

Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group
1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET) Code: 58756# (KUSKO)
ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433

April 29, 2026

Meeting called to order at 10:10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 and adjourned at 3:51 p.m. Meeting time was approximately 4 hours and 41 minutes. Seven full voting members were present and a quorum was established. Fritz Charles chaired the meeting. This meeting was the first Working Group meeting of the season. Primary themes were centered around the front-end closures and status of research projects, and Working Group business, including elections.

AGENDA ITEMS:

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: *Audio for this update begins at XX:XX – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

- Martin Andrew, Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission (KRITFC), discusses the mission of the fish commission and their goal of co-management with the USFWS. *Audio for this update begins at 00:11:22 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*
- Mike Williams, Sr. *Audio for this update begins at 14:54 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*
- James Nicori. *Audio for this update begins at 17:39 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*
- Kevin Whitworth. *Audio for this update begins at 22:00 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

1. WORKING GROUP BUSINESS: *Audio for this update begins at 34:09 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

A. Election of Co-Chairs *Audio for this update begins at 34:09 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

B. Working Group In-Season Meeting Schedule *Audio for this update begins at 41:07 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

C. Nominate WG representative to serve at KRITFC inseason meeting *Audio for this update begins at 50:02 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

2. 2025 SEASON SUMMARY AND 2026 FORECAST (Sean Larson, ADF&G) *Audio for this update begins at 53:03 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

A. Assessment projects reviews

- Sean Larson, ADF&G, reviews the results of last year’s assessment projects. Project results from 2025 can be found on pages 2-11 of the meeting packet. *Audio for this update begins at 53:03 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

B. Chinook salmon total run and drainage wide escapement

- Chinook salmon total run size was estimated at 161, 295 with an estimated drainage wide escapement of 108,792. The run size was smaller than the 2024 Chinook salmon total run size; however, the SEG was met. Page 13 of the

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meeting packet. *Audio for this update begins at 1:00:58 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

C. 2026 Chinook salmon forecast

- Chinook salmon are forecasted to have a run size between 123,000-200,000 in 2026. Page 12 of the meeting packet. *Audio for this update begins at 1:02:13 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26.*

3. 2026 ASSESSMENT PROJECTS: STARTING DATES, FUNDING. ETC. *Audio for this update begins at 1:25:31 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

A. ADF&G – Weirs, sonar, telemetry, Ichthyophonus

- Sean Larson, ADF&G, lists assessment projects that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be operating during the 2026 summer season. Mr. Larson also covers the projects that will not be running due to loss of funding.
- This year will be the first year in a multiyear chum telemetry project. Page 14 of the meeting packet. *Audio for this update begins at 1:25:31 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

B. ONC – inseason harvest estimates, fish distribution

- Avery Hoffman, ONC, discusses funding limitations and the organization's goals moving forward. *Audio for this update begins 1:32:14 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

C. NVN – Kids camp, Aniak TF, Salmon Aniak camera, outgoing smolt, inriver turbine

- Dan Gillikin, NVN, lists assessment projects that the Native Village of Napaimute will be operating or supporting during the 2026 summer season. Mr. Gillikin also voiced technician vacancies. *Audio for this update begins at 1:44:28 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

D. USFWS – Outgoing smolt, Kwethluk weir, fishing boat counts

- Brian Daniels, USFWS, discusses projects that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be operating, as well as funding limitations. *Audio for this update begins at 1:54:12*

E. KRITFC – inseason harvest estimates, Takotna weir, chum genetic research, fishing effort estimates, camera-based escapement monitoring, Chinook marine stock apportionment, water temperature monitoring

- Justin Leon, KRITFC, discusses projects that the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission will be operating during the 2026 summer season. Mr. Leon also addresses funding limitations and their willingness to support interdepartment projects. *Audio for this update begins at 1:57:57 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

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While quorum was still established, the Working Group addressed agenda item 5. B. i. Barbara Carlson moved to write the Letter of Support, Tad Lindley seconded. See “Working Group Motions” for motion result.

Lunch break from 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Roll call at 2:24:49 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26. A quorum was not re-established.

Meeting moved forward as a work session.

4. 2026 FISHERY MANAGEMENT *Audio for this update begins at XX:XX – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

A. Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (Brian Daniels, USFWS) with KRITFC

i. FSA updates and timeline

- Brian Daniels discusses management plans in the stead of Spencer Rearden, addressing an upcoming Federal Subsistence Board meeting. At which point, the service will announce their 2026 management plan. *Audio for this update begins 2:27:16 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

B. ADF&G Management Discussion on Specific Management Actions for 2026

C. Subsistence Sections 4 & 5 and Districts 4 & 5

i. AA #1: Front end closure dates

- Sam Decker address agenda items B and C. Due to no quorum, the working group decided to revisit the idea in a meeting in late May. *Audio for this update begins at 2:37:09 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

D. Sport Fish Division (John Chythlook, ADF&G)

- John Chythlook discussed the Sport Fish Division’s action plan to not close the fishery in Sections 4 & 5. *Audio for this update begins at 2:55:51 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

E. Subsistence Division (Tim Bembenic, ADF&G)

- Tim Bembenic presents 2025 subsistence harvest data. *Audio for this update begins at 3:18:55 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

5. PRESENTATIONS *Audio for this update begins at 3:36:29 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

A. ADF&G: Resident fish species movement on the Kuskokwim – Matt Albert

- Matt Albert, ADF&G Sport Fish Division, presents on resident fish species within the Kuskokwim River.

B. ADF&G SOEP: Southern Bering Sea survey results, otolith isotope research – Sabrina Garcia

- Sabrina Garcia, ADF&G Commercial Fish Division, presents on the Salmon Ocean Ecology Program (SOEP) and the apportionment research for western

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Alaska Chinook salmon. *Audio for this update begins at 4:10:00 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

i. REQUEST: Letter of Support

6. COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

WORKING GROUP MOTIONS:

Motion 1: Adopt agenda. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 0:09:38 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

Motion 2: Elect Avery Hoffman as co-chair. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 36:17 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

Motion 3: Accept Mike Williams, Sr as Working Group Representative to the KRITFC. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 51:56 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

Motion 4: Write a Letter of Support for the ADF&G SOEP. *Passed (Unanimous)*

- *Audio begins at 2:22:40 – Meeting Audio – 4/29/26*

Motion 5: Adjournment.

COMMENTS FROM THE WORKING GROUP: *No additional comments were provided from the Working Group Members.*

Meeting adjourned 3:51 p.m.

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WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE:

MEMBER SEAT:	NAME:
DOWNRIVER ELDER	Absent
UPRIVER ELDER	Allen Simeon
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Mike Williams, Sr
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	Absent
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	Barbara Carlson
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	Kevin Whitworth
MEMBER AT LARGE	Tad Lindley
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	<i>Vacant</i>
YK DELTA RAC	Absent
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<i>Vacant</i>
SPORT FISHING	<i>Vacant</i>
PROCESSOR	<i>Vacant</i>
KRITFC	James Nicori
ADF&G	Sam Decker
CHAIR	Fritz Charles

Other Participants:		
<u>ADF&G Comm Fish:</u> Madison Hardwig, Zach Liller, Iris Fletcher, Bailey Korkoske, Bill Youmans, Sean Larson		
<u>Sport Fish:</u> John Chythlook, Klaus Wuttieg		
<u>Subsistence:</u> Tim Bembenic, Jane Litvin		
<u>USFWS:</u> Christian Alexia, Jr, Bryan Danials, Nate Akers		
<u>OSM:</u>		
NVN – Dan Gillikin KRITFC – Erril Morauty, Andrew Magel, Justin Leon, Joe Spaeder, Bill Bechtol AST – Dan Valentine, Kelsey Harris	ONC – Avery Hoffman	<u>Media:</u>
		<u>WG Alternates:</u>

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (**ADF&G, department, State**), Orutsararmiut Traditional Native Council (**OTNC**), Association of Village Council Presidents (**AVCP**), Georgetown Traditional Council (**GTC**), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**), Bethel Test Fishery project (**BTF**), Catch Per Unit Effort (**CPUE**), Coastal Village Seafoods (**CVS**), ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division (**CF**), ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division (**SF**), Regional Advisory Council (**RAC**), Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (**KRSMWG, Working Group, or WG**), Sustainable Escapement Goal (**SEG**), Biological Escapement Goal (**BEG**), Management Objective (**MO**), Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence (**ANS**), Emergency Order (**EO**), Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association (**BSFA**), Law Enforcement (**LE**), Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (**KRITFC**), Native Village of Napaimute (**NVN**), Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (**YKHC**), Alaska State Troopers (**AST**), University of Alaska Fairbanks (**UAF**)

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