusing in the beginning on when the subsistence schedule is put into effect. A final question on the plan as presented concerned the sale of incidentally caught Chinook salmon during the summer chum commercial fishery. ADF&G explained that allowing it would depend on run abundance and timing, as the summer chum run is usually near the tail end of the Chinook salmon run.

There were some negative comments about the windowed fishing schedule in that open periods do not always coincide with when there are fish in the river. ADF&G replied they are aware of that, but that over the period of time when there are fish in the river, windows should allow for the harvest of enough fish. Another comment about the window schedule was that it is difficult to fish during open periods while also working. It would be helpful to have some of the openings on the weekend. ADF&G answered that it would be considered after the season, but that challenges can present themselves when schedules are different between districts.

Federal regulations were another discussion topic. While last year's Special Action, which restricted non-rural federally qualified subsistence users from fishing in federal waters, seemed like a good idea at the time, it became clear that it caused undue hardship on many elderly people. Callers did not want to see that happen again this year. USFWS recognized the hardship and felt that such a restriction would only be used as a last resort in the face of a poor run this year. Additionally, there was some concern that the federal restrictions only applied to federal waters, which resulted in inconsistencies in regulations along the river.

ADF&G's test fishing and assessment projects were also discussed. It was asked if ADF&G was looking at changing their test fishing locations at the mouth of the river as where they currently fish is not a good spot anymore. There were also questions about funding for an additional sonar. ADF&G responded that they did understand the importance of accurate test fishing sites and that they try to take as much information as they can into account when assessing the run, more than just the test fishing or the sonar. They are looking for better spots for the test fishery and will be asking local fishers to go out with them and help place nets. Some funding has been allocated for new projects: there will be a test fishery at Mountain Village and a side-scanning, downward looking sonar is going to be tried to monitor the Pilot Station sonar. In addition, ADF&G is going to try longer nets at Pilot Station. A new location for the sonar is also being investigated. With the first pulse closed to fishing last year, one caller heard reports of many males caught in the tail end of the pulse and wanted to know if there was any data about the male to female ratio of that pulse. ADF&G responded that they did not have data because they normally sample fishermen's subsistence catches to get gender ratios, and without fishing they had no samples. Other callers had questions and comments about bycatch and marine issues affecting salmon. ADF&G felt that the high bycatch in 2007 would not too greatly affect the salmon runs this year as mostly the seven year olds were impacted and this year's run should have a higher than average number of five year olds. Increased monitoring on the pollock boats was called for. Other callers brought up the importance of marine ecosystem based programs and studies and becoming involved in marine habitat protection for the long term health of the salmon and other fish species.

Summer Season Planning Meeting: April 8, 2010

Clarion Suites, Anchorage AK

Brief Summary:

- A meeting was held in Anchorage to bring together people from throughout the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage with fisheries managers to discuss management plans and other issues relating to the 2010 salmon fisheries.
- All told, more than 70 people participated in the meeting. This included representatives from 26 tribes and 30 communities from all over the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage, along with representatives from the Yukon River Panel, 2 RAC's, 2 CDQ groups, 2 processors, and YRDFA. Also, staff from a number of agencies were there to help out and learn.
- Attendees heard the outlook for the 2010 salmon runs, and they gave input into how to manage the run, both as projected and if worse than projected.
- State and federal managers used this input in developing the preseason plan.

of Attendees and who they officially represented:

RAC	2
YRDFA	4
CDQ	2
Inter-tribal	3
Tribes	26
Panel	1
Agency	19
Processor	2
Other	10
(# YR communities represented	30)

Meeting Content:

Presentation of preliminary preseason plan – there wasn't much debate or discussion specific to the plan laid out by managers. This plan basically entails starting the windows on June 7 in Y-1 and implementing chronologically with upriver migration. It also notes that commercial fishing on kings is unlikely. People did share their broader views regarding the importance of salmon.

Alternatives for how to handle a run worse than expected – participants were presented with 3 options, which they discussed in groups of 4-7 people and then noted whether or not they supported. The options were (1) cancel fishing during a pulse, (2) reduce subsistence windowed fishing time by 50% or greater, and (3) gear restrictions. Most people supported option 1, half of the people supported option 2, and option 3 was not very popular. The managers factored this input into their contingency plans.

Alternatives for continuing preseason planning and communications in future years – participants were presented with 6 options, which they discussed in their groups and then noted which they supported. The options were:

- Option 1: Continue a process similar to this year's preseason process. Specifically, hold some combination of teleconferences and in-person meetings to spread knowledge of salmon run

outlooks and to provide input for the preseason management plan from interested individuals and groups.

- Option 2: Reduce the process to one riverwide teleconference to answer questions and get recommendations from all interested individuals and groups.
- Option 3: Create a small working group made up of 15-20 representatives from tribal groups, the Yukon River Panel, RACs, CDQ groups, processors, and YRDFA to work with managers to develop the preseason management plan each spring.
- Option 4: Create a tribal working group made up of representatives from tribes and tribal groups to work with state and federal fisheries managers to develop the preseason management plan each spring.
- Option 5: Each spring, at regularly scheduled tribal and city council meetings, prepare to discuss fisheries management plans for that upcoming summer and send input to state and federal fisheries managers.
- Option 6: Discontinue the program.

Nearly everyone supported Option 1. Roughly half of the group supported Option 3, often noting that they would like to see it in combination with Option 1. Option 6 received no support.

Education Sessions were provided on 3 topics. Participants had the option of attending 2 out of three. Topics were Salmon Test Fisheries & Sonars, Use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in Management, and Customary Trade. Customary Trade was the most popular.

Summer Season Preparedness Meeting DRAFT Minutes

2010 YUKON RIVER PRESEASON PLANNING & COMMUNICATIONS MEETING

Clarion Suites
Anchorage, Alaska

April 8, 2010

Ms. Jill Klein welcomed everyone to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to enable fishers from the Yukon River to work on management on planning the 2010 summer season. She went over the agenda. Ms. Klein introduced Ms. Cady Lister from Information Insights who will assist with the meeting.

Ms. Lister stated she will be serving as the keeper of the process and the timekeeper. She gave the administrative announcements. She also went over the process to be followed.

INTRODUCTIONS OF MEETING ATTENDEES:

Jill Klein, YRDFA
Cady Lister, Information Insights
Steve Hayes, ADF&G
Jason Hale, YRDFA
Andrew Coyne, Marshall
Alfred Demientief, Holy Cross
Edna Crawford, Boreal
Randy Crawford, Boreal
Adlai Alexander, Gwitchyan Zhee
John Jonas, Canyon Village
Michael A. Jimmy, Emmonak
James Adams, Nunam Iqua
Richard Talus, Coastal Villages Region Fund
Aloysius Unok, YRDFA
Victor Lord, Nenana
Brandon Aguchak, Scammon Bay
Robert H. Walker, WIRAC
Jeff Adams, USFWS
Elena Beatus, Hughes Village Council
Benedict Jones, Koyukuk
Anna Pratt, Yupiit of Andrafski
Ben Stevens, CATG
Toshihide Hamichzik, ADF&G
David Bunyan, Native Village of Hooper Bay

Ted Suckling, Nenana
Philip Titus, Minto
Andrew Boy Scout, Chevak
Gerald Maschmann, USFWS
Virgil Umphenour, EIRAC
Jim Neely, USFWS
Bill Derendoff, Huslia
Katie Howard, ADF&G
Dayna Norris, ADF&G
Amanda Kelly, ADF&G
John Linderman, ADF&G
Abraham Kelly, Pilot Station
Hannah Maillelle, Grayling
James Kelly, CATG
Dan Bergstrom, ADF&G
Angela Demientieff, Holy Cross
Stanley Ned, Allakaket
Martin B. Moore, Emmonak
Rod Campbell, USFWS/OSM
Mick Leach, ADF&G
Heather Leba, ADF&G
Caroline Brown, ADF&G
Martha A. Wright, Ruby
Martha John, Circle

Michael Stickman, Nulato Tribe
Sandra Drake, Pitka's Point NC
Fred Huntington, Galena
Philip Loring, UAF
Larry DuBois, AD&G
Bill Alstrom, YR DFA
Georgina Solomon, GZGT, Ft. Yukon
James Roberts, Tanana Tribal Council
William Bean, Mountain Village
Leslie Hunter, Bethel
Catherine Moncrieff, YR DFA
Margaret Henry, Circle
Richard Cannon, USFWS/OSM
Seth Wilson, ADF&G
Ephrim Thompson, Mountain Village

Charles Paukin, St. Mary's
James Van Laffer, ADF&G
John Burr, ADF&G
Cathleen Jimmy, CVRF
Dan Evenson, ADF&G
Wilma Pitka, Beaver
Stanislaus Shypoul
Craig Fleener, ADF&G
Andrew Firman, Ft. Yukon
Fred Bue, USFWS
Polly Wheeler, USFWS/OSM
Richard Burnham, Kaltag
Jimmy Hanleine, ADF&G
Lauren Sill, YRDA

Mr. Jason Hale welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated that a month ago they held a teleconference to give all user groups a chance to give their opinions with 18 communities calling in. The three main areas they talked about were: 1. people had questions about test fisheries, assessment projects, sonars, etc.; 2. external factors affecting the fishery, including Bering Sea bycatch; 3. people talked about what restrictions they thought might be appropriate in the coming season. Some people also talked about some form of family or village-based quota system. Gear restrictions were also discussed in the teleconference.

OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was given by Benedict Jones.

PLANNING FOR SUMMER 2010 MANAGEMENT

REVIEW OF 2009 SEASON:

Mr. Steve Hayes gave a summary of the 2009 fishing season. There were preseason teleconferences and a preseason meeting similar to this one last year to get input from the users on how to best manage the fishery. They came up with five key actions to manage the fishery in 2009: 1. There was no directed commercial fishing for Chinook. 2. Delayed implementation of the regulatory subsistence schedule. Subsistence fishermen were allowed to fish on the earlier kings that come in before the first pulse of kings as well fish on sheefish and whitefish. 3. The subsistence fishing schedule would be reduced by one-half the amount of time. 4. There would be no fishing on the first pulse the majority of which were Canada-bound Chinook. 5. There was a Federal action to limit harvest to Federally-qualified rural subsistence users only. The bag limit for sportsfishing was also reduced. Fish & Game received emergency authority to prohibit the sale of the incidental kings harvested during directed chum fishing. He also touched on earlier years. In 2009 they met the escapement goal for Chinook into Canada for the first time in several years. Escapement goals were also met into the Chena and Salcha Rivers.

In response to Mr. Fred Huntington, Mr. Hayes stated that approximately 124,000 Chinook were counted at the Pilot Station Sonar. Due to the high water conditions early in 2009 assessment projects were affected. In hindsight, the run in 2009 was better than projected. He stated that one of the things they will be discussing with respect to the 2010 plan is how to get the fish to the subsistence fishermen while meeting escapement goals.

Mr. Benedict Jones pointed out that due to climate change the water temperature in 2009 was three to four degrees warmer, which caused the Chinook to run further out from shore and deeper in districts 4 and 5. Mr. Hayes agreed and added that there are a lot of factors affecting the run, but this is something that needs to be looked at more.

Mr. Abraham Kelly stated at Pilot Station in 2009 the problem was not high water as their water level was average. The problem was the fish were running in deeper water and the water temperature was different. The Pilot Station sonar needs to be relocated. Mr. Hayes stated that this year they plan to use a different type of sonar. They also plan to use longer nets in the test fishery. If necessary, they will move the test fishery downstream. They will also be looking at different sonar sites.

In response to Mr. Fred Huntington, Mr. Hayes stated that the total subsistence Chinook catch for the Yukon River was 33,000. On average subsistence fishermen take about 50,000 Chinook. Ms. Klein stated that the Bering Sea Chinook bycatch in 2009 was 12,415. So far in 2010, through March 27, the bycatch is 7,043 Chinook.

Mr. Martin Moore from Emmonak stated he represents up to 700 commercial fishermen as well as over 8,000 people who depend on the subsistence fishery. They have made a lot of sacrifices, including losing their only economic base, commercial fishing. When the first pulse comes in, no one knows how many fish will be coming into the river. He did not recommend stating on paper that they will only catch 2,000 fish on the first pulse. The people told Fish and Game last year that the sonar was not working and that there were a lot of fish swimming by. He urged managers to use their best judgment and to listen to the people and use the local knowledge. Mr. Hayes stated that they use their assessments projects and then also incorporate subsistence fishery information to see how the run is going. He added that they are in a conservation mode now due to the variable runs, and they try to make the best decision they can to meet the escapement and provide for subsistence. He added that the Marshall test fishery is being moved to Mountain Village beginning this year which will give them an earlier indicator on how the Pilot Station projects are working.

Mr. Victor Lord stated that the bycatch is the only indicator right now with respect to the Chinook. He was concerned that the low bycatch could mean there are not that many Chinook. He was also concerned whether the Bering Sea fishery was reporting the actual number they were catching.

Mr. Bill Alstrom pointed that they did manage to put fish on the spawning grounds in 2009 with the sacrifices by the lower river fishermen. He hoped they would have a good season in 2010. He expressed concern with respect to the accuracy of the Pilot Station sonar and was glad to hear

the Department was considering options for moving it. He also expressed concern with the accuracy of the bycatch report.

2010 OUTLOOK AND PRELIMINARY PLAN:

Dr. Katie Howard stated that for 2010 for Canadian-origin Chinook they expect a below average to average run, which is a little better than what they expected in 2009. She explained the models they use to come up with this estimate. For Canadian-origin Chinook only they expect approximately 113,000 fish to come back. She stated that some years the models work well, while other years they do not. The reason is they cannot take into account factors such as bycatch, changing in water temperature in the marine environment, etc. They do not have a lot of information on these factors so they cannot incorporate them into the models. As a consequence, they looked at the difference in recent years between what was predicted and the actual. This gives them a lower-end estimate of 77,800 Canadian-origin Chinook. The recent Yukon River Panel has set the goal for Canadian-origin Chinook at 42,500 to 55,000. She stated that in addition they are obligated by international treaty to provide fish for Canadian aboriginal fisheries, etc. They are predicting 29,000 Canadian-origin Chinook will be available for harvest between the Canadians and the U.S. side. By treaty, the Canadian side is allowed about 23 percent of the total harvest, or approximately 6,700 for 2010. Altogether approximately 55,000 need to get to the border. This will change depending on what the run actually comes back as.

Dr. Howard stated that for the entire Yukon they expect 155,000 to 226,000 Chinook coming back in 2010. Again, the model cannot account for bycatch and environmental factors.

For summer chum, they expect an average run and that all escapement goals will be met. They expect subsistence needs will be met and that there could be 250,000 to 500,000 summer chum available for commercial harvest.

Mr. Hayes stated that the first preseason teleconference occurred March 10th. Based on the outlook Dr. Howard presented, management anticipates that there will be enough fish to meet escapement goals in both Alaska and Canada as well as normal subsistence fisheries. At that time they were not projecting that they would be needing restrictions like they had last year. He cautioned that this could change based on the actual return. Mr. Hayes stated that they have heard concern from other people that it would be a good idea to have more fish on the escapement grounds than what their goals are. He added that there was nothing wrong if someone wants to voluntarily reduce their harvest. They are not looking at a directed commercial fishery.

Mr. Bue stated that the outlook is conservative. Based on parent-year escapements there should be a strong run, but they incorporated a precautionary approach by looking at the recent trend of poor production, which results in the lower projection. This still results in enough fish for subsistence and escapement.

Dr. Howard stated that there is a lot of interest in what is going on in the marine environment, especially with bycatch. There is a program that has been collecting data on salmon in the marine environment. They are using that information to try to get an estimate of how many

Yukon River Chinook will come back in 2010. This is the first time they have ever done it, so they do not know how well it will work, but so far the estimate is 180,000 Chinook total for the Yukon River which falls within the range they are looking at.

OPEN DISCUSSION OF PRELIMINARY PLAN:

Mr. Walker asked about the window restrictions for Y-2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Mr. Hayes stated that with the normal subsistence regulatory schedule for Y-1, 2 and 3 is two 36-hour periods per week. For subdistricts 4A, B and C the schedule is two 40-hour periods a week.

Mr. Huntington stated that elders' predictions for this year contradict managers' outlook. There is no snow on the Yukon River and no snow on the mountain caps. When there is low water, there is no fish return. Mr. Hayes stated that last year with the YRDFA teleconferences and an in-person meeting they came up with the restrictions they had. These tools are available in-season if the run comes in weaker than expected. They also have tools available to manage the fishery if the run comes in better than expected and they can look at the potential for commercial fisheries.

Ms. Wright stated that something to look at with respect to the sonar projects is that the channels on the rivers are changing. The weather, the water temperatures, etc. are also changing. She stated that last summer she did not get that many fish and what she did get were not very healthy.

Mr. Alstrom asked the Department if the sale of bycatch Chinook in the directed commercial chum fishery or if a directed commercial Chinook fishery would be allowed this year. Mr. Hayes stated that based on the current outlook, they anticipate a directed commercial chum fisheries and that most likely they will be able to sell some of the incidental-caught Chinook. He added that it depends on when they start fishing on chum. If the Chinook run size is better than expected, they would look at directed commercial Chinook fisheries. He added that he did not want people to think they are painting a rosy picture. They still have concerns. There is uncertainty. They do think it will be better than last year.

Mr. Demientieff expressed concern with the mesh reduction last year. The people of Holy Cross did not have six-inch mesh. This was after they had been assured by the Department that there would not be a size reduction. Boats had to go 20 miles up river where they were not able to get much fish. Gas was over \$7 a gallon. He asked that if they do it again to give them more notice. Mr. Hayes stated they realized it was not a popular management action but at the time they were projecting that things were pretty bad. If the runs come back as projected, he did not believe they would be looking at mesh reduction this year. It is a measure of last resort.

Mr. Moore spoke about the test net site. The river is changing and the Department needs to change the test net site. The current site is not giving the Department an accurate picture. He stated they need to use local knowledge as part of the management plan. Mr. Hayes stated that they plan to look at possible different locations for the sonar as well as using different nets. They realize they are having difficulties with their lower river test fisheries. They will work locally with fishermen at the beginning of the summer to locate different sites. He added they

use many different tools to manage the fishery, including the test fisheries, Pilot Station sonar, subsistence information, etc.

Mr. Crawford stated that back in the 70s before there was sonar management decisions were more accurate. He questioned whether they were putting too much emphasis on sonar. He has seen more errors when they look at sonar than when they used the traditional forms of information gathering.

Mr. Beans asked with the changes in the river channels if at Pilot Station a sonar station could be set up at the other end as well so there would be one at both ends. Mr. Hayes stated that they have sonar on both sides of the river. They will also be looking at side scan sonar this summer. It would be on a boat rather than stationed on the shore. He added that they do map the bottom of the river in 3D so they can map changes in the river.

Mr. Ned spoke about traditional knowledge and how people who live along the river know what is happening on and with the river. One thing they noticed last year was that when they closed down fishing on the first pulse they saw more and larger kings on the Koyukuk so part of that first pulse are Koyukuk fish.

Mr. Loring asked for clarification on where the 50 percent figure comes from with regard to the fish going into Canada and whether this was something that needs to be assessed given how much the river is changing. Ms. Howard explained they use genetic samples to determine how many fish are going to different spawning locations. Mr. Loring asked if genetic drift is happening as fast as landscape change. Ms. Howard stated they do not have the data yet to pinpoint any kind of genetic drift. Ms. Evenson discussed current and past ways they used to determine what proportion was going where. While they have not been looking for genetic drift, they have not seen any evidence of it either.

Mr. Jones stated that if they are going to relocate the Pilot Station sonar, now is the time to do their survey in the area as they can tell where the sand bars are and where the main channels are while after breakup it will be more difficult.

Mr. Beans asked if there was anyone looking at the genetics of the bycatch Chinook caught in the Pollock fishery. He also expressed concern on whether the numbers of bycatch Chinook were accurate. He suggested a one-year moratorium on that bycatch fishery to see where the Chinook were returning to. Mr. Bergstrom stated that they have some genetic salmon on the bycatch from previous years although it was not from a good sampling program. They do know that the bycatch Chinook go to Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and all over Alaska. They estimate that half of them are Western Alaska. They are working on a better sampling program to get estimates on where the fish might be going. He added that another genetic portion they need to work on is separating by river bed. Mr. Bergstrom also stated that a moratorium is not something the Department can do. It is something the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council would have to do. With the new regulations, they have to have observers on every single boat so they should be getting good number on what the bycatch is. He added that they Pollock fishery is trying to come up with ways to avoid the bycatch.

Mr. Suckling talked about the bycatch and the hard cap the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council put in. He would like to have confidence in the numbers they are reporting. Mr. Bergstrom stated that with the program in place they can have fair confidence in the reported bycatch. They are now actually counting the fish, both Chinook and chums, caught rather than a sampling program and an estimate. He also did not think that the number of bycatch Chinook were necessarily an indicator of how many were coming back but rather an indication of their distribution in the ocean. Also, if they hit the high cap of 60,000 two years out of seven, then they get shut down. The new rules should keep the numbers down.

Mr. Stickman discussed some of the management decisions last season, i.e. letting the first pulse go buy and then only fishing half the time on the next two pulses. As a result in Huslia they were seeing more Chinook. He asked how last year's management actions would play into this summer's management. Mr. Stickman agreed that the river was changing. He discussed the special action issued last year by the Federal managers and stated he would not like to see it happen again. It affected a 95-year old gentleman whose family was not allowed to help him as well affected some 70 and 80 year olds in Galena. Mr. Bue agreed that anyone living on the river knows the river is changing. This is something that is continuous. With respect to the special action, he agreed it was an extreme management tool the Federal managers have if the run is very poor. He did not see it being used this year if the run comes in as predicted. There are other restrictions they would use if needed before they would use that special action.

Mr. Moore stated that the people on the lower river only catch what they need. It is against their traditional culture to waste any fish. The rest of the fish go upriver. He wanted people on the rest of the river to know that they do conserve the fish. Their commercial fisheries are controlled by the Department of Fish and Game and by the Federal Government who makes sure they do not waste or take more which would hurt the sustained yield. He then commented on the sonar and test net fishery. He added that the truth and measurable aspect is the people on the river catching fish. The people know when there are fish whether the sonar and test fishery do or not.

ALTERNATIVES FOR HOW TO HANDLE A RUN WORSE THAN EXPECTED:

Mr. Hayes stated that based on projections there should be enough fish for escapement and subsistence needs and they should not need to have any restrictions on subsistence. If they have to do reductions or closures this year, possible management restrictions include gear restrictions, reducing the regulatory subsistence fishery schedule by 50 percent or greater, and/or canceling a fishing period during a pulse. He added that at the Board of Fishery meeting this year they gave the Department emergency order authority to close any portion of the run if needed.

The group broke into round table discussions:

Gear Restrictions:

Table 1: They would rather see a reduction in time over a gear restriction.

Table 2: There was consensus to oppose the six-inch mesh as not everyone has six-inch mesh gear. There was concern it would add to the cost if they had to replace current gear. They

discussed the increased drop-out rate with the smaller mesh gear. They would like to see increased restrictions on the bycatch. They discussed marine protected areas as far as habitat on the lower Yukon.

Table 3: They were in support of the smaller mesh gear. It was pointed out that most participants at this table were from the coastal districts and generally use the six-inch mesh anyway.

Table 4: They were not in support of gear restrictions. It was not really effective in most of the middle or upper river districts. People do not have six-inch mesh gear. Concern was expressed about people moving from one district to another. They felt you could catch more fish with the six-inch gear than you could with the larger mesh.

Table 5: The majority supported the gear limitation. Issues raised included a concern about drop out with the six-inch mesh. One comment was that the smaller mesh might allow larger fish to get to the spawning grounds.

Table 6: They viewed the gear restriction as a last resort method. They preferred other options such as time restrictions. There was concern that in the lower river the six-inch mesh limits the ability to specifically target Chinook and causes the fishermen to catch more chums. Since the six-inch mesh restriction last year did not go all the way up the river, it disproportionately put a hardship on some communities.

Table 7: Generally speaking, they did not support the gear restriction primarily because a lot of people do not have six-inch gear so it would be a hardship to have to buy new gear. They would be more in support of it in future years when they have time to gear up. There was concern about drop-out rate of large fish. They would like to see more restrictions on the trawl fleet before further restricting Yukon River fishermen.

Table 8: There was consensus of no support for gear restrictions. Concerns included the drop out rate for the six-inch mesh. They were not sure it would work. It was not known whether the mesh size reduction or the pulse reduction was responsible last year for getting fish up river. There was a concern that they were putting a burden on the fishers when it was not known whether it would work or not.

Table 9: There was a consensus that gear restriction was not a good recommendation. Drop-out rate was mentioned as well as damage to fish that drop out and live, particularly for the Canadian stocks that have a long way to swim after they drop out.

Reduced Subsistence Window Fishing Schedule Time:

Table 9: There was agreement the schedule restriction needs to be shared throughout the river. There was a suggestion to schedule the windows to coincide with weather patterns so they can fish when the weather is appropriate for drying fish.

Table 8: They were split equally on this option. One comment was that cutting the fishing schedule in half would be enough for her family to get their fish and she would rather see this than pulling the first pulse.

Table 7: They generally do not support reducing the time. They were against any reduced fishing time for subsistence. Comments included the poor economy and the need to be able to target the fish when they go by, as well as it can be difficult to catch enough fish in certain areas of the Yukon with restrictions. They did not have a problem with closing commercial periods, but did not want to see a reduced subsistence fishing schedule. They would prefer to see other methods restricted before further reducing subsistence time.

Table 6: There was a general consensus that they would support reduction in time if the run looks like it is going to be poorer than expected. This measure would allow a lot of Canadian origin fish to get up to the spawning ground. They suggested a gradual approach to time reduction rather than a straight-away 50 percent reduction if restrictions are necessary.

Table 5: There was consensus to support time reduction if need be. Points included if the river had lower water this year, it would concentrate the fish and make them easier to exploit so fishers would need less time to harvest. Another point was that District Y-5 needs to be subdivided as it is simply too big for the regulations to work.

Table 4: They were split on this. There was consensus that the Department needs to do a better job of working with the communities to address the schedule in-season based on where the run is that year as opposed to setting the schedule ahead of time. There was discussion that Districts 4 and 5 were too long.

Table 3: They did not support reducing the windows. Windows do not follow nature's schedule. They would rather have subsistence open until, for example, June 10th for them to meet their needs.

Table 2: They did not support reducing the windows. They discussed reducing the bycatch before restricting any in-river fisheries. There was discussion of the large sacrifice made last year when a lot of people were not able to get their fish with the reduced fishing time and people had to travel long distances to get their fish which increases fuel costs, boat repairs, etc. Families fished together to try to reduce costs, but still had difficulty getting enough fish. Weather is a factor when fishing. Concern was expressed about elders and others having to ask outside their families for fish. They discussed whether it should be open 24-7 or not or some other schedule.

Table 1: They supported the windows reduction with no more than a 50 percent reduction. They would prefer less than a 50 percent reduction. They also supported tweaking the schedule so they do not completely miss all of the fish particularly in the larger districts such as 5D.

Cancel a Fishing Period During a Pulse:

Table 1: They supported this option if necessary, but possibly a shorter closure rather than what occurred last year. This would be in conjunction with time reduction. They suggested like a

six-year moratorium on the first pulse, i.e. not fishing it for 6 to 10 days for six years. Another comment was there have been too many benefits to the first pulse closure to ignore it.

Table 3: In general they did not support this option. They felt it was important to be able to fish on the first pulse.

Table 5: There was consensus to support this option if necessary. Primarily they thought managers should plan on having at least one canceled fishing period during the first pulse regardless of run size. 2009 showed the benefits of limiting fishing on that first pulse, particularly on some of the Koyukuk River stocks.

Table 7: They generally opposed this option. They would be willing to help out and support a closure of one period but not more. They feel they have given enough over the years and due to the poor economy they do not support cutting subsistence fishing time further. It was pointed out that a lot of times when they are allowed to go back out during an open period the fish have already passed. They need to be able to catch enough fish for their efforts.

Table 9: Overall they supported this option with conditions. They would support shorter closures. In 2009 the closures were too long and they missed pulses. They suggested a maximum closure of three days so fishers would be able to either pick up the front end or the tail end of any pulse. With respect to restricting it only to people living on the river being able to fish, it is more of an extended family and even those who live in the cities are just as dependent on the resource as the people in the village. With long closures it would be difficult for those living out of the village to be able to schedule when they could come and catch their own fish.

Table 2: The majority opposed pulling any periods or laying off the first pulse. It was suggested pulling part of the first pulse would be fine. There was discussion regarding the first pulse and that which mouth it entered has an impact on pulling the pulse. There was discussion that if there was any reduction in the commercial fisheries it would have more of an affect on the older people. There was also discussion about it being open seven days a week prior to the first pulse. They would like to get fish as soon as possible.

Table 4: There was a general consensus to support this option as a method to conserve, but they also suggested some modifications. The districts are far too long to make this an equitable arrangement. There needs to be a better job of identifying the beginning of the first pulse. The movement of people from one district to another needs to be controlled. There were comments expressed about this being effective and a good way to rebuild the stock for the future. It is important to rebuild the stock.

Table 6: They supported the option with some modifications. It worked well in 2009 to put fish up the Koyukuk and into Canada. They would support a half-pulse closure or some kind of reduced closure of the first pulse rather than a full scale closure. One comment was there is a fear that by closing the entire first pulse that this would put undue pressure on the other stocks such as the Tanana River fish that come in later. The pulse closure last year sparked some controversy and they cited the Marshall test fishery. They discussed the Regional Council's proposal to enact a 12-year moratorium on the first pulse in order to protect it for two life cycles.

The people at the table opposed this idea as it might harm other stocks. They might support a measured approach but not a full-scale closure for 12 years.

Table 8: One-third of the people at the table did not support this option. Reasons included that the first pulse was the most valuable and most desirable for the people. There was concern that not fishing on the first pulse pushes drying into too warm of weather and the flesh is whiter and harder to process. Two-thirds of the table said they may be willing to close one opening near the first pulse if conservation was necessary, but it cannot be done by the calendar. They need to follow the pulse upriver as the fish travel.

FUTURE PRESEASON PLANNING & COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Klein recapped what they did last year. Last year the Yukon River Panel felt it was important to get Alaskans together to talk about how to manage the coming season in light of not having met boarder passage for the preceding two years. YR DFA basically wanted to get the opinions of fishermen and people on the river who fish to help guide the management plan, and in years of low salmon returns to give some input into how to handle the runs if they come back worse than expected.

YR DFA suggested several different options:

1. To continue a process similar to this year's process: a combination of teleconferences and an in-person meeting. It will be followed up with another teleconference.
2. Reduce the process to just have the teleconference where they would hear the information like what was presented today but it would be on the phone and then participants give some input and then management would use that to develop their preseason management plan.
3. Create a smaller working group of 15 to 20 from the tribal groups, the Yukon River Panel, the Federal Regional Advisory Councils, the CDQ group, the processors and YR DFA to work together on the preseason management plan.
4. Create a tribal working group.
5. Each spring possibly at the regularly scheduled tribal and city council meetings YR DFA helps prepare people to discuss the preseason plan.
6. That something like this is not needed and they go back to management on their own creating the preseason plans which would be presented at various public meetings.

Ms. Klein stated that with all the options there would be outreach in addition.

One comment was that it was a good idea to have everybody from up and down the river come together along with the managers. He also liked the table discussions. The people who do not come can listen in. He wanted to see this type of meeting continue.

Mr. Hunter stated that for 60 years he's been fishing they had no problems and they caught many fish, fishing up to seven days a week until the 80s and 90s when some of the new management people started coming in and doing things wrong as well as the Pollock fishery. He did not feel the current managers knew what they were doing and they need to look at how they used to do it. He supported getting together in a meeting like this, but they need to send people in who come to work and not party. They also need to have people who have fished before and know what is going on.

Mr. Jimmy spoke about option number 3. He did not see anyone present from the Bering Sea trawlers present to listen to their concerns. The fish spend most of their life in the ocean. He has spoken to people who have gone out to work in the Pollock fishery and they do not like what they see out there. The trawlers catch all kinds of fish and possibly seal pups as well as seaweed. He was concerned that the observers were getting an accurate count. He would like to have observers come and tell them what they see. Managing in-river is only part of the story and they are neglecting the life of the salmon in the ocean. He stressed that they need to manage the whole life cycle.

Mr. Crawford asked if there was something else that YRDFA was not able to fund due to the cost of the in-person meetings. Ms. Klein agreed that the meetings were expensive and time consuming for the people involved depending on what part of the river they were from. That is why they are looking at other options. If people felt this was a good option, YRDFA would seek funds to make it happen.

Mr. Unok stated this is an education for them. They need to go back to their communities and educate their people.

Mr. Umphenour felt option 1 was the best although he realized there were financial constraints. Option 3 would be second best but would also need to have teleconferences involved. The important thing is to get the word out to as many people as possible so they know what to expect.

A commenter agreed the cost of putting on the meetings was expensive. He was concerned that over time it will be harder to find those monies. He thought that what was presented today could be presented at the various other meetings that are held around the state such as the Tanana Chiefs convention. This would save money but they would still get the input of a lot of different groups.

Mr. Beans stated that the people of the Yukon from the mouth to the border have a commonality with the issue they are facing today. He felt it was important to work hand-in-hand and face-to-face to work on the issues they are faced with. He felt it was important for them to be involved in the management of the salmon runs.

A commenter stated the big question is whether they are making an impact and is anybody listening and going to do something in response to all the suggestions being made. Mr. Bergstrom stated that the managers like this process where they can have input. It is educational. While there is a lot of cost to it, it is a good thing for managers and users on the river to meet.

A commenter stated he liked this process. He would like to see them send the written information to their homes prior to the meeting so they can discuss it with the people in the villages so they can fairly represent those people.

Mr. Stickman stated that even though they struggled at the meeting last year they all did agree to let the first pulse go through and to cut the fishing schedules in half. It made a significant difference last year. They need to concentrate on where they can make a difference. He felt the way they were doing things now was making a difference. He supported option 1.

Mr. Huntington stated that in the middle river they didn't start drifting for king salmon until the early 80s when the Department changed how many people could fish in the same eddy. Now there is not as many fish as there were. The windows were established to make sure fish made it to the spawning grounds. He was concerned that there would be even fewer fish in the next 20 years. The reason they were meeting was to work on ideas to save the fish for future generations. He pointed out that there are commercial fishermen at the mouth of the Yukon who have not been able to fish for a couple years. They need to start taking notice of that as that is serious. If they do not help each other out, then they will be fighting with each other. They need to work together. They need to stand together to make a statement to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council that the Pollock fishermen are harvesting too many Chinook. They need to work together to preserve the fish for the future. He has learned that there are other methods of working together. Coming to these meetings they learn from each other what they need to do and then they take that message home. He supported continuing to have these meetings.

Mr. Ned supported option 1. He felt the face-to-face meeting with people from throughout the Yukon River was better. Prior to YRDFA they were fighting all the time. They didn't have time to sit down and discuss their differences. The current process works very well.

Mr. Moore did not support number 6. They were discussing cutting the fishing periods in half. This impacts people who make a living by subsistence fishing to put food on their table. He felt the dialogues they have at these meetings are very important to understand and interpret the regulations and what they mean to the people. Subsistence is too important to not be a part of it. It was important to keep the dialogue open.

Mr. Alstrom stated he agrees with what has been said by others. They need to keep the dialogue open amongst all the users up and down the river. All the districts are different. He was in favor of option 1. It is important to hear the different opinions from all the users on the river. He touched on some of the things that happened during the last season. He hoped there was a good fish run this year and some of the restrictions will not need to be applied.

Mr. Walker supported option 3. He suggested adding someone from the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. He felt it would be to the group's benefit. He also questioned why the Pollock fishery did not have windows. Ms. Klein stated that the Council is actually meeting right now in Anchorage to work on chum bycatch. She would have liked to have people from the Council come for one of the educational sessions but could not due to their meeting. She added that the Council has created a rural outreach committee. The Council is working on

trying to get better information out to people in communities affected by their decisions as well as have people give input to them at their meetings. She stated they will try to include them more in the future.

Mr. Kelly supported option 1. He felt the current process was working and should be continued. He felt options 3 and 4 could be combined into option 1. He advocated having rural and tribal representation. He felt that if they really want to make changes and to encourage people to participate in discussion and implementation of openings and closures, they need to get the village/tribe involved. He felt that there would need to be sacrifices made in the future just as there have in past years. This had created dilemmas in a lot of villages. He felt that when they talk about closures they need to have people watching the run as it makes it way up the Yukon and then be able to work with the villages.

Ms. Wright questioned why they would not want to continue the face-to-face meetings. A lot of important information gets shared at the meeting. She felt they needed to get more young people involved because there needs to be someone to pick it up. It is important to teach the young people ways of survival. Everything is changing. When you share a fishing spot, you are not just helping yourself, but you are helping others. She encouraged everyone to talk to the young people when they get back home.

Mr. Paukin supported option 1. Getting people together from the mouth of the river to the border is important. They need to work together instead of pointing fingers at each other as they had in the past. He thanked YRDFFA for having the meeting.

Mr. Firman supported option 1. It helps them get to know each other and how people live from village to village. He felt option 3 should be incorporated with option 1. With respect to option 5, he encouraged people when they get back to their villages to talk to members of their tribal councils and city councils and make this an item on their agendas so they can put forward a voice and opinion they can put forward when people come to these meetings.

The meeting broke out into educational sessions.

Customary trade – (This is a compilation of both sessions) Dr. Polly Wheeler, OSM explained what ANILCA allows for as far as customary trade. It is part of the definition of subsistence uses. The implementing regulations talk about customary trade for personal or family uses as long as it is not a significant commercial enterprise. The question is what is a significant commercial enterprise? Customary trade is allowed under the Federal program. They state a rural resident may trade fish, their parts or their eggs legally taken under the regulations for cash from individuals other than rural residents if the individual who purchases the fish or their parts or their eggs uses them for personal or family consumption. Under customary trade, rural residents may exchange subsistence harvested fish, their parts or their eggs legally taken under the regulations for cash from other rural residents.

Two regions, the Upper Copper River and the Bristol Bay, have refined the definition. They were developed locally and passed through the Federal Board. The Federal Board will not take action on something unless the recommendation is from the regional advisory councils to support

it. There are three proposals that will be before the Federal Board in January dealing with customary trade on the Yukon River. The proposals are out for public comment through May 11th. They will be analyzed by OSM staff and then go before the Regional Advisory Councils in the fall with the Federal Board acting on them in January.

Customary trade is one of those things that when one first looks at it, it seems like the answer is simple. However, the more you talk about it, the more complicated it gets. Customary trade is different from the large-scale sale of subsistence-caught fish. Customary trade is not barter. Fish can be bartered for berries, meat, etc. Customary trade is also not the sale of handicrafts. Federal regulations concerning customary trade are vague. The Federal Board had a task force in 2002 and 2003 to deal with what a significant commercial enterprise is. What they ended up with is the realization that customary trade is difficult to pin down due to different regional practices. Dr. Wheeler felt it was important to talk about it in order to come up with regulations.

First session discussion:

A commenter explained they sell dry fish, whitefish, smoked salmon, seal skins, etc. He wanted to know at what point that becomes a commercial enterprise, or was the program only talking about Chinook, chum and Coho. Dr. Wheeler explained that under ANILCA their regulations cover everything. The relevant question is what is a significant commercial enterprise. What is a significant commercial enterprise to one person may be different to other people. That is what the task force found. Everyone had a different opinion on what constituted a significant commercial enterprise. The issue before the Regional Advisory Council is what is a significant commercial enterprise for Yukon River Chinook.

A commenter asked how the two regions decide what was a significant commercial enterprise. Dr. Wheeler stated that the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council and the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council both had proposals and they as a council agreed on what a significant commercial enterprise was to them in their perspective in their region taking into account local practices, customary and traditional uses. The Federal Subsistence Board supported their decisions. She explained that their program was locally driven and reflects local customary and traditional practices. Mr. Simmons felt those two councils did not go into the definition of a significant commercial enterprise, but rather put a limit on it. Dr. Wheeler stated that they defined customary trade as being something less than \$500. From a legal standpoint that then defines significant commercial enterprise for those regions. Mr. Simmons added that they also required permits for sales from rural to non-rural residents.

Mr. Jimmy stated he did a lot of traveling and saw some customary trade as well as arts and crafts. In response to Mr. Jimmy, Dr. Wheeler stated that under ANILCA arts and crafts are separate from customary trade. In response to a question, Dr. Wheeler stated that someone did not have to have a business license or a fish permit, etc. to have a significant commercial enterprise. Under ANILCA a significant commercial enterprise is not defined. In Federal regulation, there are regulations covering customary trade and who they can trade with, i.e. rural to rural, rural to nonrural, but there is no allowance of customary trade of product to a fisheries business.

Mr. Huntington stated that customary trade comes from the Federal and commercially sold product comes from the state. They are two different things. It gets confusing.

Mr. Bean stated he was an elder and in the earlier days a lot of dry fish was in warehouses for sale to people who had dog teams. It was a source of income for the people. It could be considered a significant commercial enterprise.

In response to Mr. Firman, Dr. Wheeler stated there is a reporting requirement in the Copper River area for rural to nonrural. She did not think there was a reporting requirement for rural to rural. It is on the honor system.

Dr. Wheeler reiterated that there are 9 Federal proposals for the Yukon River region and she encouraged everyone to review them. One deals with the pulse protection and others deal with customary trade.

A commenter stated that during AFN convention he sees a lot of people selling salmon strips. In response to a question regarding monitoring the customary trade, Dr. Wheeler stated that the feds will not do anything to come up with a system to monitor customary trade unless that is the will of the people on the Regional Advisory Councils. It is important that the Federal Subsistence Board hear from all subsistence users on what they want and how they think it should be regulated or monitored. It was also recommended to go to the local fish and game advisory committee as an avenue to submit a proposal or give information on monitoring customary trade. Mr. Umphenour felt it was the job of DEC and U.S. Food and Drug Administration to monitor it.

Ms. Demientieff stated seven years ago when she was on the Western Interior RAC no one could come up with a definition of customary trade. Each of the villages in the region has their own idea about what it is. They also have their own definition of barter. There are just too many different descriptions from all over the state to come up with one definitive one.

A commenter stated that customary trade is trade between individuals. Selling through a store can become commercial. He stated that a lot of subsistence fishermen deal with the Native corporations. He knows they cannot sell it but when you go to meetings, they are handing it out when people do not have any at home. He felt there were abuses with customary trade.

Mr. Titus stated customary trade has been going on for a long time. He was concerned about putting a limit or permit on it. It sounded to him like they were trying to end customary trade by putting a limit on it.

Mr. Hunter stated he has seen people from different villages send whitefish and other fish to some of the local stores in Bethel that turn around and sell it. He was sure some of them were selling more than \$500 worth of whitefish to the stores. Dr. Wheeler stated her understanding was that that was not a legal practice, but it depends on how enforcement was going to view it.

Mr. Stickman stated that the Western Interior RAC has really struggled with this for a long time. It is hard to set a precedent as there are people who depend on customary trade to get through the

year. On the other hand there are people who abuse the system. He was concerned about hurting those who really needed it. He also wondered if it would make any difference with the fish runs.

In response to a question, Mr. Umphenour stated that the DEC and the Food and Drug Administration were not doing anything because they were lazy and afraid. He also felt the state troopers were not doing their job. He stated that last year both the Eastern and Western Interior RACs put in special action requests to the Federal Subsistence Board to not allow customary trade on the Yukon River for last season only because they knew there were going to be the restrictions on subsistence and no commercial fishery. He talked to Lt. Dalkie of the state troopers about whether they were going to do anything about the illegal sale of subsistence-caught salmon if the Federal Subsistence Board passes the special action request, and his answer was no. Mr. Umphenour has had the same conversation with Food and Drug Administration people and DEC people, and they will not do anything about it. Mr. Huntington stated the only way they can deal with the issue is by changing ANILCA which they do not want to do, because it would become a can of worms to deal with.

Dr. Wheeler stated that customary trade is in the definition of subsistence uses under ANILCA which Congress intended to protect. Trying to put an upper limit is complex and there are no easy answers, but it is worth a lot of thought and discussion.

Ms. Demientieff stated when she was growing up her grandfather had three fishwheels and used to catch about 2,000 fish a day. They all went to a barge that came downriver. They traded for food for the winter. That was customary trade. She trades fish for berries. She is teaching her children customary trade. She knows there is a lot of abuse, but could not understand why there has to be rules and regulations telling people what they can do with that fish once it comes into their nets. The whole issue bothers her.

Mr. Umphenour stated that years ago the only thing the Federal Government recognized as commercial salmon fishing was if it got put in a can, pickled or salted and shipped to the Lower 48. What is legal under customary trade under Federal regulations is whole frozen fish and nothing else. The strips and stuff is not legal under the Federal customary trade regulations. It also says you have to comply with all Federal and state health standard regulations.

Ms Brown stated her understanding is that under Federal law it is not just frozen fresh uncut. She stated it was important to keep in mind the difference between customary trade and barter. Exchanging fish for other products like berries is barter and is perfectly legal under state and Federal law. When talking about the issues surrounding customary trade they were talking about the exchange for cash as well as how the fish is processed.

Second session discussion:

In response to a question, Dr. Wheeler stated that the definition the Federal program uses can be found in the Federal Register as well as the Federal Regulations. She explained that ANILCA is the statute. It does not define customary trade. The implementing regulations give the

definition. The specific fisheries regulations contain more about customary trade for the Upper Copper River area and for the Bristol Bay region.

Mr. Walker asked what the difference was between the State and Federal governments with respect to customary and traditional trade. Mr. Bergstrom stated that under the State does look at the ANILCA idea of customary and traditional trade, but the Board of Fisheries implements what is legal and what is not. So far in the Yukon River area they cannot sell subsistence-caught fish or eggs. In Norton Sound it is limited to \$200 or less and they have to have a permit. In response to Mr. Walker, Mr. Bergstrom stated it just says fish and does not refer to the process such as strips or dry fish. The State's position is that once they get into the processing, then it gets into the DEC regulations. Dr. Wheeler stated that also applied to the Federal. There are health permit requirements. In response to Mr. Crawford, Dr. Wheeler stated that if one wanted to sell strips to the general public, it would be done under DEC regulations under both State and Federal regulations regarding customary trade. In practical terms, the sale of strips is not legal because of the health permitting requirements.

Dr. Wheeler stated that there are nine proposals for the Yukon River region the Federal Board will be dealing with. Three of them deal with customary trade and one with the pulse protection for the next 12 years. The Board is meeting in April to deal with the mesh size and mesh depth on the Yukon.

Mr. Bergstrom stated that customary trade is a complex issue. There was an understanding that there was an historical sale of processed fish, such as strips.

Mr. Walker asked what section of ANILCA traditional and customary trade fall under. Dr. Wheeler stated the implementing regulations are under Subpart A. The fisheries regulations are under Subparts C and D where they speak specifically to the Bristol Bay region and the Upper Copper River region where they put an upper limit on customary trade.

Mr. Crawford asked who would be held legally liable if someone died or gets seriously ill from eating strips done in customary trade and an outside person bought them if there was no AK number and no inspection behind those strips. Mr. Neely stated the Federal Government would claim immunity. Unless you could prove negligence, the Federal Government has an immunity clause.

Mr. Neely stated that the question is whether he as an enforcement office could enforce these regulations that involve food and health inspections, etc. He stated he could, but he has a boss who may have an opinion that that is another agency's responsibility. That is why they will not enter into those politics. If this is a concern at the local level and people believe the resource is impacted by how some people are carrying on customary trade currently, then it would be up to the people in the region who feel it would be appropriate to put a dollar amount cap on what customary trade is, to do so. The U.S. Attorney's Office has said that until such time it can be shown in regulation what a cap is on customary trade, they will not prosecute. In response to Mr. Walker, Mr. Neely stated that they have had discussions with the state as to whose responsibility it is, and they have not come to an agreement on who if anyone will take an enforcement action.

Dr. Wheeler stated that the Federal Board's mandate is ANILCA which was passed to protect and continue subsistence users. Customary trade is a subsistence use. Then there are the implementing regulations talking about personal and family uses as long as it is not a significant commercial enterprise. The question is what is a significant commercial enterprise? The task force in 2002/2003 involved people from every region of the people as well as agency people and they could not agree on a definition. It is a complicated issue with regional differences.

Mr. Crawford stated his concern was not customary trade per se. It is more the matter of public safety and somebody should be responsible for public safety. He thought DEC was there to protect the public.

Mr. Alexander stated he has never heard about a death or illness along the Yukon River from eating the fish. They handle the fish with utmost respect. He felt it was all political and they were putting another barrier in the people's way. They should all come together and tell them to leave the people alone to continue their traditional lifestyle gathering their traditional food on their ancestral land.

A commenter stated that looking at some of the written material, there is a difference between customary trade and barter. She asked for an explanation of the difference between them. Dr. Wheeler stated that customary trade involves cash while barter does not. That is the only difference.

Mr. Hunter stated that more and more rural people moving to Anchorage and they want to eat their native food. He asked if he sent his cousin in Point Barrow a bag of oranges in exchange for some muktuk, was that trade or barter. Dr. Wheeler stated that was barter.

Mr. Moore stated that subsistence is the key for survival for most of the Native people in the villages. They do not have cash jobs. They have to have something to eat.

Ms. Norris asked if the Federal proposals that will be addressed in January were to be passed or modified and then accepted by the Federal Subsistence Board, would that have an impact on all people or only those adjacent to Federal lands. Dr. Wheeler stated that under ANILCA the Federal Subsistence Management Program is for rural Alaskans. Under ANILCA rural Alaskans are the subsistence users. If there is a customary and traditional use finding, that further defines the pool of users. If a proposal is passed by the Federal Board that is Yukon River wide, it would be the customary and traditional users on Federal public waters. She agreed that the patchwork of Federal and State regulations could be confusing, but that is the reality.

Ms. Norris asked if the Federal actions would give the State enforcement people more definitions to enforce what the State regulations are with customary trade. Mr. Bergstrom stated that usually the State and Federal enforcement meet together as to how they would enforce, so in that situation it might help. Mr. Neely added that they try to apply similar enforcement philosophies wherever they are able to do so. Ms. Norris stated she was asking as now neither the troopers nor the Fish and Wildlife enforcement people wanted to touch customary trade unless it was

blatant. Mr. Neely stated they were both looking for guidance. Any definition or clarification of what a significant commercial enterprise is would be applied consistently.

Mr. Alexander stated that last year one of the fishers stated that it used to be fun to fish and now they have to keep looking over their shoulders and it is not comfortable.

Dr. Wheeler stated that the Federal program is a bottom up program and the Federal Subsistence Board will only take action if the RACs recommend taking certain action. There were RAC members present people could talk to about their concerns about customary trade. There is a balancing act in protecting the continuing subsistence uses and getting at the bad actors.

Ms. Wright stated that if someone comes down the river and looks like they need something to eat, she will feed them. Now they are being told not to do that. She did not think that was right. She also stated that the predatory fish are eating all the little salmon coming out of the creeks and streams. She recommended people practice some of the old ways. They used to live a cycle, going from trapping (winter) camp to spring camp to summer camp to fall camp and then back to winter camp. She was very concerned about the younger generation. They do not know how to survive. She was concerned that they were telling her she could not trade her fish for moose.

There was a comment that a lot of those present share the same feelings when talking about customary trade and how it impacts people who really need it. They have to look at their region to define customary trade. There can be abuse and it can put a black eye on the efforts of people who live in urban areas but really need the Native food. Defining it must be on a regional basis. In response to a question, Dr. Wheeler stated that the proposals can be submitted by anybody.

MEETING WRAP-UP:

Mr. Bue stated that the comments from the attendees were very helpful. He reported that the most favored option was to protect a portion of the first pulse. The least favorite was limiting nets to six-inch mesh or less, although that option will be available to managers if it is necessary. Given the outlook, they did not think that would be necessary. Reducing the fishing window time was evenly split.

Mr. Hayes outlined their preseason plan for 2010. Subsistence fishing will be allowed seven days a week until June 7th. Beginning June 7th Y1 would begin the subsistence fishing schedule. The schedule would be followed chronologically up the river in the other districts. They anticipate that there will be enough Chinook for escapement in both Alaska and Canada as well as subsistence uses this year. The outlook does not call for any subsistence restrictions preseason for the 2010 season for Chinook salmon. If the in-season assessment projects tell them the run is lower than the preseason projection and if genetic sampling shows the Canadian portion of the run is lower than expected, management would pull a subsistence period between the first quarter point of the run and the mid point of the run beginning Y1 June 16th and following chronologically up the river. On June 21st they would return to the normal fishing schedule beginning in District Y1.

With respect to the first pulse, Mr. Hayes stated that pulling fishing on the first pulse to protect the Canadian-bound fish would require committing to it pre-season and put it in the plan. The current run outlook indicates to management that they do not need to do that. One of the things that concerns them with pulling on the first pulse is if the run comes back as projected is that they would be taking fish away from subsistence fishermen to put on the escapement grounds when the fish are not needed up there.

Mr. Hayes stated that their plan is to work on the informational flyer they distribute every year to fishermen. It will explain the management strategies. There is also a YR DFA teleconference scheduled for April 21st.

Mr. Bue stated that one of the unknowns is whether breakup will be early or late.

Mr. Thompson asked is if prior to the windows starting, can they use gear they currently have to get their subsistence fish. Mr. Hayes stated that the mesh size change passed by the Board of Fish does not go into effect until the summer of 2011.

Ms. Klein stated that the Department will send out a flyer with the details of the management plan. On April 21st YR DFA will hold a teleconference. She urged attendees to go back home and share the information from the meeting with other people in their community. If wanted, YR DFA will pull some materials together for them. YR DFA will continue to do outreach about the management plan so people are aware of it prior to the season. She thanked everyone for attending. She also requested feedback on how they can improve the process.

Mr. Hale talked about the April 21st teleconference. It will begin at 1:00 p.m. It will be open riverwide. He urged attendees to spread the word about it so that anyone who is interested is aware of it and can call in and participate. Summer teleconferences will start June 1st. He thanked everyone for coming. He also thanked the Yukon Panel for funding the event.

In response to a question from Mr. Thompson, Mr. Hayes stated that they anticipate being able to sell incidentally caught Chinook in the chum fishery, but it will depend upon the runs.

There were other comments made but their microphones were not turned on.

Mr. Beans talked about being able to sell their commercial permits 10 years ago for \$40,000, \$50,000. Today he would be surprised if anybody would want to buy his permit for \$10,000. In addition next year their nets will become surplus since they will have to go to six-inch mesh or less. This will have a big financial impact on the commercial fishermen. The commercial fishermen of Y1, 2 and 3 have sacrificed a lot over the past few years, but they definitely do not want to lose subsistence fishing.

Mr. Bergstrom stated he appreciated the input from the attendees and how well they worked together. He and Mr. Hale also thanked the notetakers for their participation.

Mr. Wasillie stated he saw a linear relationship at the management table between the Federal and State governments. He felt inclusion of the tribal governments would benefit the State and

Federal governments in the management of the fishery. This would aid communication as well as build relationships between all the agencies.

There were four sweatshirts raffled off, two donated by YRDFA and two donated by Boreal.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Appendix E – Educational Exchange Itinerary

2009 Educational Exchange Travel Details

Wednesday, August 5

Morning/Afternoon Participants fly to Fairbanks
8:30 p.m. Orientation dinner at Pikes

Thursday, August 6

8:30 a.m. Tour Interior Fish (local fish processor)
11:40 a.m.-3:35 p.m. Air North, Fairbanks to Whitehorse (*get to airport 90 minutes before flight*)
4-6 p.m. Meet with Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) to discuss fisheries management
7 p.m. Dinner with DFO reps & Canadian Co-chair of Yukon River Panel

Friday, August 7

Attend and participate in Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (YRITWC) summit for a day-long discussion of salmon
Discuss bycatch with Becca Robbins Gisclair, policy director with Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
Attend dance at YRITWC summit

Saturday, August 8

8:30-9 a.m. Orientation for tour with Al von Finster, DFO
9-10:30 a.m. Tour fish ladder & hatchery
10:30-11:15 a.m. Visit Takhini River to learn about environmental & human activities/impacts
11:15-noon Tour Mendenhall Landing—old village, Restoration & Enhancement project site
noon-2 p.m. Tour Kusawa Lake outlet—old trading site near a spawning area—& enjoy bag lunch
2:30-4 p.m. Tour Ta'an Kwachan Council Fox Creek Chinook Salmon Restoration Project
4:30 p.m. Visit Policeman's Point—old town/trading site, have cookout style dinner, and take boat tour of Lake Laberge

Sunday, August 9 – Monday, August 10

Drive to Pelly Crossing
Tour community
Visit Pelly Farm for overview of domestic fishery
Boat to Ft. Selkirk for tour and visit fish camps
Join community in potluck
Drive back to Whitehorse

Tuesday, August 11

8 a.m. Drive to Teslin
11 a.m.-1 p.m. Tour community and local museum
1-2 p.m. Lunch
2-3 p.m. Participate in In-Season Management Teleconference
4-7 p.m. Tour Teslin Lake &/or salmon corridor
7 p.m. Attend community potluck at Longhouse

Wednesday, August 12

Tour Teslin Lake with game guardian
Visit fish camps

Drive back to Whitehorse
Debriefing dinner

Thursday, August 13

7-11 a.m.

Noon-1 p.m

Air North, Whitehorse to Fairbanks (*get to airport 90 minutes before flight*)

Alaska Airlines, Fairbanks to Anchorage (*confirmation code BGYBYT*)

Participants fly home

Appendix F – Bycatch Mailer

(Salmon Bycatch Action Alert attached)

Appendix G – Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance & Timing Report

(Natural Indicators of Salmon Run Abundance & Timing Report attached)