

Copper River Land and Resource Managers Meeting

October 4, 2017

Next Meeting - March 7, 2018

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) – Mark Somerville

- Subsistence fish reports are due October 31st. About 20% of reports are in – looking for harvest totals are done substantially.
- In 2012-2015, escapement equaled 1.2 million, this year the total is 700k. Projecting 65k for subsistence harvest, about 1/3 the five year average.
- King harvest was projected to be 3k total for Copper River in 2017, but run was substantially better than projected and harvest will probably be around 20k.
- Pre season restrictions were lifted during the season. Open fishery went from closed to an annual limit of two fish with one per tributary. These restrictions remained in place for the rest of the season. Subsistence bag limits on fish wheels were rescinded and the bag limit of five king salmon taken with dip net was restored to two fish. The Pu fishery was allowed to return to open beginning the fourth week of the season. Commercial fisheries were restricted by time and area for entire season.
- Online no-data yet for personal use but expect numbers to be down (140k and 100k in last several years, probably down to 120k this year).
- Gulksu: 1,188 king salmon were counted past the tower, a little below 1,600 average.
- The Board of Fisheries meets the first week of December in Valdez. Proposals are available online. Can comment online but being there in person is more effective. There are 12 proposals that directly affect the Copper River and local fisheries:
 - One proposal requests Copper River District salmon management plan increases the current Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) for sockeye salmon from 360-750k salmon to an Optimal Escapement Goal (OEG) of 700k-1.2M. The Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee wants more fish to go to upriver fisheries, over a certain amount is bad for fishery (over-escapement). Less production for spawners – means out system. Concern is result of this proposal would be chronic over-escaping. Fishery can't catch that many fish.
 - Copper River Fisheries Management plan. Every year ADF&G has to open a Barabaras Emergency Order. Doesn't make sense to issue permits there, it is private land. But leaving it open. ADF&G maintains a state fishery there because federal management of it state navigable waters rules in flux. No EOI eliminates paperwork that serves no function, does not change access or land status.
 - A local person proposes mandating the boxes on fish wheels, or mandate closely attended. Board traditionally has not required this due to cost for some users to update wheels. SO authority this year, for example, made close attendance a requirement.
 - Prohibit the use of dip nets from a boat in the Copper River Glenallen sub-district. Concern is they are too-effective, affecting sockeye run.
 - Modify season dates based on preseason harvest projection, put in by Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Commission. Concern is in conservation, we want to make sure they can get kings to their spawning areas.