

**Nelson Lagoon AC**  
**September 23, 2022**  
**Nelson Lagoon Community Building**

I. Call to Order: Mark McNeley calls meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present:

Mark McNeley

Tim Heuker

Angela Johnson

Sherman McNeley

Dick Rysewyk

Paul Schaack

Darren Johnson

Melinda Johnson

Samantha McNeley

Trevor Edwards

Shannon Johnson

Leona Nelson

Ray Johnson

Reanna Heuker

Members Absent (Excused):

Members Absent (Unexcused):

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 8

List of User Groups Present:

None.

III. Fish and Game Staff Present:

Charles Russel Fish and Game

Bob Murphy Fish and Game

Tyler Polum Sports Fishing

Taryn O Connor

IV. Guests Present:

None.

- V. Approval of Agenda: Angela Johnson 1sts and Darren Johnson 2nds
- VI. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Melinda Johnson 1sts and Trevor Edwards 2nds
- VII. Public Comment:  
None.
- VIII. Old Business:

Discuss proposals that were tabled for this meeting.

Proposals 99-102

Tyler explains proposal 99-102

Proposal 99

To prohibit the retention of king salmon and establish closed areas in King Salmon River and Ridge Runner Creek. Makes them catch and release.

Proposal 100

Similar to 99 to prohibit the retention of king salmon in King Salmon River, Ridge Runner Creek and Milky River. Make them catch and release, and retain 1 jack/day (under 20in).

Proposal 101

To prohibit retention of King Salmon in King Salmon River and Ridge Runner Creek.  
No retention of King Salmon.

Proposal 102

To prohibit the retention of King Salmon in King Salmon River and the tributaries of Bear River to include Ridge Runner Creek and Milky River.

Mark comments- what's the potential retention numbers?

Tyler comments- We don't get harvest information because we don't keep fresh water log books anymore. No harvest information directly from user groups. What information that they (ADF&G) do have, as a whole of Alaska 384 fish harvest (estimate).

Mark comments- what's the survival rate of catch and release?

Tyler comments- catch and release numbers that we (ADF&G) typically use are 7% mortality rate across all types of rod type fishing. The number one thing that effects the salmon is the handling. For these smaller systems, mortality is probably in the 10's or fish not 100's of fish.

Mark comments- are fish and game opposed to these 4 proposals?

Tyler comments- it is too early to tell because staff comments are not in yet. "We typically would oppose anything that restricts access to the fisheries if not a conservation concern."

Mark comments- these proposals that want to fish the drainage, that's outside the mouth of the river?

Tyler comments- "these are all in river fisheries."

Mark comments- these fish that they were harvesting would be for that river they fishing in.

Tyler comments – within that drainage for certain.

Mark comments- what's the potential for future increase in guides (more fisherman participating). Has impact been increasing over the years? Has that been a concern with ADF&G?

Tyler comments- there is little potential for guides (lodges) to be huge fisheries. However, there is nothing to limit the # of clients the lodges can have. Or the limit of how many guides and lodges there can be participating. "We don't know what the sustainable harvest is."

Tim comments- concerning the 7% mortality, what about the second, third and fourth time they are caught? "Is there a spot in the drainage that they cant fish?"

Tyler comments- currently there is no place that are off limits to fishing, as far as those places that fish might be safe, I don't know their movement in the drainage entirely.

All of the rivers close by July 26<sup>th</sup>, because when they move into their spawning areas they tend to stay put. Salmon are extremely vulnerable when they are getting into that spawning area. For what happens to salmon released multiple times, he doesn't know of any studies for Alaska. Best we have is that mortality is pretty low.

Board votes unanimous no comment.

Proposal 125- will rotate the line to more perpendicular to the beach.

Board votes unanimous no comment.

Proposal 126: Change the outer Port Heiden section area and make it smaller.

Board votes unanimous support.

## IX. New Business

Agenda items will include the following:

Discuss and vote on Mark's Emergency Petition Draft.

Mark comments- he did not write a proposal type attachment and hoped the emergency petition would sum up what NLG AC's would like.

Mark reads NLG AC emergency petition out loud.

Petition addresses: lack of salmon returns crisis because no windows and deep nets, continuous 24/7 harvests from June 20<sup>th</sup> to end of salmon season in North Area M.

Conservation must take priority overall.

Aleutians East Borough (Area M Borough) submitted a Federal Fisheries Disaster Determination to the governor on behalf of the Native Village of Nelson Lagoon for FY2022 salmon season.

Native Village of Nelson Lagoon feels that several Federal Fisheries Disaster Declarations could have been submitted for several years prior to 2022.

Native Village of Nelson Lagoon and NLG AC strongly feel that salmon interception by Area M fishermen (outside Nelson Lagoon) are the main cause of our decline. Nelson Lagoon is a terminal fishery.

Any fishing outside of Nelson Lagoon is an intercept fishery.

Year after year ADF&G have failed to protect Nelson Lagoon salmon.

ADF&G quick to point out any other possible reason for Nelson Lagoon's salmon decline ignoring obvious ongoing salmon interception by Area M fishermen.

Proposal 120 addresses the Native Village of Nelson Lagoon's concerns of the dire salmon returns. NLG AC supports 120, but does not address strong enough language for conservation. NLG AC supports the windows in 120 for the North Alaska Peninsula Area M.

NLG AC wants to address the single most obvious common denominator every year is the interception of salmon by Area M fishermen.

Interception by Area M fisherman impact Chinook, Sockeye, Chum and Coho salmon.

Conservation must be demanded for all salmon migrations.

"Rolling Closures" (1/2 area closing of 1 out of 4 open Area M Sections at any given Time) proved that any limited fishing time of Area M has a positive impact on Nelson Lagoon's salmon returns. Rolling Closures is not enough.

BOF please address ADF&G and Area M fishermen to focus on conservation and preservation of Nelson Lagoon's salmon system over profit.

Many contributing factors have impacted Nelson Lagoons salmon escapement goals over the years. 70md nets and unrestricted mesh size have enabled Area M fisherman to achieve 30,000lbs of salmon per day/boat. Over 150 boats harvesting/day.

NLG AC supports proposal 128, but it needs to be amended to exclude Nelson Lagoon from increasing Nelson Lagoon to 45md. Nelson Lagoon stays at status-quo of 29md.

Only those nets that are currently 70md max depth be reduced to previous 45md max.

NLG AC would like a complete shutdown of Area M in the way of windows.

Mandatory 4 day closure any given week throughout the entire salmon season to

Ensure conservation of all Nelson Lagoon's salmon stocks.

Nelson Lagoon sees an impact 3-4 days later once June 20<sup>th</sup> harvest starts in OPH North Area M. The farther away the harvest, the longer it takes to be realized in Nelson Lagoon. Mandatory shutdown is imperative. Areas should only be opened if Nelson Lagoon has reached its periodic escapement goals. No fishing in Three Hills or Moller Bight because these sections do not have salmon harvest supporting streams.

BOF to consider pre 1980's management when lack of escapement was not an issue.

Board voted on submitting emergency petition as is, unanimous approval.

Taryn comments- to submit emergency petition to Art Nelson, Henry Lesia and

BOF comment email. CC Taryn as well.

Angie comments- Ray Johnson and Leona Nelson showed up right after meeting started.

Comment deadline is February 3<sup>rd</sup> for proposals.

Mark asks everyone to comment on Proposal 120 and 128 at ADF&G web site.

Mark comments- are we able to attend the BOF work sessions?

Taryn comments- you can listen to work sessions and submit comments.

Mark comments- NLG Fisheries Association needs to be formed.

Mark comments- he was hoping that APICDA persons would attend to discuss goings on with the sports fishing up river.

- X. Set next meeting date: Not setting a next meeting at this point.
- XI. Other
- XII. Adjourn: Mark McNeley makes a motion to adjourn the meeting and Angela Johnson  
2nds at 3:52 p.m.
- XIII. Adjournment:

Minutes Recorded By: Angela Johnson  
Minutes Approved By: Mark McNeley  
Date: 2/6/2023