

# Fisheries

This document is intended to summarize for interested parties the priority issues and recommendations put forward by the Walker Mallott Fisheries Transition Committee. This is not a complete transcription of the entire committee process and does not document all aspects of the discussions that occurred within the Committee meetings.

For each of the priority issues identified we were also tasked with identifying what success or resolution of the priority issues would look like and what actions would lead to success or resolution. The committee also discussed what barriers to achieving the success elements would be, and what actions might be taken to help resolve the barriers.

## Priority Issues and Recommendations for Alaska Fisheries:

Transition Team Committees were asked to identify the top five priority issues in their topic areas by identifying the biggest challenges they believe the State of Alaska needs to work on. Out of many ideas that were brought forward, the top five were voted on and solidified. The top five priority issues for the Fisheries Committee were:

- 1. Clear "Fish First" Policy for Alaska**
- 2. Prioritize and Improve Fishery Access for Alaskans: Develop policies, strategies, management to return fishery access opportunities to residents of Alaska's fishing communities**
- 3. Adequate Funding for ADF&G and Fisheries Science**
- 4. Alaska fisheries should be managed based on Science over politics**
- 5. Alaska fisheries management should be locally based and adaptive**

Other issues considered that had commonalities to the major issues included:

- Define Subsistence/Personal Use
- Technology Utilization
- Increase and improve public understanding of dollar value of fisheries
- Recruitment and retention in fisheries management

## Priority Issue #1: Fish First Policy for Alaska

Success Elements Considered Agreeable to Most Alaskans

#1 - Instream flows necessary for fish propagation and fish habitat conservation should be automatically reserved for fish in waters lacking instream flow reservations

#2 – There should be no significant loss of fish habitat knowingly permitted in the State of Alaska

#3 – A Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) that incorporates viewpoints of all stakeholders should be reinstated

#4 - All new road construction should not restrict fish passage

#5 - All existing roads should be upgraded so no restriction in fish passage occurs

### Possible Actions to Achieve Success:

- Enact legislation creating automatic in stream flow reservations for fish. If someone wants to use water then the burden of proof is on the appropriator to both collect flow data AND show their water use will not harm fish or habitat (saves DNR and ADF&G money and conserves fish) (Pertains to Success Element #1)
- State of Alaska Sustainable Salmon policy should be reworked, enacted by Alaska Board of Fisheries, and codified into statute. (Pertains to Success Elements #1,2,3,4)
- Reinstate DNR's original mission statement to include habitat conservation (Pertains to Success Elements #1,2,3,4)
- Enact state legislation or utilize executive order to reinstate Coastal Zone Management Program or similar process that:
  - o Creates local control
  - o Defends against federal overreach
  - o Makes Alaska eligible for federal funds (Pertains to Success Element #3)
- Enact fish passage requirements via: ADF&G fish habitat permit regulations or statute or DOT regulations. (#4)
- Existing roads and stream crossing (culverts) should be prioritized for fish passage assessment, those not meeting fish passage standards should be prioritized for upgrading to state of the art fish passage standards as road improvements are conducted (Pertains to success element #5)
- Leverage network of regional salmon habitat partnerships around the State of Alaska. (Pertains to success elements #1,2,3,4,5)

### Barriers to Further Success

- Lack of scientific data due to lack of money
- Lack of education/information to general public regarding habitat conservation
- Lack of political support from the public and legislators to protect fisheries
- Lack of holistic/basin wide/whole watershed management
- Lack of unified action or influence on behalf of fisheries conservation relative to other industries in the state
- State, federal, and international management disconnect and lack of coordination
- No compendium of best practices in conservation based fisheries management
- Subversion of science to politics
- Sustainability rhetoric from state versus reality (i.e. effective implementation of sustainable practices)
- Myth that we can re-create fish, recreate nature, recreate habitat, or replace wild runs with hatchery production
- Fish and fishermen are viewed as barriers to development
- Irreplaceable optimism that fish can coexist with development at any scale. Failure to heed lessons of history.
- Economic value of fisheries is undervalued and not understood, monetary dollar value of clean water and habitat is not understood

## Actions to Address Barriers

- Barrier: Lack of scientific data:
  - Prioritize baseline data collection and routine stock assessment
  - Look for partnership opportunities to conduct research that may allow fisheries to open based on adequate data analysis by managers
  - Provide a transparent process and documentation of how prioritization of research funding is decided
- Barrier: Lack of education and information to the general public on habitat conservation
  - Governor Walker to create “fish first” education team to better inform Alaska public – UNITE subsistence, sport, charter, commercial to accomplish this
  - Launch public campaign using effective modern media tools to explain why fish, fishermen and fish habitat matter
  - Emphasize community supported fisheries and local consumption of seafood
- Barrier: Lack of votes from public/legislators (see above – educate)
  - Annual seafood briefing to Legislature
  - Greater visibility of fishing industry and work in support of fish and fish habitat in Juneau
- Barrier: Lack of holistic/basin wide/watershed management
  - Educate
  - Mandate evaluation of cumulative impact in the development and permitting process
  - ADF&G needs stronger voice, ability to veto or improve projects that threaten fish
  - Restore powers and resources of the Habitat division to ADF&G
  - State/federal/international disconnect – Strong state presence at international and federal forums (Pacific Salmon Treaty, NPAFC, IPHC, ESA listing, trans boundary development issues)
- Barrier: No compendium
  - Compile a “bible” of best practices in conservation-based fisheries management to be used in permitting processes and fisheries management (e.g. roads, riparian management, hydro, hatcheries, seafloor habitat, and culverts!)
- Barrier: Subversion of science to politics, Sustainability rhetoric
  - Recommit to sustainability and precautionary management - walk the talk
  - Allow State scientists to present at State/national/international scientific forums, allow findings to be presented that might at times be contrary to existing state policy.
- Barrier: Myth that we can re-create fish
  - Educate! Every legislator should be familiar with Author David Montgomery’s book King of Fish
  - Explain why Hatcheries cannot replace wild and why
- Barrier: Fish and fishermen as barriers to development
  - Look for mitigation and coexistence opportunities, but make the hard choices. Say “no” to some projects that compromise fish production and clean water for fish
  - Educate the public on the seafood industry’s contribution to Alaska’s economy.

## **Success Element #2: Prioritize and Improve Fishery Access for Alaskans**

### **Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans**

- At least 10% increase in Alaska ownership of commercial fishing licenses, permits, quotas in next five years
  - At least 10% increase in ownership and meaningful participation in Alaska fisheries by coastal residents over next five years
- Policy that ties permits, licenses, and quotas to Alaska fishing communities. Coastal access to fisheries (can't be sold away)

### **Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements**

- Establish state funds to recapture commercial fishing licenses/permits for Alaskans, with designated subset for "young" Alaskans
- Enact legislation that allows "recognized community entities" to retain/recapture commercial fishing licenses/permits for the use and benefit of community residents Address unincorporated communities
- Support/establish Fishery Trusts/permit banks that allow investment in recapturing/retaining commercial quotas/licenses for the use and benefit of coastal Alaskans
- Reduce obstacles to local small-scale processing and marketing
- Increase consumption of locally harvested seafood

### **Barriers to Further Success**

- Contrary to free market economics
- Constitutional and legal issues
- Lack of opportunities
- Lack of financial capital
- Lack of business acumen
- Currently have Community Quota Entities, which are good in theory but implementation is difficult for federal fisheries (halibut stock fluctuation; costs); salmon may be easier
- Bureaucratic process is cumbersome
- Too expensive to purchase entire fishing business so permit/equipment is parsed out when retirement is desired
- Inability to collateralize permits
- Limited number of entities that can shoulder financial risk
- Funding sources
- Some rural communities don't have legal standing to be a CQE
- Lack of boats and equipment in order to put permits and licenses to work
- Need to prepare/recruit young people to want to go into this business
- Educate people about process and how they can become eligible and successful
- Fluctuations in value of permit/licenses
- Changing regulatory environment

### Actions to Address Barriers

- Continued access to harvest the resources
- A stable regulatory environment
- Constitutional amendment and legislation
- A lot more entities to hold licenses and permits and quota shares
- Unorganized communities need to become legal entities or partner with existing legal entity
- Alaska Maritime Workforce Development Plan
  - Fund vocational education
  - Promote Career awareness, follow example of, or tie in with Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program at UAA
  - Teach basic fishing, boat repair, and business skills
- Educate Alaskans about how to acquire fishing permits, licenses, quota shares
- Consider possible changes to federal loan program for quota shares
  - (Provided IRS cannot seize quota shares)

## **Priority Issue #3: Adequate Funding for ADF&G and Fisheries Science**

### Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans

- ADF&G has funds required to:
  - Sustainably manage (harvest, habitat, etc.)
  - Manage based on science
  - Manage to the benefit of all users
  - Restore Habitat Division & resources back to ADF&G from DNR

### Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements

- Eliminate "future, free" lifetime license, Alaska residency (*Action not likely supported by most Alaskans*)
- Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) generates \$1.5M additional dollars into ADF&G budget or research endowment
- New tax on sport and charter fish
  - Exported outside
- Fish landing tax and give to general fund (ADF&G as recipient)
- Work with DC delegation to amend Dingell-Johnson
  - Increased tax on retail recreation items
- Ask DC delegation to review Sustainable/Salmon/Fish fund and how the funds are distributed (22-0)
- Tax on sport fish derbies (*Action not likely supported by most Alaskans*)
- Silver/Sockeye salmon stamp (similar to king stamp)
- Be cognizant that some decrease in state expenditure may have outsized impact on federal money coming in
- Tax on Limited Entry permit sales
- Seek efficiency
  - More temps/interns
  - Retire/rehire
  - Contract for some services
  - Share the equipment and expertise between divisions

- o Use technology: such as video equipment for weir count. Drones?
  - Data Centric Database Systems
- o Virtual meetings
- o Increase cooperation among resource managers
  - State – federal
  - Inter – divisions
- o Online creel surveys versus mail (surveys)
- o Avoid bureaucratic overlap – top heavy areas?

### Barriers to Further Success

- Trust
- Lack of transparency within funding mechanisms leads to lack of trust
- Public doesn't see need for tax
- No mechanisms or processes for local needs base
- Low profit margins and cyclical profits are difficult to tax
- Lack of understanding of dedicated vs undedicated funding sources: Agencies, public, legislators, users
- Lack of ability to adjust fees relative to inflation: Revenue indexing
- Long or blind feedback from funding source
- Percentage based cuts versus targeted
- We don't involve agency employees
- Program versus personnel cuts
- Personnel indexing
- Lack of administration personnel oversight
- High cost (disproportionate) of managing rural areas of state
- Lack of technology to improve efficiencies (Fish tickets, logbooks, etc.). No platform for sharing data between divisions or departments
- Bias to adopt homegrown technology
- Biased against contracting out services (website)
- Technological efficiencies not been considered or utilized
- No ability to track replication of data source/platforms not communicating. Reluctance to invite technology expertise on technological challenges

### Actions to Address Barriers

- More transparency and education about funding mechanisms
- Better tracking of funds and taxes
- Provide ability to adjust fees relative to inflation and revenue indexing
- Shorter feedback loop between taxes/fees and their use – transparent
- Equitable taxation (Parity among stakeholders), one-time tax, amount based tax
- Alaska's fisheries resources generate 6 billion dollars in value per year to Alaska. We need to take that into account when we are seeking efficiencies and cost cutting.
- Actively engage agency employees and cost-cutting
- Address personnel costs
- Evaluate potential innovative outsourcing
  - o Technology expertise
  - o Technology platforms
  - o Scientific expertise (more biometricians for example)
  - o Overhaul/explore technology innovations (e.g. video cameras underwater at Weirs)

- o Digitize current paper reporting system
- Tele meetings/teleconferences by videos
- Include rural people/agencies in data collection
- Establish digital standards for data sharing between agencies and governments (State, Federal, and Tribal). Outsource!
- Administrative panel to review department and division personnel costs<sup>4</sup>. Science Over Politics

## **Priority Issue #4: Alaska Fisheries should be Managed based on Science over Politics**

### **Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans**

- Develop policies to ensure that the best available science is applied to management decisions
- Develop policies to require Board of Fisheries generated proposals adhere to public process like other proposals
  - o Enlarge, regionalize and professionalize the Board of Fish; Reopen conversation.
  - o Regional
  - o Explore possibilities
  - o Split shellfish from finfish
  - o Board selection process, board processes
  - o Review reoccurring problems
  - o Conflicts of interest issues
  - o Access and transparency to department "report" information
  - o Improve timely access to information
  - o Increase authority of advisory groups
  - o Ability of Alaska Board of Fisheries representative to speak, participate (re: conflict of interest related)
  - o Ask Governor to form a working group to consider Alaska Board of Fish reforms
  - o Consider forming a workgroup to review regional concerns
  - o Evaluation of Board of Fish process that results in changes and improvements
  - o Regionalization is good but need departmental support to these areas
  - o Recommend the Administration review and evaluate policies, procedures and practices of the Alaska Board of Fish, including the interaction between the Board and ADF&G, and provide a series of possible improvements to the overall process.
  - o Unanimous vote to adopt all points listed above as corresponding success elements for Priority Issue #4

### **Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements**

- Adopt state legislation to require use of best available science, similar to or equal to Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards
- The Governor or the Legislature should adopt policies requiring the Board of Fish generated proposals adhere to public process requirements like other proposals

### Barriers to Further Success

- First action item above:
  - Administration and Legislature
  - Human factor
  - Money
- Second action item above:
  - People/resource come first
  - Area conflict
  - Resolution summit (all stakeholders)

### Actions to Address Barriers

- A division within ADF&G that just does scientific, social and economic research in support of the BOF

## **Priority Issue #5: Locally Based Adaptive Fisheries Management**

### Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans

- Reenact Coastal Zone Management Program
- Have area managers based year round in the area they manage
- Real time management decisions based on science and run timing
- Well educated and informed legislators and administration

### Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements

- Reenact Coastal Zone Management Program
  - Reenact a new coastal zone management program that incorporates the viewpoints of all stakeholders.
  - Introduce to Legislature in 2016 after input from relevant stakeholders and communities
- Have area managers based year round in the area they manage
  - Encourage an ANSEP style program for fisheries management
- Real Time management decisions based on science and inseason analysis
  - Encourage development and use of tools that improve the effectiveness of in-season decision-making
  - Encourage long-term development of capacity building at local levels during the season.
  - Encourage professional development program within ADF&G
- Well educated and informed legislators and administration
  - Encourage legislators and administrators to get out into communities to listen to the diversity of stakeholders

### Barriers to Further Success

- Can Sitka model be replicated? Barriers:
  - Cooperation (State, business, individuals, subsistence definition)
  - Funding
  - Dual management
  - Enforcement
  - Scale and scope
  - Data



### *Actions to Address Barriers*

- State expertise and data
- ID private, federal funding
- Create/support process to solicit and incorporate local ideas and knowledge with aim of creating a LAMP or other local management regime (State helps locals get to yes)
- Mediation