

**MINUTES**  
**SALMON SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**September 23, 2009**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Meeting#68**

**Upcoming Meeting Dates (tentative)**

SSC Meeting	November 17-19, 2009	Whitehorse, YT
Yukon River Working Group	November 20, 2009	Whitehorse, YT
Porcupine River Working Group	December 1, 2009	Old Crow, YT
Yukon River Panel	December 8-10, 2009?	Whitehorse, YT
Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board	December 8-10, 2009	
Strat. Plan Meeting	January?	
Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board	February 9-11, 2010	
SSC Meeting	February 9-11, 2010	Whitehorse, YT
Yukon River Panel Meeting	March?	Anchorage, Alaska
Alsek Drainage Working Group	March?	

**Location: Tagish Post Rm, Westmark, Whitehorse**

**Present:** Carl Sidney, William Asp, Ron Chambers, Don Hutton, Vicky Josie, Steve Smith (DFO), Louise Naylor (DFO)  
**(Conference call participants:** Tara Christie, Craig McKinnon, Lorelei Smith)

**Regrets:** Pauline Frost-Hanberg

**Meeting called to order by Chair Carl Sidney at 9:15 A.M.**  
**Opening Prayer**

**1. Introductions**

- Carl made introductions round the table, and introduced new member of the SSC are Ron Chamber, Tara Christie, Pauline Frost-Hanberg and Don Hutton. One position on the Yukon River Drainage is still vacant.
- SSC Members discussed nomination processes and delays from FN plus government
  - Determined that it was not a SSC responsibility
  - This is not just affecting the SSC; it is an issue of concern with most UFA boards.

**2. Reviewed Agenda**

Items on the agenda were reviewed,

- New member orientations (Postponed to September 29th)

**3. New Member Orientation (1/2 day) – (to be postponed until all new members can be present in person)**

- Steve briefly described the existing binder that is available for the new SSC members.



- The following items the SSC would like to provide further details on:
  - SSC
  - Yukon River Panel
- Orientation meeting set for September 29<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00pm

**ACTION ITEM #68-1: Carl to review new orientation binder info, and provide any additional information that the SSC want to include in orientation.**

**ACTION ITEM #68-2: Executive Sec. to follow-up with Canadian Yukon Panel Co-chair on commitment for the YFWMB to make a presentation to the Panel in December.**

4. **Development Budget for 2009/2010**

- Discussion on hiring a facilitator for the development of budget and clarifying the roles of the SSC.
- Carl explained what had occurred to date, the work and problems that occurred in the development of the interim budget.
- New members requested a summary package of the letters etc. that have occurred in the development of the budget. Discussion on the relevance of the documents, over the need to meet in person and discuss.
- Discussion over planed facilitated meeting and interpretation of roles and responsibilities. There is a desire to have “the parties” provide interpretation rather than individuals or any one government.
- Meeting set for Oct 6-7 to develop budget (Agenda items: Develop Budget, Mandate, and Strategic Plan Update).

**ACTION ITEMS #68-3: Exec. Secretary to provide letters and past documents that are related to the development of the budget for September 24<sup>th</sup>.**

**ACTION ITEMS #68-4: SSC to develop a letter to DFO with a request of what is required from DFO in regards to budget.**

**ACTION ITEM #68-5: Carl to check into the availability of an individual who took part in negotiating the development of the UFA, to see if they could be available for half a day to discuss with SSC.**

5. **Chair and Vice-Chair Elections**

- The process of electing the Chair and Vice-Chair is usually carried out every November. Due to the new appointments to the SSC do the SSC want to review the positions now, or postpone the review until November?
- Decision made to postpone reviewing of positions to November meeting.

6. **Activities to date**

Carl has been contacted by FN governments, RRC etc, and requested updates on what is happening with the following:

- Minto Mine



- Minto has accumulated more water than anticipated; there is no place to store the excess water.
- SSC discussed who is responsible to address these concerns with the Minto Mine, and where does the SSC fit in?
  - A: SSC usually has a habitat consultant look into the background, and then the SSC make a recommendation in regards to how it impacts on the salmon and salmon habitat.
- Q: Is this an issue that is most likely covered by the RRC?
- The YFWMB has adopted a policy that the Board would defer issues that are community related the RRC's, the Board would make recommendations when the issue is Yukon wide.
- Q: What is DFO's position in regards to minto mine?

**ACTION ITEM #68-6: Steve to follow-up with DFO, compile info on Minto Mine licence water accumulation and provide the SSC with the info in an executive briefing format.**

- Mayo-B Hydro Electric
  - To date the Mayo RRC has indicated to the Chair of the SSC that the Mayo-B dam will have impacts on the Salmon Spawning below the dam.
  - RRC has requested a letter of support from the SSC.
  - Discussion included the acknowledgement that this project is in the future and it will require a YESSA screening with opportunity for input.

**ACTION ITEM #68-7: Carl to call the RRC and request a formal letter from the RRC requesting an update with their concerns. The SSC can respond based on the info provided.**

- Salmon Summit (October 5, 2009)
  - Selkirk Renewable Resource Council is concerned with salmon and has requested support from the SSC in the form of funding.
  - Carl has requested further details from the RRC on the budget, but no details have been received to date.
  - Recommended that SSC members, who are available, are to attend the Salmon Summit.

**ACTION ITEM #68-8: Carl to request further details about the Salmon Summit from the RRC; funding level request, purpose, agenda.**

Lunch Break - Meeting adjourned to 1:30pm

## 7. Scheduling

- Sept 24 – Meeting at YFWMB Board room to discuss package to members, summarize budget info to date, letter to DFO.
- Sept 29 – New members orientation (Ron, Tara)
- Oct 5-7 - SSC Meeting



- Agenda items: Salmon Summit, Budget – (in camera), Interpret Mandate- (in camera), Strategic Plan – (in camera), State of the Salmon attendance.
- Remainder of meeting dates to be determined during the October meeting.

## 8. **Late additions:**

### State of the Salmon (Nov 1-5)

- Committee discussed the possibility of a member attending:
  - Conference to take place in Portland Oregon
  - Concerns expressed with the SSC limited budget.
  - Decision on attendance to be postponed until the SSC budget has been completed

### Fishery Updates

- Don Hutton as a new member expressed concerns with the method of consultation with SSC members on changes to the salmon management made in-season, due to the fact that only two SSC members participated in meeting. A: Where there are in season changes to the approved management plan, there is a requirement for DFO to consult with the SSC where possible prior to the change, but there is only a day or two of prior notice so every effort is made to try and reach members prior to the change but this is not always possible

### *Yukon Drainage*

- Sandy Johnston provided an update to the SSC on the Yukon River Fishery. See Appendix I attached for further details.

### *Alsek Drainage*

- Poor sockeye run to date. This resulted in closure of FN fishery and sport retention for sockeye reduced to zero effective midnight Sept 23.
  - Low effort
  - CAFN has agreed to close their fishery for 2 weeks, based on current numbers.

### *General Discussion*

- With the lower than anticipated numbers there has been a lot of communication with the communities and the co-operation with the communities has been very good.
- Q: Is the Chum production in other areas of Canada, and Alaska comparable? A: It is too early to tell, focus has been on the Chinook to date.
- Q: Is there any scientific data on salmon predators? A: None known of.
- Q: What about FN traditional knowledge has there been any effort to correlate it to what is happening now? A: Traditional knowledge is showing that the size of the fish has gone down. Scientific data is present but not as far back as the traditional knowledge and public knowledge.
- Q: During the run oscillations there are trends, are there any studies done on the sea mammals when there are fluctuation? A: You would assume that there would be, as there are studies being done on Salmon.

Closing Prayer - Ron Chambers



Meeting adjourned 4:05



# Appendix I

Yukon River Update provided by Sandy Johnson

## Run Status:

The current run status of the Yukon River chum salmon run in Canada appears to be weak and unlikely to achieve conservation goals.

In-season assessments of fall chum in the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River all indicate the run is well below average. For example, the Pilot Station sonar estimate is 235,891 (completed) which is the lowest estimate since the project commenced in 1995, and is well below the average (1995, 1997-2008) of approximately 665,400 fish. The Lower Yukon River test fishery, Mountain Village test fishery, Tanana 5A fish wheel, Rapids video fish wheel, and Sheenjek River sonar are all indicating a fall chum salmon run well below average. Some fishery restrictions have been imposed in Alaska to address the low run size.

Management decisions for the management of the chum salmon run in the Canadian sections of the upper Yukon River drainage are based on the sonar counts provided from a joint Canada/US project near Eagle Alaska. Chum salmon management decisions for the Porcupine River are based on weir counts from the Fishing Branch River.

In the upper Yukon, the Eagle sonar estimate as of **September 22 is 46,089** compared to an average of **124,000** to date (for the years 2006-2008 when the project has operated). Estimates for the 2006-2008 period to this date ranged from **102,600 in 2008 to 169,900 in 2006**. Based on the estimate to date and historical run timing data, it is projected that the Eagle sonar estimate for the season will total **68,000 to 90,000** chum salmon. Accounting for catches that are likely to occur in Alaska near Eagle above the sonar project, the expected number of chum to migrate into the Canadian section of the upper Yukon is **53,000 to 77,000** chum salmon. This places us in the **YELLOW Zone** of our chum management plan which is a run of 40,000 to 83,000. In the Yellow Zone, opportunities to fish chum salmon are not provided in the commercial, domestic and sport fisheries. First Nation fisheries are provided some opportunity to fish depending on where the run projection falls in the zone. **The spawning goal for upper Yukon chum salmon is >80,000.**

On the Porcupine River, the situation is poorer with a total of only **8,226** chum being counted through September 22 at the Fishing Branch weir. This is well below the average to date of 19,100 and is the **third** lowest count (**1972-75, 1985-2008 excluding 1990**) to date recorded. Based on run timing information from historical weir counts, the total 2009 weir count is projected to reach **15,700 to 22,900**. **The escapement goal for this system is 22,000 to 49,000 chum salmon.**

## Management Considerations/Actions:

The upper Yukon chum run status was discussed during a teleconference with First Nation Lands and Resources personnel on September 16. Since the projection for the number of chum salmon migrating into the upper Yukon River in Canada is in the Yellow management zone, it was recommended that the overall First Nation catch would be reduced by one-third to total 2,000 chum salmon (compared to “normal” unrestricted fishery catch of approximately 3,000). Guideline harvests for communities based on a pro-rata sharing approach as described in the UFA would be as follows:

Dawson	1,600 (80%)
Pelly Crossing	240 (12%)
Carmacks	140 (7%)
Burwash	<100 (1%)

First Nation participants in the teleconference requested time to allow this to be discussed with their respective First Nations and it was agreed that we would discuss the outcome of those discussions Monday September 21 at 10:30 a.m. via teleconference. Unless the run projection changes, it is expected restrictions in upper Yukon First Nation chum fisheries will be implemented soon thereafter.

The outlook for Porcupine River and Fishing Branch chum was also discussed on the conference call on September 16 and it was recommended that Vuntut Gwitchin Government consider a complete closure. **Further discussions**



**with VGG personnel held September 17 have resulted in plans to close the fishery effective noon September 21 through noon October 05 to conserve chum salmon. This closure will be subject to ongoing updates of the run status.** DFO Conservation and Protection personnel will assist in helping to implement this closure.

It was hoped that restrictions would not be required in First Nation chum fisheries in 2009 and up until now, First Nations have had opportunities to fish chum (open 24-7). However, the run status is poorer than expected and actions are being taken to address conservation of the resource to ensure enough fish reach the spawning grounds. **The Canadian commercial and domestic fisheries have not opened and are unlikely to be opened at all during the fall chum season. In the recreational fishery, the catch and possession limits for chum salmon will be reduced to zero effective noon September 21; chum salmon are not targeted in the sport fishery and historically no chum have been reported.**

We will continue to regularly update fishers, Yukon communities, and the Yukon Salmon Sub-committee and other interested parties regarding the run status and adjustments to fishing regimes.

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