

RC71



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

February 26, 2013

Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Re: Comments on 2012-2013 Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands on Board of Fisheries Proposals

Dear Mr. Johnstone and Board of Fisheries Members:

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the 2012-2013 Alaska Board of Fisheries Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands proposals. YRDFA is an association of commercial and subsistence fishermen and women on the Yukon River in Alaska with a mission of protecting and promoting healthy, wild fisheries and cultures within the Yukon River drainage. The salmon of the Yukon River provide a primary source of healthy food for the people and tribes of the region and are essential to the subsistence way of life on the Yukon River. For many residents the commercial salmon harvest also provides the only means of income for those who live in the remote villages along the Yukon River.

YRDFA's Board of Directors is composed of sixteen board members and fourteen alternates representing every fishing district within the Yukon River watershed. The Board adopted the attached resolution in reference to proposals 179, 180 and 181 at their annual meeting in St. Mary's earlier this month.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Klein".

Jill Klein
Executive Director



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

725 Christensen Drive, Suite 3-B, Anchorage, Alaska 99501
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Resolution: 2013-06

Reduce Fishing Time in June South Alaska Peninsula Salmon Fisheries

WHEREAS the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) works on behalf of subsistence and commercial fishing families within the Alaskan and Canadian Yukon River drainage who depend on wild salmon for subsistence and commercial fisheries; and

WHEREAS Chum salmon provide an essential source of food, income and culture for the people of the Yukon River, with chum salmon increasingly important for commercial fisheries and subsistence as Chinook salmon decline; and

WHEREAS subsistence harvests of Chinook salmon have been severely restricted in recent years, and chum salmon provide a healthy and nutritious alternative for food and income from commercial fisheries; and

WHEREAS the Board of Fish has recently taken action to restrict subsistence fishing on the first pulse of Chinook salmon as a conservation measure and has asked Yukon River fishermen to shift their harvest to abundant species when possible such as chum salmon; and

WHEREAS according to the best available scientific information, 50% or more of the chum salmon harvested in June in the South Alaska peninsula Coastal Western Alaska (CWAK) stocks; and

WHEREAS a limit on the total number of chum salmon which could be caught in the June South Unimak and Shumagin Islands was in place from 1986 until 2001; and

WHEREAS regulations in place from 2001 to 2003 allowed the fishery to be open 29% of the time, and current regulations provide for the fishery to be open 73% of the time;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that YRDFA requests that the Alaska Board of Fisheries significantly reduce the amount of fishing time for the South Alaska Peninsula June fisheries, with accompanying meaningful closure windows to help protect migratory Western Alaska stocks that are transiting the fishery.

COPIES of this resolution will be sent to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, Association of Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs Conference and other Western Alaska salmon groups.

APPROVED unanimously this 14th day of February 2013 by the Board members and delegates of YRDFA assembled at their Twenty-third Annual Meeting held in St. Mary's, Alaska.

Attest:

Richard Burnham

Richard Burnham, YRDFA Co-Chair

William Alstrom

William Alstrom, YRDFA Co-Chair