

Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes- Virtual

Friday, July 31, 2020

PRESENT: Al von Finster (Chair, VGG nominee), Carl Sidney (Vice-Chair, YFWMB Appointee), Jason Jim (2nd Vice Chair, CAFN nominee), Roger Alfred (CYFN nominee), Stanley Njootli Sr. (VGG nominee), Tim Gerberding (Federal nominee), Harvey Jessup (Federal nominee)

Guest: Martin Slama (LRRC), Steve Smith (DFO), Bill Waugh (DFO)

SUPPORT: Elizabeth MacDonald (Executive Director)

Call to Order and Agenda Review/Approval

Al reviewed the agenda and asked for additions and amendments.

- Time change- Bill will present later at 2:30pm.

Motion 1 – YSSC accept the July 31, 2020 agenda as amended.

Moved by: Harvey Jessup

Seconded by: Carl Sidney

Passed by: Consensus

Yukon River Salmon Update

Steve Smith provided an update on Yukon River Chinook salmon:

- Initially DFO encouraged FNs to participate fully in the fishery for food
 - Now advising caution in the FN fishery and encouraged FNs to adjust accordingly
- Run timing very different at Pilot with a prolonged trickle
- Eagle is a poor predictor of total run size
 - Anticipate that there will be an increase in a few days
- High water, nothing record breaking but prolonged high water

Discussion:

- Ich impact on Chinook is not known but reports from Stan at Rampart Rapids indicate around 50% infection
- DFO is reluctant to declare all is lost, as the Eagle estimate could still improve
 - Jesse Trerice (DFO Manager) is talking individual to Lands & Resources Staff
- There is already 15,000 less Chinook than last year, and the spawning escapement goal wasn't met then and I don't see any changes from last year. This is a serious situation.
- Environmental conditions need to be looked at more closely and considered. Water conditions (high, hot...) and disease needs to be considered. The spawning escapement goal needs a buffer.
- ADF&G was more conservative this year after last year's over harvest. They closed 5D even after allowing the other districts to fish. This is very unusual.

Steve Smith provided an update on Chum.

The run size is much lower than predicted due to poor 4 year old survival. Should still be plenty for mainstem harvest in Canada. The new prediction is less than the lower end of the spawning escapement goal for Fishing Branch.

- Need a plan if Chinook don't materialize for a chum food fishery
- Angling and commercial fisheries have different opening dates due to the locations of the fisheries and the likely presence of Chinook on spawning grounds

YSSC decided to table the approval of minutes to provide additional time to review minutes and clarify the process.

Discuss if/when YSSC Should Resume In-Person Meetings

- Members discussed issues around meeting in person
- Members OK for an in-person meeting provided that we follow the Chief Medical Officer guidelines
- Need to act sooner than next meeting in August

Action Item 1 – Send a recommendation to FNs asking for additional conservation measures for Chinook. Tim will draft. Send by end of day. Follow up with media next week.

Action Item 2 – Next meeting to be in-person August 10. Only YSSC in-person, guests and presenters can join electronically.

Alsek Salmon Update

Bill Waugh (DFO) provided an update on Alsek Chinook and Sockeye. Klukshu Chinook looking like an average run. Doing snorkel surveys on Takhanne River now. Currently no angling and FN is open. Sockeye is too early at Klukshu to do a prediction yet. Village Creek Sockeye appear to have a later run timing than normal, likely due to high water. Angling is currently closed and FN fishery is open. Anticipate an angling fishery for Coho. Seeing decent numbers of Coho on the Taku and Stikine and predict to see something similar on the Alsek River.

Discussion:

- Projections for Sockeye will be available typically late August
- US may delay the Sockeye openings
 - Not a lot of harvest anticipated as only 10 licenses are active (approximately 70% of the average)

Discuss Potential RE Projects for 2012

- Discussed doing a salmon summit by partnering with YR Intertribal Fish Commission

A power outage at 2:40 ended the meeting early.

End of Day