

## Alaska Board of Fisheries Committee Summary

# COMMITTEE B

**Lower Cook Inlet Finfish**  
December 8, 2013

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### Board Committee Members:

1. Sue Jeffrey, \*Chair
2. Tom Kluberton
3. Fritz Johnson

### Alaska Department of Fish and Game Staff Members:

1. Forrest Bowers- Deputy Director, CF
2. Glenn Hollowell – Lower Cook Inlet Area Management Biologist, CF
3. Jan Rumble – Lower Cook Inlet Area Management Biologist, CF
4. Ted Otis – Lower Cook Inlet Area Research Biologist, CF
5. Tim Baker – Central Regional Management Coordinator, CF
6. Tracy Lingnau – Central Regional Supervisor, CF
7. Lowell Fair – Central Regional Research Coordinator, CF
8. Elisa Russ – Central Regional Asst. Area Management Biologist, CF
9. Kevin Messing – Regulations Specialist, CF
10. Karla Bush – Extended Jurisdiction
11. Matt Miller – Regional Management Coordinator, SF
12. Al Cain – Enforcement Specialist
13. Davin Holen – Subsistence Program Manager, Subsistence
14. Lisa Olson – Deputy Director, Subsistence
15. Stefanie Moreland – Governor’s Office

### Alaska Department of Law:

1. Lance Nelson

### Advisory Committee Members:

1. Mike Crawford – Kenai/Soldotna AC
2. David Martin – Central Peninsula AC

### Public Panel Members:

1. Malcolm Milne – Cook Inlet Seiner’s Association (CISA)
2. Theresa Peterson – Alaska Marine Conservation Council (AMCC)

3. Paul Olson – The Boat Company
4. Tim Schmidt – Icicle Seafoods
5. Beaver Nelson – Cook Inlet Seiner’s Association (CISA)
6. Julie Bonney – Alaska Groundfish Data Bank (AGDB)
7. Paul Shadura – SOKI
8. Matt Hegge – Self, F/V Anthem, Commercial Fisherman

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

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The committee met December 8, 2013 at 4:15 p.m. and adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

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PROPOSALS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE WERE: (9 total) 76, 77, 78, 80, 86, 87, 43, 44, and 45.

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**PROPOSAL 76 – 5 AAC 01.560. Fishing seasons and daily fishing periods.** Clarify open periods for subsistence salmon fishing in August in Seldovia Bay.

**Comment Summary:**

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments: None.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 77 – 5 AAC 21.200. Fishing districts, subdistricts, and sections.** Change line and descriptions separating the Port Dick North and South sections in the Outer District.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- More logical statistical areas.
- Substitute language was generated and can be found in RC 19.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments: None.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 78 – 5 AAC 21.200. Fishing districts, subdistricts, and sections.** Remove the "300 yards offshore" reference, and remove references to regulatory markers and replace with latitude and longitude coordinates for certain waters.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- If the previous proposal (proposal 77) is adopted, it will remove the definition of one the lines in this proposal. Substitute language was generated and can be found in RC 20.
- We have not maintained the markers for years and some of them have physically moved. It is expensive for the department to continue to maintain markers.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Public member did not want GPS coordinates to take the place of the physical markers. This would cause a problem for commercial fishermen; they would like the department to continue to maintain markers.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 80 – 5 AAC 21.350. Closed Waters.** Amend waters closed to commercial fishing in Lower Cook Inlet.

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- Department has been issuing emergency orders with the closed waters coordinates at the beginning of each season.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- Public is concerned about not having physical markers and does not want to have to rely only on GPS.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 86 – 5 AAC 28.332. Groundfish pot storage requirements for Cook Inlet.**  
Modify Cook Inlet groundfish pot storage requirements.

**Comment Summary:**

Department: None.

Department of Law: None

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments: None.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.

**PROPOSAL 87 – 5 AAC 28.371. Landing requirements for Cook Inlet Area.** Modify offloading requirements for groundfish.

**Comment Summary:**

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments: None.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** Consensus to support.



**PROPOSAL 43 – 5 AAC 28.36X. Cook Inlet State-Waters Groundfish Trawl Management Plan; 5 AAC 28.46X. Kodiak Area State-Waters Groundfish Trawl Management Plan; and 5 AAC 28.53X. Chignik Area State-Waters Groundfish Trawl Management Plan.** Create management plans for state-managed fisheries for all Gulf of Alaska groundfish for vessels less than 58 feet using trawl gear. *(This proposal will be considered at the Chignik, LCI, and Kodiak Finfish meetings, but deliberated at the Kodiak meeting.)*

**Comment Summary:**

Department: None.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

**Public Panel Comments:**

- This proposal would require the state to develop management plans for a state waters trawl fishery. Supporters of the proposal believe that the state needs to manage resources that occur in state waters and that there is enough fish to support these kinds of fisheries.
- This proposal would create a state waters open access fishery.
- Bycatch levels in federal waters allow trawlers to harvest levels of king salmon and trawlers in state waters could attain some level of king salmon harvest as well.
- The state does not have a groundfish stock assessment program. There is historical harvest information, but managing groundfish in state waters fisheries without specific fishery independent information would be difficult.
- As proposed, the potential state waters GHL maybe too large for the existing fleet to fully utilize. Coordination between the board and the Council during development of the catch share program is important.
- There was concern about the area that would be available to trawling in state waters because of existing closures. Questions arose about the efficiency of different gear types to catch groundfish.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** No consensus.

**PROPOSAL 44 – 5 AAC 28.36X. Cook Inlet Area Pollock Management Plan; 5 AAC 28.46X. Kodiak Area Pollock Management Plan and 5 AAC 28.53X. Chignik Area Pollock Management Plan.** Adopt a state-waters pollock fishery management plan, including provisions for seasons, gear, quotas, landing requirements, and observer coverage. *(This proposal will be considered at the Chignik, LCI, and Kodiak Finfish meetings, but deliberated at the Kodiak meeting.)*

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- The state cannot implement a catch share program. It is up to the department and board to decide what to do in state waters. Maybe we can identify the goals and objectives of the federal catch share program and see if they are aligned with the state and board.

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- The proposal includes bottom trawl gear because there are times when pollock are on the bottom and times when they are mid-water. Also, seine gear was included in the proposal because some people interested in fishing that gear type contacted the proposer. This kind of state water fishery might encourage small boats to participate and positively affect smaller communities. Trip limits could be used as a management tool to help manage harvest and bycatch levels (including king salmon).
- Negative aspects of this shallower fishery include increased bycatch of king salmon. Currently in the federal waters fishery, there are vessel co-ops that help to control the fleet in terms of reducing bycatch. Other problems with a state fishery include Steller sea lion restrictions and Endangered Species Act issues. Bycatch harvest in state waters would have to be added to the federal bycatch levels. Pollock are not generally assessed in state waters but there is historical harvest information.
- The catch share program should be ready by 2017 and then it will take another year to write the regulations. Meshing together the new program with a state waters program that we develop is critical to the success of the fishery: there may be more pressure to develop state waters fisheries as this new federal program is instituted. In a new state waters fishery, participating fishermen would not be subject to the federal catch shares requirements. The state has an existing parallel fishery, and may need to do something in state waters because of this upcoming catch shares shift.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** No consensus. However, the public panel agrees that this issue needs to be explored, maybe not as it is written but as an idea that has to be considered.

**PROPOSAL 45 – 5 AAC 28.XXX. New Section.** Require 100% observer coverage on vessels fishing for groundfish with trawl gear in state-waters management areas. *(This proposal will be considered at the Chignik, LCI, and Kodiak Finfish meetings, but deliberated at the Kodiak meeting.)*

**Comment Summary:**

Department:

- The department has taken a neutral position because of the amount of time and money, could take away from other programs.
- The board and Council should coordinate observer coverage requirements so that resultant data are reflective of the entire fishery (0-200m).

Department of Law: None.

Federal Subsistence Representative: None.

Public Panel Comments:

- The entire committee supported some level of observer coverage during a state waters trawl fishery. Because trawlers have a high capacity to catch fish, observer presence is important; one vessel can have a large impact on a fishery. Observers can have an affect on the fishing behavior of a trawl vessel.
- The new federal observer program results from 2013 are being analyzed and reported. The observer program coverage rate has been lower in the Gulf of Alaska than their goals. There have been improvements in coverage but there are still concerns over the trawl bycatch rates. The observer program has started covering some of the gear types that they have not covered in the past. There are challenges but some of them may be relieved by electronic monitoring (EM). EM may be an option in state waters, also. Funding this state observer program could be done by increasing the tax that is imposed on fishermen in the federal observer program.

**Public Panel Recommendation:** No consensus. However, the majority of the public panel supported observer coverage in state waters groundfish trawl fisheries.