Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 6:00 pm
Zoom/Webconference Only

Join the meeting online: **https://bit.ly/fairbanksACjuly21**
Dial in: **(669) 444-9171**
Meeting ID: **857 2597 8897**
Passcode: **FAIRBANKS**

I. **Call to Order:** Acting Chair Gale Vick called the meeting to order at approximately 6:01 p.m.

Levi Lewellyn, Chair, and Mark Richards, Vice Chair, had excused absences. Gale Vick chaired the meeting in their absence.

II. **Roll Call:**

a. **Present:** Krystal Lapp (secretary), Gale Vick, Virgil Umphenour, John Wisnieski, Mike Tinker, Chuck Derrick, Lance Nelson, Julia Hnilicka,
b. **Excused:** Levi Lewellyn, Chair; Mark Richards, Vice Chair; Gabriel Davis, Warren Giuchici, John Haddix, James Paine;
c. **Alternates Present:** None
d. **Unexcused:** Ricko DeWilde (has he formally been removed from the FAC? There was a motion in previous meeting minutes that the Chair/Co-Chair would send him notice but I keep seeing his name on the agendas)

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: The acting chair announced that a quorum of 8 was established after Virgil Umphenour joined the meeting.

III. Introduce Fish and Game Staff Present:

a. Deena Jallen, Yukon River Summer Season Area Management Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
b. Matt Olson, Yukon River Fall Season Area Management Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
c. Leila Williams, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Boards Support
d. Lieutenant Dan Valentine, Alaska Wildlife Troopers

IV. **Introduce Guests Present**:

a. Ernie Weiss, Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee
b. Olivia Irwin, Alaska Board of Fisheries
c. Terese Vincente, Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission
d. Charlie Lean, Chair, Northern Norton Sound Fish & Game Advisory Committee
e. Jim Simon, Director of Subsistence Policy, Research and Co-Management Strategy, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
f. Jazmyn Vent, Communications Director, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
g. Toby Schwoerer, economist, University of Alaska Fairbanks
h. Joe Martin, Association of Village Council Presidents
i. Andy Couch, Matanuska Valley Fish & Game Advisory Committee and Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission

j. Gabe Canfield, Subsistence Policy Specialist, Association of Village Council Presidents
k. Jacqueline "Jackie" Muehlbauer, Policy Analyst, Tanana Chiefs Conference
l. Andy Bassich, Chair, Eagle Fish & Game Advisory Committee, Regional Advisory Council member, and Yukon River Panel Communications Co-Chair
m. Earl Krygier, advisor and analyst, Chignik Intertribal Coalition
n. Al Barrette, Board of Game

V. Approval of Agenda

a. No formal motion or vote to approve the agenda. The committee proceeded with the circulated agenda and ACR discussion materials.

VI. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** 06/24/2026

a. The June 24, 2026, meeting minutes were not discussed or approved during this meeting.

VII. Reports

a. Chair's report
    - No separate chair's report was given.
b. Others
    - Legislative audit of the Board of Fisheries: Gale Vick reported that the Alaska Legislature had approved an audit of the Board of Fisheries process following concerns arising from the Area M meeting. She said she submitted comments supporting the audit, but urged the auditors to examine whether board members followed state conservation policies, not only whether the board followed proper procedure. She also recommended that the auditors seek input from Interior, Central, and Western Alaska stakeholders to ensure a balanced review.
    - Area M and vacated Board of Fisheries actions: Gale also provided background on the lawsuit challenging actions taken at the February 2026 Area M Board of Fisheries meeting. She explained that five actions, Proposals 126, 127, 141, 147, and 148, were vacated after the case was dismissed, and that the state had not publicly explained the basis for doing so. Members discussed concern that the lack of explanation undermined confidence in the Board of Fisheries and advisory committee process.

VIII. Public Comment

a. No separate general public comment period was held. Guests and members of the public were invited to participate during the discussion of the agenda items and potential Agenda Change Requests.

IX. Old Business

a. No old business was discussed.

X. New Business

a. Discuss and draft potential Agenda Change Requests (ACRs) for submission to the Board of Fisheries prior to the August 28th deadline
    - Gale Vick provided background on five actions adopted during the February

2026 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Chignik Board of Fisheries meeting that were subsequently vacated: Proposals 126, 127, 141, 147, and 148.

- Members discussed concerns about the lack of a public explanation for vacating the actions and the effect this could have on confidence in the Board of Fisheries and advisory committee processes. The committee also discussed the interception of chum and Chinook salmon in the June Area M fishery and whether the matters could reasonably wait until the next regular board cycle.
- The committee agreed to approve the general concepts for the ACRs during this meeting. Formal language would be drafted afterward and circulated to committee members for review. Gale Vick and Virgil Umphenour agreed to assist with drafting, and Krystal Lapp agreed to review the drafts.

b. Proposal 126

- The committee discussed Proposal 126, which addressed commercial fishing time and boundaries intended to provide additional protection for Chignik-bound early-run sockeye and Chinook salmon, as well as Western Alaska-bound chum salmon.
- Chignik representatives were still considering whether to submit an ACR.
- Olivia Irwin, Alaska Board of Fisheries, explained that Proposal 126 would expand the area through which Chignik-bound early-run salmon could pass before additional commercial fishing occurred. She described it as a greater safeguard for early-run Chignik sockeye salmon.
- Earl Krygier, Chignik Intertribal Coalition, said Proposal 126 sought to restore boundaries that existed before 2004, when portions of the Doggo area and Volcano Bay were opened to fishing. He said opening those areas created additional interception of Chignik-bound sockeye and Western Alaska-bound chum salmon. He also raised broader concerns about the sustainability of intercept fisheries when intercepted stocks are not accurately counted or managed according to conditions in their terminal fisheries. He encouraged consideration of both Board of Fisheries and legislative action addressing intercept fisheries.
- Action: The committee agreed by consensus to wait for the Chignik representatives' decision and consider supporting their ACR at a later meeting. The Fairbanks AC did not approve submission of its own ACR for Proposal 126.

c. Proposal 127, as Amended by RC 245

- Members discussed whether Proposal 127, as amended by RC 245, should be submitted as an ACR. Members stated that the continuing effects on the fishery could not reasonably wait for the next three-year board cycle.
- Motion: Virgil Umphenour moved that the committee submit an ACR seeking reinstatement of Proposal 127 as amended by RC 245.
- Second: Mike Tinker.

- Vote: Motion passed by unanimous consent, with no objections.

d. Proposal 141
    - The committee discussed Proposal 141, which addressed Chinook salmon retention after the June Area M fishery. Members emphasized the importance of retaining harvested Chinook salmon for accurate harvest reporting and genetic stock-of-origin sampling. They also questioned the survival rate of Chinook salmon released from purse seines.
    - Earl Krygier explained that the proposal addressed the lack of a Chinook salmon conservation plan in the South Alaska Peninsula area and was intended to align management more closely with actions taken in the Chignik management area. He emphasized the importance of retaining Chinook salmon for genetic sampling and questioned the likelihood that Chinook released from seine gear would survive.
    - Motion: A motion was made to submit an ACR seeking reinstatement of Proposal 141.
    - Second: John Wisniewski.
    - Vote: Motion passed by unanimous consent, with no objections.
e. Proposal 147, as Amended by RC 161
    - Charlie Lean, Northern Norton Sound AC Chair, presented the reasoning behind his draft ACR. He said shallower nets would allow fishermen to continue targeting sockeye while reducing Chinook and chum interception. Lean also argued that vacating Board of Fisheries actions without a public explanation damaged confidence in both the Board of Fisheries and advisory committee processes. He said the actions had been approved through the established public process and that unexplained reversals could discourage future public and AC participation.
    - Al Barrette clarified that Alaska Wildlife Troopers' review of proposals generally concerns whether regulations can be enforced, rather than whether the troopers support the underlying conservation policy.
    - Members discussed research indicating that Chinook and chum salmon generally travel deeper than sockeye salmon and that shallower gear could reduce the harvest of non-target species.
    - Lean recommended including language explaining that the unexplained reversal of actions approved by the Board of Fisheries undermined confidence in the board and advisory committee processes. Members agreed that similar language should be considered for each relevant ACR.
    - Motion: Virgil Umphenour moved that the committee submit an ACR seeking reinstatement of Proposal 147, using the amended language in RC 161 and coordinating with Charlie Lean.
    - Second: John Wisniewski.
    - Vote: Motion passed by unanimous consent, with no objections.
    - The committee agreed to retain the original 2027 implementation date and

not provide an additional year for implementation.

f. Proposal 148, as Amended by RC 208
    - The committee discussed Proposal 148, which addressed purse seine dimensions and operations in Area M.
    - Earl Krygier clarified that Proposal 148 was submitted by the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, not by Chignik. He said it was substantially similar to Proposal 152, which had been submitted by Chignik representatives. Krygier explained that Area M seines were longer and deeper than gear allowed in several other Alaska fisheries. He stated that reducing seine dimensions would still allow harvest of the target sockeye stocks while decreasing Chinook and chum interception.
    - Members stated that shorter and shallower seine gear could continue to harvest the target sockeye salmon while reducing the interception of Chinook and chum salmon.
    - Motion: Virgil Umphenour moved that the committee submit an ACR seeking reinstatement of Proposal 148 as amended by RC 208.
    - Second: Chuck Derrick.
    - Clarification: The committee agreed that the ACR should not provide an additional year for implementation of the gear requirements.
    - Vote: Motion passed by unanimous consent, with no objections.
g. Proposal 135, as Amended by RC 149
    - The committee discussed Proposal 135, which established a Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan but was amended through RC 149 to permit non-retention of Chinook salmon.
    - Al Barrette asked whether genetic testing could identify Chinook originating from Canada, Washington, or Oregon and whether those results could have unintended consequences for Alaska fisheries, including possible federal conservation action.
    - Charlie Lean responded that although genetic information could produce unintended consequences, it would likely strengthen the case for terminal fisheries and reduce reliance on mixed-stock intercept fisheries. He said fishing closer to terminal areas allows harvest to be directed at known stocks and reduces impacts on unrelated stocks.
    - Members discussed whether an ACR should require Chinook salmon retention to allow accurate harvest reporting and genetic sampling. Members also discussed the need to consult ADF&G regarding sampling procedures and review the Board of Fisheries record before finalizing the language.
    - Motion: Virgil Umphenour moved that the committee develop an ACR requiring retention of Chinook salmon under the management plan adopted through Proposal 135 and RC 149.
    - Second: Mike Tinker.
    - Vote: Motion passed by unanimous consent, with no objections.

- The final language will be developed after reviewing the board record and consulting with ADF&G.

h. Other fisheries, wildlife, or committee business as needed
    - Support for the Mike Kramer Letter
        - Gale Vick presented a letter written by former Fairbanks AC member and attorney Mike Kramer on behalf of the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association. The letter requested guidance from the Alaska Department of Law regarding whether a current state employee may serve on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council when the ADF&G commissioner already holds a designated seat.
        - Members clarified that the letter was an ethics inquiry and not an ethics complaint.
        - Motion: Virgil Umphenour moved that the Fairbanks AC support the letter written by Mike Kramer concerning appointments to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.
        - Second: Chuck Derrick.
        - Vote: Motion passed by unanimous consent, with no objections.
        - The committee agreed to send a letter to the Department of Law expressing support for Kramer's inquiry.
    - Legislative Audit of the Board of Fisheries
        - Gale Vick reported that the Alaska Legislature had approved an audit concerning Board of Fisheries processes following concerns arising from the Area M meeting.
        - Vick said she had submitted comments supporting the audit but encouraged the auditors to examine whether individual board members followed state conservation policies, rather than limiting the review to board procedures. She also recommended that auditors seek input from Interior, Central, and Western Alaska stakeholders.
        - No committee action was taken.
    - Prince William Sound Chinook Stock of Concern
        - The committee discussed a possible Stock of Concern proposal for Prince William Sound Chinook salmon.
        - Al Barrette questioned whether Stock of Concern criteria were applied consistently among drainages. Deena Jallen described general considerations, including recent escapement or yield performance, species life history, and historic stock patterns. Andy Couch suggested clarifying in the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy that advisory committees and individuals may request consideration of a Stock of Concern designation.
        - Members agreed that the issue should be addressed through a

regular proposal during the upcoming Prince William Sound Board of Fisheries cycle rather than through an ACR.
    - Action: The committee will consider developing a proposal before the April 9, 2027 proposal deadline.
- Stock of Concern Criteria
    - Members discussed whether Stock of Concern criteria are applied consistently among different species, stocks, and regions.
    - Deena Jallen explained that evaluations generally consider recent failures to achieve escapement or yield goals, the life history of the species, historical stock patterns, and whether the designation concerns yield or management.
    - Andy Couch suggested amending the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy to clarify that individuals and advisory committees may request consideration of a Stock of Concern designation.
    - Action: The committee agreed to consider this issue during the winter proposal-development process.
- Hatchery Proposal Scheduling
    - The committee discussed whether hatchery-related proposals may be submitted during regional Board of Fisheries cycles or only during statewide meetings.
    - Members reviewed previous board actions that had shifted consideration of hatchery proposals between statewide and regional meetings.
    - Action: Members agreed that hatchery proposals should be submitted during the appropriate regional cycles unless the Board of Fisheries provides clear direction otherwise.
- Copper River Salmon Concerns
    - Chuck Derrick raised concerns about low Copper River sonar counts and the possibility of a poor salmon return.
    - Al Barrette expressed concern about saltwater subsistence fishing inside the barrier islands during periods of Chinook conservation concern and questioned whether that opportunity was consistent with restrictions placed on other users.
    - Members discussed restrictions on the Copper River commercial drift gillnet fishery and ADF&G's use of sonar counts and in-river goals to manage fishing opportunity.
    - Al Barrette raised concerns about saltwater subsistence fishing opportunities inside the barrier islands during periods of Chinook conservation concern. Members also discussed commercial home-pack provisions and the interception of Chinook salmon.
    - Action: The committee agreed that Copper River Chinook conservation, commercial home-pack provisions, and related

management questions should be considered while developing proposals for the Prince William Sound cycle.

- ACR Drafting Schedule
    - Gale Vick stated that draft ACRs should be circulated to committee members by approximately mid-August to allow time for review before the August 28 submission deadline.
    - Members and subject-matter experts may be contacted to assist with individual ACRs. Charlie Lean offered to assist with the ACR concerning Proposal 147.

XI. **Set next meeting date:** No next meeting date was set. Gale Vick indicated that the committee expected to meet again in the fall before the October 2026 Board of Fisheries work session.

XII. Other- no other business was discussed.

XIII. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned following completion of business. No formal motion to adjourn or exact adjournment time was recorded.