

Lower Bristol Bay Fish and Game Advisory Committee

Bristol Bay Board of Fisheries Comments Approved November 14, 2012

Actions of the committee are supported in attached Minutes from the November 5, 2012 meeting held in Port Heiden, AK

PROPOSAL 5-5ACC 65.020 Bag limits, possession limits and size limits for Coho in the Ugashik and Cinder Rivers salmon districts.

Discussion: Conservation concern for Coho in these systems is the main concern from user groups from this area. There has been a huge decline in Coho runs in this area for several years and not enough data available to safely justify the present large catch limits. Bob Dreezen and Tracy Vrem both expressed concern regarding the Egegik and Cinder River drainages seeing increased effort if the Ugashik River drainages had a reduced bag limit and size restrictions, that differed from these other rivers.

Support - Unanimous

PROPOSAL 16-5 ACC 06.331 Allow set gillnet gear to remain in place between fishing periods on consecutive tides. Motion made and seconded.

Discussion: This proposal would allow fishing to occur on a closed period for a few fortunate fishers and to make it make less work for them. This proposal is unfair to all other fishers.

Opposed - Unanimous

PROPOSAL 17-5 ACC 06.331. Gillnets spec. and operations.

Discussion: This proposal is trying to address a loop hole that was created through a past board approved proposal from a different fishing district. Proper board process was not done for this allowed loop hole.

Support – Unanimous

PROPOSAL 18-5 ACC 06331. Gillnet specs. and operations.

Discussion: This proposal was made out of safety concerns from a new way of fishing in the Ugashik up river exclusive set net fishing area.

It was summited to address new fishing practices by one of our committee members from this fishing area, he states that he is able to navigate with no problems in this area and that present regs. provide options that allow better opportunities for all fishers in this area. Tim, a life time resident of Ugashik and was around at the time of this section of development gave a firsthand account of how this area developed as a fishery in 1941. He stated that it was designed as a 25 fathom low impact fishery for fishermen wive’s to support their families while their husbands were off at war. He said until 2 years ago, all fishing has always been done right on shore 400 ft. or less off the beach. He stated that to have nets and running lines that can go almost all the way across the river is a huge safety issue and this fishery was never created for these new practices. Roland asked if the safety issue was addressed and solved if that would satisfy the concerns of the proposer. The response to that was “no, I support the proposal as written”. It was pointed out that it would turn into a complete different fishery if this proposal is not approved and that there will be higher costs to fishers with this new way of fishing, if other fishers have to do the same to stay competitive, but will be restrictive for this area if approved by the board.

Roland commented in response to Tim:

The 11 setnet sites were not established until statehood when the fishing boundary was moved to Muddy Point. Before that (during federal days drift fishing and setnet was allowed upriver in front of the village.)

Roland would like all references to this being a 'new' way of fishing to be taken out. It is NOT new, just unfamiliar to drifters who are on this board. It has been used extensively on the East side of the bay for 20 years; we have been refining bridle nets fishing in this area for 8 to 10 years.

The 25 fathoms portion is incorrect also as we have always, since '65, fished the full 50 fathoms.

Roland asked that the minutes reflect that when Hattie, one of the initial submitters of one proposal, was asked that IF the safety issues, which she stated as the primary reason for submitting the proposal, were addressed would she withdraw it and she answered NO, she would continue to supported it as written.

Motion failed, 5 support, 5 opposed, 3 abstained

***Footnote offered by Roland on November 14, 2012:

During statehood Mr Matsuno and Mr Enright (Tim and Hattie's dad) petitioned Congress to get 11 sites in front of the village. It was granted. When my parents arrived in Ugashik village in 1965 they bought a site from the estate of Sasa Struck and Mr Matsuno family fished 5 sites Mr. Enright family fished 4 sites. I am not sure who fished the eleventh site in '65. The Matsuno and Enright families had about half their sites registered in their children names. So to say it was set up for wives of men off at war is totally incorrect.

PROPOSAL 19 -5 ACC O6331. Gillnet specs. and operations

Discussion: After hearing the depts. comments of this proposal and with all agreeing with them, that this proposal is a gear conflict reaction that reg's presently in use all ready address.

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSAL 20-ACC 06331. Gillnet spec. and operations

Discussion: Gear conflict, lack of public safety in this area is probably the reasons for this proposals, this proposal might go past legal board perimeters if adopted by the board. There are issues here that should be addressed but as written would harm the legal setnet fishery.

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSAL 24 -5 ACC 06330. GEAR.

Discussion: We support the dept's comments on this proposal.

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSAL 25-5ACC 06330. Bristol Bay commercial Coho Salmon Troll Fishery.

Discussion: We support the dept.'s comments on this proposal.

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSAL'S 32,33,34,35, -5 ACC 06.341

Discussion: These proposals have been visit at every board cycle and debated without approval. These proposals would benefit very few well off fishers and burden the rest. Quality of the Bristol Bay pack is at an all-time high and improving every year and the fleet has no problems with not being able to harvest any abundant salmon with the 32 foot limit.

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSAL'S 36,37,238 5ACC 06.333. Permit stacking.

Discussion: If approved and everyone had 2 drift permits it would eliminate half of the boats in the bay and might eliminate 9000 fathoms of drift gear. The economics for the boats left in the fishery would have a better chance considerably, however if changes are made with the two permit system now in place , would make it more difficult for new fishers to come into the fishery and could eliminate some crew positions.

Motion failed, 1 support, 12 opposed.

PROPOSAL 41 ,42 -5 ACC 06.331 gillnet spec's and operations.

Discussion: We support the current system in place because it makes it easier for new fishers to get in the fishery and helps people that have boat problems to keep being able to fish.

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSAL 44 THRU 54 -5ACC Set net permit stacking

Discussion: The system in place has enhanced the setnet fishers that were having troubles before it was adopted, no sunset.

Support – Unanimous

PROPOSAL 55 -5 ACC 06.331. Gillnet spec's and operations

Discussion: It was not the intent of the board to allow this when the dual permit system was adopted to allow what the proposal is asking for.

This will re allocate salmon and cause gear conflicts and make these set net sites too efficient

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSAL 58,59,60,61 GENERAL DISTRICT

Discussion: Our committee has never supported any general district. It is a mixed stock fishery that has potential to harvest stocks that could be weak or to harvest too much of the front end of runs that could cause escapement concerns.

Enforcement will have troubles trying to cover this big area. It is possible that other species might be harvested that would cause waste.

Opposed – Unanimous

PROPOSALS 63,64,65, ALLOCATION PLAN

Discussion: When this plan was adopted, all angles were truly discussed, average historical catch data were looked at and all agreed to by all participants. It would reallocate fish were they don't belong. The present plan has been working very well.

Opposed – Unanimous