

Tribal Consultation

Cook Inlet Salmon Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)

Amendment

Monday, May 22, 2023

Summary

Attendees

- Salamatof Tribe: Chairman Chris Monfor, Charlene Morrison, Eric Morrison, Shannon Williford, and Kaarlo Wik
- NOAA NMFS: Jon Kurland (Regional Administrator), Jamal Moss (Deputy Regional Administrator), Amilee Wilson (Tribal Liaison), Gretchen Harrington (Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division), Doug Duncan, and Abby Jahn (Sustainable Fisheries Division);
- NOAA General Counsel AKR: Joshua Fortenbery and Adam Eno

Meeting commenced @ ~1:00pm AKST

Welcome and introduction

- Google Virtual Platform logistics
 - A quick refresher was provided on how to navigate the Google platform (google meet functions, how to turn on and off mic/audio, closed captioning, raised hand, etc.).
- Meeting Notes Process
 - Discussed process for finalizing notes, posting to NOAA website, and a disclaimer for sharing of confidential/sensitive information
- FAI Dialogue Agreement (Appendix)
 - All parties agreed
- Land Acknowledgement

Introductions (*Co-Facilitators: Chairman Monfor or Mr. Morrison and Mr. Kurland*)

- Salamatof Tribe
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- NOAA General Counsel Alaska Section

NMFS Update on proposed Amendment 16 to the Alaska Salmon FMP process and status

Salamatof Tribe

- Salmon fishing is culturally important to the Salamatof Tribe and a family tradition and they have been fishing Salamatof beach for many generations.
- The proposed fixed closure date of July 15 would occur when the salmon runs are still strong. The benefit of closing the EEZ in mid-July was questioned. This negatively affects the commercial fishery, the community, and the economy built around salmon. The fish hit the beach between July 19th and 23rd. Closure on August 1 or August 15

would be preferred and is more consistent with historical use.

- A premature closure may result in too many fish returning to their natal grounds and disrupting the balance in the ecosystem due to record runs in recent years putting too many fish in the river. How many fish can it actually support?
- A lot of salmon must be caught in the ocean to avoid causing issues in the river.
- What salmon stocks are NMFS concerned about in the Cook Inlet EEZ, coho?
- NMFS should look at the fishery in real time to make any closure decision, not set it pre-season.
- What are the requirements to participate in the new Federal fishery?
- There are concerns about the Chinook salmon population. Tribe does not see as many king salmon returning to the area as before. A solution needs to be found.
- Chinook salmon sport fishing is year around and should have limits.
- We are working with the Quinault Indian Nation to exchange ideas regarding developing hatchery practices to reintroduce Chinook salmon to the area.
- The tribe is working to restore Chinook salmon habitat and improving water quality.
- King salmon are not caught in the EEZ fishery but do migrate through it. Recreational and charter anglers target them, but drift gillnet gear generally does not catch them.
- Commercial fisheries are an important management tool. NMFS has the actual numbers and the information already. All of the data that NMFS collects can help assist in making better fishery decisions. However, the state is not using that information to manage fisheries in Alaska. All state management appears to be political. The Tribe expressed their concern that the state has a sports fishing department and a commercial fisheries department that seem to run the show. Even though the state has a subsistence department, it has no voice.
- Where does Federal management apply? It can be confusing navigating the network of State and Federal agencies with jurisdiction over management, water quality, and other issues.
- There are challenges getting recognized and advocating for subsistence opportunities under State jurisdiction and would like NMFS to provide a direct voice on any subsistence fishing elements and impacts.
- One of the most vulnerable populations of commercial fishermen are native fishermen. We want to be involved in any permit buy-back programs.
- There needs to be a coming together of federal and state authorities. If you manage your area and you are doing great and then you send them into another area, there can still be problems. There needs to be a partnership.
- We want help navigating the network of authority of different federal agencies issues - e.g., wastewater treatment in Anchorage is an ongoing problem that we are concerned about.
- Thank you for involving the Tribes in your fishery management process.
- The Tribe will provide a written statement after tribal consultation outlining their feedback and concerns.

NMFS

- NMFS provided a summary of the proposed management measures.

- NMFS provided an overview of what NMFS would be prohibiting and recreational fishing information. Federal waters would be closed to recreational fishing if state waters are closed.
- NMFS must amend the Alaska Salmon FMP to address a court order. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council did not make a management recommendation. NMFS would like to receive tribal input on the NMFS proposed management plan.
- NMFS must consider the balance of mixed stocks moving through the area and not overharvest weak stocks.
- NMFS is concerned with late-run Kenai River Chinook salmon, and understands that the drift gillnet and recreational fishing in the EEZ doesn't harvest many Chinook salmon.
- Inseason salmon abundance information is very important and will be considered, but Federal management has less flexibility than the state regarding inseason management. NMFS must adhere to rulemaking and notice and comment requirements.
- This is a new fishery and federal managers have never managed this type of fishery before.
- A federal fishing permit (free), logbook, and a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) are required for federal managers to know where fishermen are fishing. A Commercial Fisheries Entry Coalition (CFEC) permit and use of eLandings would likely be required.
- Federal management would only apply to Federal waters.
- Agree that the health of Chinook salmon stocks in Cook Inlet is an important concern.
- For this tribal consultation, NMFS is interested in the specific action to manage the EEZ salmon fishery.
- This action is narrow and does not address topics like hatcheries or how to address fish restoration.
 - NMFS has limited jurisdiction regarding hatcheries and water quality issues.
 - NMFS appreciated the feedback and information provided by Salamatof tribal members.
 - NMFS can provide information about which agencies have jurisdiction over different elements related to salmon and their habitat.
- NMFS will consider this information into the development of Amendment 16.

Next Steps

NMFS will work to schedule any follow up meetings, as appropriate

Meeting Adjourned: 2:16 PM AK

Appendix: Dialogue Agreement



Our Agreements:

In Every Chair, a Leader

Speak to be Understood; Listen to Understand

Be Present; Be Engaged

Value Our Time Together

Safe Space for Meaningful Conversation

Challenges Solutions

Takest Thou Hats Off

Our Value of Humor Helps Us

We are Responsible for Our Experience

Take Care of Yourself; Take Care of Each Other

Questions?

Please see a host

