ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES
February 16, 2007
8:40 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Bryce Edgmon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Kyle Johansen
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Lindsey Holmes

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Mark Neuman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: COOK INLET AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION/ADF&G - 2006 SUSITNA SOCKEYE SALMON PROJECT[S]

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

TRENT DODSON, Fisheries Scientist
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA)
Kenai, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of the CIAA component of the affiliated projects, and responded to questions.

GARY FANDREI, Executive Director
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA)
Kenai, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to association questions regarding the 2006 Susitna Sockeye Salmon Project[s].

DOUG EGGERS, Fisheries Scientist
Region I, Division of Commercial Fisheries
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the ADF&G component of the affiliated projects, and responded to questions.

JIM HASBROUCK, Fisheries Scientist
Region II, Division of Sport Fish
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to departmental questions regarding the 2006 Susitna Sockeye Salmon Project[s].

BOB CLARK, Fisheries Scientist
Region II, Division of Sport Fish
Alaska Department of Fish & Game, (ADF&G)
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to departmental questions regarding the 2006 Susitna Sockeye Salmon Project[s].

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR PAUL SEATON called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 8:40:07 AM. Representatives Johnson and Edgmon were present at the call to order. Representative Wilson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

OVERVIEW: COOK INLET AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION/ADF&G - 2006 SUSITNA SOCKEYE SALMON PROJECT[S]

8:40:28 AM

CHAIR SEATON announced that the only order of business would be an overview of the 2006 Susitna Sockeye Salmon Project[s].

8:41:40 AM

TRENT DODSON, Fisheries Scientist, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA), provided a brief history of the projects, developed in 2005 to conduct investigative work on various lakes in the Susitna River watershed system. Proposals generated by the CIAA, and proposals that were under development at the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), were integrated in a memorandum of understanding (MOU), for a collaborative effort to complete two, three year affiliated projects. The first is a three part project titled “Evaluation of Sockeye Salmon

Production from Lakes in the Susitna River Watershed." Part one requires the CIAA to collect limnology samples from each of seven study lakes. The 2006 sample collection is currently being completed by ADF&G to evaluate whether limnological conditions in the lakes have changed since the 1980's and 1990's. In response to Chair Seaton, he agreed to provide the data evaluation report to the committee.

8:44:00 AM

MR. DODSON described second part of the watershed production project, being handled by ADF&G: Conduct hydro acoustic surveys of the lakes to establish estimates of the population size, and mean body size, of juvenile sockeye salmon, and other juvenile fish, rearing in each lake in the fall, and estimate the age composition of the juvenile sockeye salmon population. This encompasses fish that have hatched the previous spring, as well as some age one, and age two, sockeye salmon from prior hatches. The CIAA assists with the project's third part, which is to evaluate whether survivals from potential egg deposition to fall fry, and from fall fry to smolt, are lower in these seven rearing lakes compared to other sockeye salmon stocks. The CIAA is charged with conducting weir enumeration on the adult sockeye salmon, as well as smolt counts in the lakes; gathered data is evaluated by ADF&G.

8:45:42 AM

MR. DODSON presented the second collaborative project, titled "Susitna River Sockeye Salmon Escapement Abundance." The field work on this project began in July, 2006. The CIAA established weir operations to estimate the age, sex, and length composition of the population of adult sockeye salmon migrating upstream of Flat Horn [Susitna River local], at Chelatna, Hewitt, Shell, Judd, Byers, Stephan, and Larson Lakes. The department has already analyzed this data.

8:46:51 AM

MR. DODSON provided two slides [pages 3 and 4 of the committee handout], to illustrate the general watershed areas, and the specific sites, used in the study. He reported that ADF&G operated fish wheel tagging stations in three Susitna River locations: four at the Flat Horn local, two on Yentna River, and three at the Sunshine Station local. The fish were caught, marked with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags, and released or re-released, when recaptured. The CIAA operated

weirs at Byers, Chelatna, Hewitt, Judd, Larson, and Shell Lakes. Timely access was not gained, to allow a 2006 survey at Stephan Lake, however the access permits are expected to be in place for the 2007 season. Hence, data for 2006 was reported from six weirs: four lakes on the Yentna system, and two on the Susitna system.

8:50:05 AM

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN asked what the funding source was for the fish wheel operation.

MR. DODSON deferred.

8:50:36 AM

MR. DODSON said that Chelatna Lake is the largest lake in the system that the CIAA is monitoring. He projected a slide [page 5], which provided the analysis for the species tagged; just over 13,000 sockeye salmon, and reported that 81 of the PIT tags were recovered. In addition 130 age and genetic samples were collected.

8:52:13 AM

CHAIR SEATON requested a description of the PIT tagging system.

MR. DODSON described how a glass transmitter tag, the size of a grain of rice, is imbedded in the cheek of the fish via an injection device similar to a syringe. As the fish pass between the receiver antennas, at the weir site, the encoded number on the tag is transmitted to a receiver and recorded for the data base. The transmitter can also be "read" utilizing a hand held wand, which resembles a small tennis racket, or a large rectangular device that is integrated into the weir where the fish swim through. In response to a question, he explained that a radio tracking tag is larger, with an antennae that is inserted into the esophagus of the fish. Detection of this type of tag is accomplished in a different manner, utilizing remote antennae receivers or equipped aircraft. The radio tag is particularly helpful for detecting the final spawning locations of individual fish.

CHAIR SEATON reiterated the two tagging processes, clarifying the differences.

8:54:26 AM

MR. DODSON continued, stating that the CIAA had no means to tag the fish, only to read the tags. In order for a PIT tag to be read, the fish must pass within two feet of a receiver antennae. Asked for clarity, he explained that detection scanning techniques varied between weirs. Chelatna, Larson, and Judd Lakes used weir integrated devices, and at Hewitt, Shell, and Byers a hand wand was employed. In further discussion, with Chair Seaton, he explained that the integrated antennae allowed scanning of 100 percent of the fish, but when using the hand wand, at Shell Lake, only 1 PIT tag was detected among the 70,000 returning fish. He added that at Shell Lake 14,000 fish returned in one day, rendering the wand method ineffective. It is expected that an integrated device will be available from ADF&G for future use at this lake.

8:56:16 AM

CHAIR SEATON asked if the weirs were of similar construction, at each site.

MR. DODSON explained that the weirs were similar in length, 60-70 feet, but the designs varied to allow boat traffic where necessary. To further questions, he stated that the antennae would be visible in the slide of Larson Lake [page 10], and responded that the Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe construction is commonly used to allow motorized traffic to pass.

MR. DODSON provided a series of six slides, presenting each of the weir sites individually. Each slide provided specific site information, including: lake specifications, enumeration and recovery totals, and a photograph of each site. He began with the weir at Chelatna Lake [page 5], and pointed out that the workers were not prepared for the unexpected flood conditions that occurred. Prevention methods and weir design adjustments will be implemented for subsequent seasons. Hewitt Lake [page 6] required a manual gate to be installed for boat traffic. This lake is a popular northern pike fishing local, and he opined that the northern pike may effect the sockeye salmon population. He reported that he observed northern pike migrating through the weir along with the salmon. A hand held scanner was used at this site, and three PIT tags were detected in the 2,500 sockeye salmon that were monitored. At Shell Lake [page 7], nearly 70,000 sockeye salmon returned; a surprisingly high enumeration for this lake. He reiterated that, due to the use of the hand held scanning device, not every fish was scanned, accounting for the recovery of only 1 PIT tag.

9:01:31 AM

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN pointed out that Shell Lake is known to support a population of northern pike. He asked that, assuming the northern pike consume the salmonids fry, why would the sockeye salmon return be at the reportedly high level.

MR. DODSON responded that he cannot account for this discrepancy, and added that he did not observe any of the reported northern pike. Next year's sockeye fry and smolt counts may help to unravel this mystery.

CHAIR SEATON offered that the Division of Sport Fish may be able to provide the committee with an estimate of the northern pike population, to satisfy Representative Neuman's question.

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN elaborated that northern pike have been blamed for reduction of salmon smolt, in some areas, but the CIAA data on Shell Lake does not support that theory.

MR. DODSON opined that the returns would be greater if northern pike predation was not occurring.

9:03:03 AM

CHAIR SEATON remembered that previous Shell Lake escapements were lower than the 2006 count, but the enumeration method did not employ a weir.

MR. DODSON agreed, and stated that stream and aerial surveys were previously used. One year [unstated], an estimated return of 45,000 sockeye salmon was recorded, up from an average of 5,000.

9:03:34 AM

MR. DODSON introduced the slide for Judd Lake [page 8], which yielded 40,000 sockeye salmon, and had 51 PIT tags detected. He explained that all of the weirs were dismantled early in the season, due to the college intern work force needing to return for school. Henceforth, alternative man power will be used, or interns whose schedules provide more flexibility. Either way, he said the weirs will be manned into September, as the project continues. At some sites, the weirs were pulled within days of when the fish were tagged at the fish wheels; minimizing the possibility for detection.

9:04:49 AM

MR. DODSON continued with Byers Lake [page 9], one of the northern most lakes. Approximately 3,000 sockeye salmon were enumerated, of the 5,000 estimated by ADF&G to return, and no PIT tags were recovered. The weir was located near a state park foot bridge, and hikers occasionally opened the weir gates unwittingly. The weir will henceforth be located out of sight of the foot bridge. Although the weir was erected mid-July, the salmon return did not begin until mid-August. The timing information gained will be used to ensure that the next two years will be more productive.

9:05:57 AM

MR. DODSON presented the final lake surveyed, Larson Lake [page 10], reporting that 56,000 sockeye salmon were enumerated, and approximately 700 PIT tags, and one radio tag, were recovered. The slide provided a photograph of the integrated tag detector. In response to Chair Seaton, he stated that the fish did not accumulate behind the weir, despite the device, but passed through it in a timely manner. He described a beaver dam, below Shell Lake, which had detained the fish, and once broken-down, accounted for the mass of 14,000 fish in one day, passing the weir.

9:08:00 AM

CHAIR SEATON inquired whether information on beaver dams effecting these salmon runs is available.

MR. DODSON deferred.

9:08:20 AM

MR. DODSON explained the “Summary” slide [page 11], with a brief analysis of the available data. It provided the enumeration totals, tags recoveries, and age data, by location. Chelatna, he pointed out, has a population with a “0” freshwater rearing component; hatching and exiting the lake in the same year, returning after 3 years in saltwater. The 92,051 Yentna total, represents the ADF&G sonar count, contrasting with the CIAA count of 120,000. There are many other lakes in the system, but responding to Chair Seaton, he said these were identified by ADF&G for data collection.

9:10:00 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked for further clarification on the age data percentages.

MR. DODSON explained the reading of the Chelatna age samples: 11% 0.3 indicates smolt that migrate out of the lake with zero years of freshwater development, and return after three years of salt water maturation; 38% 1.2 indicates smolt that migrate out of the lake after one year of freshwater development, and return after two years of saltwater maturation.

CHAIR SEATON referred to the diversity in the percentages and asked what would account for the differences between the lakes.

MR. DODSON responded that, although some of the lakes are only 4 miles apart, there are many contributing factors including genetic trends and the size the smolt have attained prior to entering saltwater. He agreed with Chair Seaton that factors could also include lake depth and size, water quality, and available feed.

9:12:53 AM

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN noted the lack of chum salmon in the statistical counts, and stressed the importance of this species.

MR. DODSON attributed this to timing. The weir work was completed prior to the chum and coho salmon migration.

CHAIR SEATON suggested that ADF&G may be able to clarify the timing of species migration.

9:14:27 AM

MR. DODSON presented the final slide [page 12], which identified the Susitna Project Budget and Funding. He explained the three year time frame for the budget expenses; totaling $746,893. The funding sources were: CIAA - $40,000, Southeast Sustainable Salmon Fund - $210,000, State of Alaska $200,000; totaling $450,000. The request to the state was for an allocation of $500,000. The remaining $300,000 could be allocated, over the next two years, to complete the project.

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN explained that the $500,000, directed to the CIAA, is part of a $1,000,000 grant, secured by the Matanuska-Susitna Valley legislators for this three year study.

This grant also includes $500,000 for a "Fisherman's Satisfaction Survey."

9:17:45 AM

CHAIR SEATON stated that this study helps to address the Cook Inlet issue of managing the Susitna River drainage. It has long been a concern that the drainage is not producing salmon, and issues have arisen when in-season management called for closure of the commercial fishery. The study thus far, indicates a lack of accuracy regarding ADF&G fish count estimates, and generates questions regarding the statistics the department uses to manage this fishery.

9:19:22 AM

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN interjected that the Yentna is a large, murky river, possibly effecting the accuracy of the ADF&G counts. Additionally, he provided previous count totals, and the commercial fleets catch activity to suggest a direct correlation.

CHAIR SEATON stipulated that the counts reported in the overview clearly indicate a significant difference in totals. However, he opined that it would be premature to draw definite conclusions. A better understanding should result when three years of data have been collected and analyzed.

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN commented that this is the purpose of the study. He offered that this study will not only enumerate the fish population, but also encompasses genetic studies, scale studies, and a compilation of ten years of previous data.

9:21:42 AM

GARY FANDREI, Executive Director, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA), relayed that the CIAA request for $500,000 was "above and beyond" the $1,000,000, requested and received by ADF&G. The CIAA was allocated $200,000, leaving the agency with a $300,000 shortfall, to complete the three year study.

CHAIR SEATON stressed the importance of the CIAA aspect of this study. He opined that the escapement and limnological studies, on each of these lakes, are necessary components for formulating a comprehensive and effective management plan. Observing that the automatic sensors [integrated detectors] appear to be the

most effective means to detect the tags, he asked what the additional expense would be to have these at each site.

MR. FANDREI agreed that the automatic sensor is a key piece of equipment, particularly when a large number of fish are present. It would be ideal to have one of these sensors on each weir, however, at a set up cost of $3,500 each, it is out of the CIAA's budget realm.

CHAIR SEATON clarified the need to implement four additional integrated tag detectors, and stated that it would be "penny wise and pound foolish" not to investment in this essential equipment.

9:27:10 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON inquired what the "life" expectancy is for these devices, and whether there are units available from other state projects.

MR. FANDREI responded that the antennas are a sturdy piece of equipment, certainly viable for longer than the life of the lake study. Further, he stated that equipment availability inquiries have been made to ADF&G.

9:28:08 AM

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked what is involved in setting up the detection devices, and whether the labor and logistical costs are prohibitive.

MR. FANDREI explained that crews of three to five workers construct the weir, and, primarily for safety reasons, a two person team mans it throughout the season.

9:29:01 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON requested information on the budget percentages regarding the equipment and salaries.

MR. FANDREI agreed to forward the information to the committee. He stated that the initial budget outlays are for equipment setup. Once established, the budget primarily covers salaries, non-durable supplies, and remote site logistical costs including flight contracts.

9:30:14 AM

DOUG EGGERS, Fisheries Scientist, Region I, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), said that he is not directly involved with this project, however he is familiar with the departments operational plans, and related activities from the 2006 season.

BOB CLARK, Fisheries Scientist, Region II, Division of Sport Fish, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, (ADF&G), identified himself to the committee, and offered to respond to questions.

JIM HASBROUCK, Fisheries Scientist, Region II, Division of Sport Fish, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), identified himself to the committee, and offered to respond to questions.

9:31:20 AM

CHAIR SEATON requested that the ADF&G biologists comment on the collaborative effort, involved in the project, as well as the different equipment and data collection methods utilized.

9:32:09 AM

MR. EGGERS relayed that the mark [tag] and capture methods are an effective means to obtain useful escapement statistics on the fish populations of large, complex watersheds. The same methods are used throughout the state. He explained the logistical relationship between the department's three tagging locations, and how the fish tagged at Flat Horn are recaptured at Sunshine [Station] and Yentna. This "built in" redundancy factor is used to establish population escapement estimates between the three marking areas. The upstream, CIAA weirs provide additional, important, management data. During the 2006 season, tag recovery data was minimal, due to the premature dismantling of the weirs, but, as previously reported, future plans will remedy this shortcoming. The preliminary data, he confirmed, indicates a larger escapement than ADF&G had previously been able to assess utilizing sonar. The final data analysis is still undergoing stratification, however.

9:35:08 AM

CHAIR SEATON addressed the Shell Lake return estimate of [69,000], with [one] tag recovered, and asked how a population analysis can be compiled on this type of sampling.

MR. EGGERS ascertained that the Larson and Chelatna Lake weir sites enumerated a large escapement, and recovered a usable percentage of tags. He predicted that those data will provide confident estimates. As the capability for tag detection is improved, a full sampling from each weir site will afford a better analysis. Responding to a question, he described again the tagging and detection process. He added that the tag signal is emitted constantly. In locations where a small weir is used, a hand wand is more effective. The large run at Shell Lake was not anticipated, and the hand wand was inadequate. Further, he stated that the weir integrated device provides 100 percent detection.

9:39:55 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON queried what information is provided by a tag.

MR. EGGERS responded that each tag holds specific information on an individual fish including: length, other biological characteristics, and where it was tagged. On request of Chair Seaton, he described the differences of radio, floy, and PIT tags. He explained how the range of the radio tag allows it to be detected by a remote riverside tower, or receiver equipped aircraft. The disadvantages are the cost, approximately $200 each, and the heavy battery, which may influence the behavior of the fish. The tag is injected into the stomach cavity, with the antennae extending from the fishes mouth. The battery is designed to outlast the final stage of the life of the fish. He explained that the PIT tags are the size of a grain of rice, have a smaller battery, are injected into the body or cheek cavity, are less intrusive to the behavior of the fish, require less handling during insertion, and the recovery process is easier and faster. Finally, Mr. Eggers described the floy tag as being similar to a piece of spaghetti, pinned through the fish's dorsal fin. The floy is a visually detected tag. Once the streamer on the tag is sighted, a technician must handle the fish to read the floy tag and record the data. These tags are not used in this type of passive enumeration project.

9:43:31 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON inquired about the reuse possibilities of the expensive radio tags. Further, he suggested that an entrepreneur might create a cottage industry of locating and returning the tags, if the department offered a reward.

MR. EGGERS said that whenever the tags are recovered, or turned in by fishermen, the battery is replaced and the tag reused. A reward system has not been established, however. In response to an inquiry he reiterated the unique fish data contained on each tag.

9:46:17 AM

CHAIR SEATON established that the weirs at Larson, Chelatna, and Judd Lakes each had integrated detection devices, high return counts, and significant tag recoveries. This contrasted with Hewitt, Shell, and Byers Lakes, where the tag recoveries were minimal to none, and the fish count, save for Shell Lake, was also low. He asked how the variability of the sample and tag recovery is being handled for analysis purposes.

MR. EGGERS reiterated that the timing for dismantling some of the weirs was premature, and acknowledged the tag detection problems that occurred. He deferred to Mr. Dodson for follow-up questions.

9:47:37 AM

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON queried how the timing to man the weirs was determined.

MR. DODSON restated how the student intern schedules played a key role in the 2006 season, and how other arrangements are being made for the subsequent seasons.

9:49:07 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked if the sockeye salmon migrate to these lakes on different schedules.

MR. EGGERS responded that run timing does vary. Also, time must be allowed for the fish to migrate from the tagging site to the weirs.

9:49:56 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON referred to the coordination effort between the downstream tagging, and the weir enumeration, and asked if there was appropriate collusion to foster success of the tag recovery effort.

MR. EGGERS assured the committee that the goal is to tag a representative proportion of fish in the run with the expectation that the tag recovery will allow an appropriate sampling and adequate data for analysis. The tagging occurs seven days a week, 24 hours a day, during the migration, to accomplish this task.

9:51:07 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON clarified that the ADF&G effort is adequate and the CIAA aspect needs further refinement to provide the follow-up data for analysis.

MR. EGGERS commented that the population marking proportions are monitored, and the biases are accounted for, in the final analysis.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON stated that he would like to further understand the accuracy of the data being processed, and he asked if there appears to be a correlation of fish returning to specific lakes in the system.

MR. EGGERS stated that the purpose for using the radio telemetry devices, is to answer that question. These radio tags will provide information on the distribution of fish throughout the Susitna system.

9:53:16 AM

CHAIR SEATON stated that it is his understanding, from the initial study proposal, that a statistical confidence would be attained by tracking 500 radio tags. The number has been adjusted to 100, or one fifth of the scientific design, and he asked if that will effect the significance of the statistics.

9:53:44 AM

MR. HASBROUCK stated that he did not recall a plan to deploy 500 radio tags in one year, but rather over the course of the study. He opined that this will allow adequate spawning distribution information on the areas sockeye salmon.

CHAIR SEATON asked whether each weir should have an automatic antenna.

MR. EGGERS stressed the importance of scanning each fish, and granted that an integrated device provides that opportunity.

CHAIR SEATON inquired if ADF&G has the ability to provide the needed devices, and whether $3,500 is the actual cost.

MR. DODSON relayed that $2,500 is the cost for the antenna and an additional $1,000 is for the solar panel that provides the remote power supply.

9:56:06 AM

MR. HASBROUCK, said that the department does not have surplus PIT tag detectors, but he opined that the purchase of four additional devices would be "doable."

CHAIR SEATON emphasized that the committee is in agreement for the CIAA to be supplied with four additional integrated detection devices. He stipulated that the department will be prepared to account to this committee, should the devices not be made available. He went on to ask what proportion of the total Susitna watershed system is being surveyed by the study of these seven lakes.

MR. CLARK relayed that the radio telemetry aspect of the three year study is designed to answer that question. To Chair Seaton's follow-up he said that, when Stephan Lake becomes part of the survey, the major sockeye salmon producing lakes, of the Susitna watershed, will be covered by the study.

9:59:22 AM

MR. FANDREI reported how past studies have estimated that these seven lakes contribute 80-85 percent of the sockeye salmon population produced in the Susitna River system. Trinity Lake and the adjoining Movie Lake have been documented to have occasional substantial sockeye salmon runs, as well. The CIAA workers observe these runs, when they are conducting beaver dam patrol and fish are backed up behind the dams, en route to these lakes.

10:00:44 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON emphasized the need to purchase the relatively inexpensive equipment; integrated detection devices. He stressed the need for this equipment to insure critical, usable data.

CHAIR SEATON noted that the [weir enumeration] work, being undertaken by the CIAA, has not been fully funded by the state. ADF&G is not doing the weir work. Fish and game have been allocated money for the tagging aspect, but the tag recovery has a $300,000 shortfall.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked where that appropriation "lives."

MR. FANDREI responded that the funds received have come from a specific legislative grant, directly to the aquaculture association, from the Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development.

CHAIR SEATON opined that funding $1,000,000 to tag the fish and not providing funds to recover the tags, is counter productive.

10:03:49 AM

CHAIR SEATON asked about the Susitna watershed beaver dam issues.

MR. FANDREI explained that the CIAA has run a program to regularly survey areas that are susceptible to beaver dams. This has been a chronic problem for a number of years, and with the last three or four dry seasons it has proven critical. The agency workers will locate and "notch" a dam, but within 24 hours the beavers complete repairs. The last two years, he reported, there have been significant mortalities of fish downstream of these dams, due to the low water and high temperature conditions.

CHAIR SEATON suggested that the beaver dam issue may need to be reviewed by ADF&G, and operational procedures developed to help remedy the situation.

10:06:25 AM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.