

Draft Outreach Plan for Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch Action

The Council has previously indicated that it considers the proposed action on Bering Sea salmon bycatch to be one in which targeted outreach to western Alaska is desirable. This is consistent with action by the Council in 2008, 2009 and 2012 in conjunction with the Council's previous action on Bering Sea salmon bycatch. The current draft outreach plan is based upon these previous experiences and focuses upon participating in specific Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meetings as possible, if desired by the RACs. Council staff will make an effort to contact other western Alaskan interest groups as well and will participate as possible in other meetings if scheduling and travel funds allow, if groups are interested. To date we have not scheduled any presentations or meetings but have been requested to participate in the Bristol Bay RAC meeting in February. This effort is fairly condensed given the Council's priority to take final action on this issue in early 2015 (tentatively scheduled for April).

Outreach Plan:

1. Statewide teleconference to explain Council action, answer questions and provide schedule of outreach meetings and Council final action timeline.
2. Contact western Alaskan interest groups that have requested outreach in previous Council action on salmon bycatch (e.g., Tanana Chiefs Conference, Association of Village Council Presidents, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association) for discussion of proposed outreach and facilitate information exchange with groups.
3. Provide presentation at RAC meetings as possible in February and March. As with previous efforts, 1-2 Council members would be invited to attend with staff to answer questions as needed following staff presentation. The following is the RAC schedule for western Alaskan RACs (note that only Bristol Bay RAC has thus far requested a presentation but coordinators would be contacted by staff following the December Council meeting to discuss interest and scheduling noting that it is extremely unlikely that participation at all 6 RACs would be possible):
 - a. Seward Peninsula RAC (NOME) Feb 18-19
 - b. Bristol Bay RAC (Naknek): Feb 24-25
 - c. Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC (Bethel): Feb 25-26
 - d. Western Interior R (Fairbanks): Mar 3-4
 - e. Eastern Interior RAC (Fairbanks): Mar 4-5
 - f. Northwest Arctic RAC (Kotzebue): Mar 9-10
4. Documentation of input: Council staff will document input provided at the regional meetings, including any public testimony. An outreach report will be prepared to document the outreach process and resulting input. A short summary of each meeting will be provided in the outreach report as a brief reference. In addition, details of the regional meetings attended and the comments provided (by category) will be compiled. Resolutions or motions that result from any of these meetings will be appended to the report.

Other ideas:

1. Coordination with NMFS regarding outreach plan and any requested tribal consultations by NMFS. We have in the past, when requested, had staff provide information to assist in tribal consultations and have coordinated with NMFS on meeting schedules so as not to duplicate efforts or confuse the public with divergent processes or inconsistent information.
2. Additional meetings outside of RAC meetings: While it is preferable to schedule with the RAC meetings for consistency we have in the past organized meetings with local entities as requested, particularly in instances where we were not able to attend the local RAC due to scheduling issues.