

**Seward Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes of November 7, 2013
City of Seward Community Library**

A. Call to order at 6:06 pm by Chairman McCracken

B. Roll Call:

Members Present: Jim McCracken, Jim Hubbard, Jeanette Hanneman, Bob White, W.C. Casey, Diane Dubuc, Arne Hatch, Mark Clemens, Robin Collman.

McCracken offered introduction of the Committee members to any in the audience who were not familiar with individuals.

Quorum present; 8 members required.

Members Excused: Ezra Campbell, Jim Herbert, John Flood, Trent Foldager

Members Absent: Matt Hall

User groups present: Sport and Commercial Fish, Hunting, Conservation, Wildlife Viewing, Guiding, non consumptive users, personal use

Staff present: Dan Bosch and Mike Thalhausen ADF&G

Public present: Caroline Cherry, Wolfgang Kurtz, and Carl Hughes

C. Approval of Agenda/Approval of minutes from meeting of October 17, 2013:
[Motion–Agenda Dubuc; Hatch] no objection

[Motion-Minutes Casey; White] approval as corrected

D. Correspondence/emails: Casey presented a notice from Seward Chamber of Commerce Director regarding placing a net pen in lagoon.

E. Introduction of committee members/agency reps:

Fish and Game Dan Bosch, Mike Thalhauser

Public Present: sign in sheet not available

F1. Presentations: Dan Bosch – Most of surveys were complete (5 out of 7) salmon and Japp Creek not surveyed due to rain.

F. Citizens comments on Fish-Game issues: Bob White asked about putting fish at the waterfall? Bosch replied the area had changed and there is now no area to put fish. White said in thirty years he has not seen any significant changes in that area.

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G. Old Business: none

H. New Business: Fish Proposals The following proposals concerning Lower Cook Inlet Finfish were deliberated and voted on during the November 7th Advisory meeting:

Proposal 46 would allow party fishing in Cook Inlet saltwater.

Unanimous opposition 0-8-0.

We did not want to be the only area statewide where this is legal. The legal limit should stay with the individual, not the vessel.

Proposals 47-49-&49 seek to ban barbed hooks in both fresh [47 & 48] and saltwater [49].

We grouped these 3 proposals and opposed all by a 0-8-0 vote.

Studies have shown that the use of barbless hooks reduces efficiency but does not reduce mortality. Anglers would fish for longer periods for the same amount of fish.

Proposal 50 would prohibit catch and release fishing for coho in all Cook Inlet fresh water.

7 members opposed this proposal and there was 1 abstention. 0-7-1. Those opposed were concerned that once you reached your limit of coho; you would not be able to fish for other species.

Proposal 51 would ban catch and release fishing for coho in Cook Inlet-Resurrection Bay saltwater.

Unanimously opposed, 0-8-0. Resurrection Bay is managed by an escapement based management plan. mortality connected with catch and release fishing is reasonable.

Proposal 52 seeks to prohibit catch and release fishing for all salmon in all Cook Inlet fresh waters. We took no action based on the votes on proposals 50 & 51.

Proposal 53 seeks to prohibit anglers who are releasing a fish in the fresh waters of the Kenai Peninsula from bringing the fish's head out of the water.

We supported the spirit of this proposal and supported it 8-0-0. We did, however, realize that in practice enforcement would be problematic. There are situations when to quickly unhook a fish, the head would be removed from the water.

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Proposal 54 would prohibit sport fishing in major spawning areas when spawning salmon are present.

We had a split vote [2-6-0] on this proposal with 6 opposed and 2 supporting. The majority felt this would close all freshwater fishing as just about every stream, creek, river, or drainage is salmon spawning habitat. The supporting votes did so believing it would close the Kenai River to sport fishing and they felt this was a good idea to protect the spawning beds of king & coho.

Proposals 55 & 56 would decrease the Cook Inlet king salmon limit to 2 fish annually.

Opposed 0-8-0.

We addressed these proposals together. Part of the discussing centered on the fact that several proposals being debated at the Lower Cook Inlet meeting will also be discussed at the Upper Cook Inlet meeting and the Board will not debate or vote on these proposals at the December meeting. We opposed both proposals 8-0. There is no biological imperative, especially in Resurrection Bay. There are no natal king salmon streams in our bay. ADF&G has established a put and take fishery here. There were concerns that hatchery and wild fish would be treated the same.

Proposal 57 would limit the amount of sport caught fish that may be exported to 100#s.

This proposal was opposed 8-0. We felt this proposal was poorly worded. Does this mean 100#s per person? What would happen to the angler that caught a 200 # halibut and was prohibited from taking it all home? Extensive logistical concerns were debated. Non resident commercial fishermen are not limited to a specific amount of home pack.

Proposal 58 would eliminate Wednesday fishing on the Anchor River.

The vote was split on this proposal 5-3-0 to support.

Discussion centered on the suite of regulations enacted almost 18 years ago to protect the king salmon resource in the Lower Peninsula streams that were thrown out the window at the Lower Cook Inlet meeting 6 years ago at the urging of the then regional sport fish manager based in Homer. There was a vocal minority pleading with the Board to not lift the entire suite of regulations and encouraged them to proceed slowly by lifting one regulation at a time. The Board sided with the department and not only lifted the entire suite of regulations, but added additional fishing opportunity in the form of the Wednesday fishery. 6 years later, the resource is in trouble. The 3 votes to oppose did so because they

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felt the catch rate on Wednesdays was not of consequence and having a mid-week fishing period favored the locals.

Proposal 59 would delay reopening of the Anchor, Deep Creek, and Stariski Creek by 2 weeks.

We supported this proposal 8-0-0.

King salmon are vulnerable to hooking and associated mortality by fishermen fishing for dollies. Delaying the reopening of these waters would give later returning kings a chance to get upriver. before a fishery that allows bait and multiple hooks is allowed.

Proposal 60 would modify the sport fishing season on Lower Cook Inlet streams to allow fishing during November & December.

We supported this proposal 7-0-1 and felt it would not restrict fishing opportunity or greatly effect mortality. The member abstaining did so because they believed this proposal was not in their area of expertise.

Proposal 61 would reduce the king salmon limit on the Ninilchik River to one fish.

This proposal was supported 7-0-1. This proposal would make the bag limit consistent with other Lower Peninsula streams. The Department has EO authority to increase the bag limit if escapement goes over the upper range of the escapement goal. The abstaining member did so for the same reason as the previous proposal.

Proposal 63 would allow use of sport caught pinks and chums for bait in the saltwaters of Cook Inlet.

We discussed this proposal but did not vote on it. We supported the concept of using pinks as they are not a stock of concern, but opposed using wild chum as bait.

Proposal 64 would allow the use of sport caught pinks for bait in Cook Inlet saltwaters.

We supported this proposal 8-0-0.

This would bring Lower Cook Inlet in line with Prince William Sound. It was stated that these fish would become part of the bag and possession limit.

Proposal 65 would allow the use of sport caught dog fish as bait in Cook Inlet.

This proposal was supported 7-1.

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Discussion centered on the fact that anglers are not retaining their limits now. The opposing vote was concerned that dogfish take too long to reproduce.

Proposal 71 would decrease the winter king salmon bag & possession limit to 1 fish with a 2 fish annual king salmon limit.

We opposed this proposal 0-8-0 for the same reasons we opposed proposals 55 & 56.

The winter fishery has never reached the GHL. This is an allocation issue with no biological imperatives.

Proposals 82, 83, & 84 would change hatchery management plans for Tutka Bay, Port Graham, & Trail Lakes.

We grouped these proposals together and unanimously opposed all three 0-8-0.

The Department stated that there has not been a management plan for the last 2 years. Everything seems to be working as bag limits and escapement are OK. There was considerable discussion concerning the negative effects of the revised management plan. Each of these proposals would change current sport fish management to allow EO management for cost recovery as well as broodstock concerns. Currently the Department manages by EO only for broodstock.

Dianne Dubuc was approved to represent the AC at the BOF LCI meeting.

I. Citizens comments on Fish-Game issues: none

J. Response to Fish-Game issues by AC members/agency reps: none

K. Schedule for next meeting: November 14, 2013 at 6:00pm to discuss Game proposals. Sherry Wright requested election meeting to be held January 16, 2014 at 7pm.

Meeting adjourned at 9pm [White, Casey]

Draft Minutes created November 10, 2013

J. Hanneman and D. Dubuc

Approved and Final Corrected Version
November 14, 2013
Jim Herbert
SWD AC Secretary