

Yakutat Regional Aquaculture Association History

Meeting and contacts, reports might be incomplete as computer used 2014-2017 is not available to the consultant. Documents mentioned and minutes for the meetings will be on the website under documents.

2011

1/20/2011: The Yakutat Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (YAFA) met to discuss about forming an association, the steps and costs necessary and possible goals & objectives. These included YAFA having a collective voice for the local Yakutat fishermen to be able to get things done. To become a strong entity with voting rights and to be recognized as a committee of fishermen that can manage their fisheries.

- Suggest to the Fish & Game on what we would like to see as far as the fisheries are managed.
- Get fishermen from each of the Yakutat area rivers: Tsiu, Spoon River, Sudden, Situk, Alsek, & Dry Bay
- Figure out how to enhance & protect the wild fish runs.
- Monitor Sport Fishing and Spawning beds on the Situk
- Forest Service Trail going right into the Spawning Beds
- Steel head eating our smolt
- Salmon Management plan = rewrite

2/3/2011: YAFA met again with 17 Yakutat fishermen which was considered a quorum. Kathy Hansen was invited as a guest. A motion was made to create Yakutat's own Terminal Enhancement Board from local fishermen. The board voted to hire Kathy Hansen as a consultant for \$500 to file all paperwork for the Terminal Enhancement Board (TEB).

2/17/2011: YAFA met and made a motion to adopt Articles of Incorporation as presented and have Kathy complete the State, & Federal paperwork. Discussion followed about next steps including State of Alaska fee \$50, Federal EIN number, Adopt Bi-Laws in two weeks, CBY City License, Letter to State of Fish and Game, to be considered as the Yakutat Aquaculture Association, look into Tax Exempt status, Registered Agents, Elections, Newsletter, State funding and minutes of last meetings.

2/24/2011: State of Alaska issued CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION for the Yakutat Regional Aquaculture Association, Inc.

3/7/2011: IRS issued an Employer Identification Number

4/15/2011: First YRAA meeting, By-Laws discussed and adopted, discussion about Commerce grant for new aquaculture associations, temporary officers were elected.

4/29/2011: Yakutat Salmon Board wrote a letter of support for the development of YRAA. In their letter they stated, “The Yakutat Salmon Board is in full support of the formation of the proposed Yakutat Aquaculture Association. The YSB has investigated a variety of salmon enhancement and shellfish aquaculture options over the past three years. As the investigations evolved it became obvious that a nonprofit board dedicated to this task was necessary. The coordination, responsibility and workload of initiating aquaculture projects are substantial. It is essential that a dedicated group of stakeholders focus on this task to ensure success.” It concludes with, “With a variety of agency and industry partnerships I believe this diversification can include finfish production stabilizing our local economy.”

5/20/2011: First letter submitted to Commissioner of Fish and Game (ADF&G) asking for recognition of YRAA. This is a requirement to form a regional aquaculture association.

6/28/2011: Received letter from Commissioner of ADF&G suggesting changes to YRAA documents to meet legal requirements.

8/4/11: YRAA Meeting- main discussion was responding to the Commissioner of ADF&G letter regarding recognition of YRAA as a regional aquaculture association. Motion was made to adopt changes to the Articles of Incorporation and YRAA’s By-law. Next step will be to incorporate the changes just adopted and resubmit the Amended articles to the State of Alaska and resubmit the request to the Commissioner for recognition.

8/5/2011: Letter from Borough confirming that City of Yakutat supports YRAA. The Commissioner of ADF&G questioned if the Yakutat Salmon Board spoke for the City of Yakutat.

8/7/2011: Received Certificate of Amendment for Articles of Incorporation

8/30/2011: Resubmitted letter to Commissioner of ADF&G asking for recognition of YRAA with amended articles and bylaws.

9/6/2011: Commissioner Cora Campbell formally recognized the Yakutat Regional Aquaculture Association which automatically formed the Yakutat Regional Planning Team (RPT). The RPT is a combination of ADF&G and YRAA members providing recommendations to the Commissioner of ADF&G regarding enhancement permits, applications, and salmon comprehensive plan amendments.

4/30-5/1/2012: YRAA Meeting. During this day and half meeting, YRAA made a motion to pursue a 2% enhancement tax assessment. Made a motion to approach the City Assembly and have the salmon landing tax be rescinded when the 2% enhancement tax is implemented. YRAA Board took care of a lot of basic business decisions, checking account, IRS tax exemption, filing 2011 taxes, business licenses and authority to send letter/grant application to Dept of Commerce for the \$100,000 grant available to new regional aquaculture associations. (*Budget for grant: \$2500 for filing fees, (cost of setting up accounts, business licenses, IRS tax exemption); \$4000 for board elections for 2013; \$15,000 for tax assessment process & planning; \$25,000 Consultant/Admin costs(split between reimbursement & future work including tasks from this meeting) & \$50,000 for stage 1 of Comprehensive plan phase II*). Apply for a grant from the Chinook Mitigation Fund of \$150,000 for the Yakutat Salmon Comprehensive Plan, Phase II. Kathy Hansen was hired to rewrite the Yakutat Salmon Comprehensive Plan.

5/1/2012: First Regional Planning Team Meeting. ADF&G gave a presentation called “Regional Planning Teams: Their Role in Alaska’s Salmon Fishery Enhancement Program”. The primary focus of the presentation was the ADF&G mission statement, statutes, and regulations that guide enhancement projects. Alaska’s enhancement program is stakeholder driven. Regional aquaculture associations determine what fishery enhancement is desirable in their region. ADF&G determines what is appropriate within their mandate to protect natural production. The Regional Planning Team (RPT) process is a cooperative effort between the regional association and ADF&G. Each RPT consists of six members, three appointed by the Commissioner of ADF&G, and three appointed by the regional association. RPTs play an advisory role to the Commissioner of ADF&G on regional salmon fishery enhancement activities by: drafting and updating regional comprehensive salmon plans (CSP); reviewing hatchery permit applications and alteration requests; reviewing hatchery annual management plans; and reviewing certain fish resource permit applications.

There was continued discussion about updating the Salmon Comprehensive plan and the costs and process involved. Current plan prohibits enhancement, so plan needs to be updated. ADF&G commented that one of the biggest hurdles for a chum enhancement program would be where the chum broodstock is gotten from.

Bill Lucey (Yakutat City Planner), gave a Power-Point presentation entitled “City and Borough of Yakutat Planning and Natural Resources; Project Update to the Yakutat Regional Aquaculture Association and Yakutat Regional Planning Team”.

RPT made a motion to recommend the chair to draft a letter of support from the YRPT to request funding of \$150,000 from the Chinook Mitigation Fund to update the Yakutat Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plan. **VOTE:** the vote was unanimously **CARRIED**.

5/9/2012: Opened a checking account at First National Bank of Alaska using the Corporate resolution passed at the last YRAA meeting.

7/13/2012: State of Alaska Dept of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) approved a Fisheries Enhancement grant of \$100,000.00 in accordance with AS16.10.510. Grant funds are for the organizational and planning purposes of YRAA.

8/19/2012: Received an updated Certificate of Amendment for Articles of Incorporation from the State of Alaska

10/6/2012: YRAA Board meeting. Updates were given regarding the IRS tax exemption and Dept of Commerce grant. Army Corp of Engineers provided a presentation of studies being worked on in Yakutat including an Experimental Remote Chum Release Site project which is an analysis and determination if a chum release would be environmentally acceptable and economically feasible. Long discussion with the Corp and afterwards. Discussion about the salmon enhancement 2% tax assessment, preparations being made and motion was made to amend the Articles and Bylaws to better define the boundary for the 2% tax assessment. Discussion about comprehensive plan update, a survey was sent out to all permit holders as part of the plan update. Board voted to establish a simple website as it was believed that it would help in the tax assessment process. ADF&G provided a PowerPoint presentation on Management Feasibility Assessment (MFA). YRAA Board supported the letter submitted by Nate on behalf of YRAA requesting an MFA. Did not receive funding from the Chinook Mitigation Fund request.

10/26/2012: ADF&G Management Feasibility Analysis (MFA) received.

11/1/2012: YRAA Board provided a presentation to the Yakutat City Assembly regarding the 2% tax assessment.

12/5/2012: DCCED approved the Notice of Election, Ballot and voting procedure thereby authorizing YRAA to conduct an election to approve a salmon enhancement tax assessment in Yakutat.

2013

1/4/2013: YRAA Meeting. Motion was made to request a Capital Improvement Project for funding by the legislature in the amount of \$200,000. Justification for the grant was that the DCCED grant of \$100,000 was developed in 1978 and the funds were insufficient to start the association. A second motion was made to approach the City Assembly for a funding

request to help cover the costs in 2013 for data loggers (water sampling), meeting and election expenses.

1/21/2013: Tax assessment ballot mailed to all permit holders.

2/4/2013: Tax assessment public hearing in Yakutat

2/26/2013: Data loggers installed at the five release sites listed in the MFA.

3/2/2013: YRAA Board Meeting. Discussions at the meeting included filling board seats, IRS tax exemption update, Dept of Commerce grant, Tax assessment, Comprehensive salmon plan, Data loggers installation, election of officers, financial update, Assembly funding and State of Alaska funding requests. City Assembly passed a resolution to appropriate up to \$196K of Tongass Economic Relief Funds (TERF) upon presentation of receipts. Funds must be used for economic development in Yakutat region (planning, permitting, or purchasing of equipment).

3/27/2013: DCCED completed the review of the salmon enhancement tax assessment election and certified the results. The initiative passed a 2% tax assessment, effective starting 5/1/2013. 155 voted yes and 49 no.

5/31/2013: YRAA Board Meeting. Discussions included tax assessment, Comprehensive plan, update on data loggers, Steve Reifentstahl from NSRAA to do a site visit and provide information on areas that look good, water source information. Received \$100K of the \$200K legislative request. Committee was formed for a small committee for developing a 4 month contract with the following scope of duties: grant administration, NSRAA visit site report, project scenarios (species or combination of species, site selections, water sources, incubation facility, lease possibilities, pro-forma, land owners, water rights, permit preparation; work with community leaders and association, develop a business plan. Further discussions.

Fall 2013: Joy was hired for a 4-month contract by the sub-committee as approved by the board.

9/16/2013: Steve Reifentstahl from NSRAA investigative trip to YRAA report received

11/2/2013: YRAA Board Meeting – Minutes not available

12/16/2013: IRS issued tax exempt status

2014

1/25/2014: YRAA Board Meeting. Board discussed administrative, financial issues; By-Law amendments; Comprehensive plan update, tax exempt update, newsletter, Tetra-Tech contract and work as part of the Board motion to allow for up to \$20K for water studies, site. Joy met with Yak-Tat-Kwaan & they have now requested a teleconference with the CEO. Joe met with the forest service and found out about permitting on forest service land would be a five year or more project. Board approved hiring Ed Neal – Alaska Hydroscience to help with the water studies. Long discussion about letter sent to the three hatcheries (NSRAA, DIPAC & PWSAC) about chum broodstock and what happens if these chum broodstock options don't work out. Discussion about setting up an office location & lease. Joy presented spreadsheets with several options with 10 million and 3 million egg sources. Discussion about a part-time director position which was posted two weeks ago and whether it could be a contract position or would have to be salaried position. The election results were announced. Comment that the city needs to be updated since it was a year since we received funds from them

2/22/2014: YRAA Board Meeting. The employee sub-committee provided the board with a recommendation that the staff position needed to be salaried since it is functioning out of a office space paid for by YRAA on equipment purchased by YRAA. The committee recommended hiring a combination of Sheri Nelson and Nate Endicott. The Board received an update on the hatchery meeting where YRAA's letter for broodstock was considered. Having fisherman board members at the meeting made a difference with DIPAC, PWSAC didn't agree but didn't provide a no either. A handout from Nate with project development information was passed out and discussed as Nate was not at the meeting. It included talking to Greg Inderland about the YKI site, Tetra Tech and Ed Neal. There was a free-flowing discussion. CAPSIS request was submitted. No nomination had been received for the non-fisherman seat for sport, subsistence and public at large. The update on the Comprehensive Salmon Plan is that it was turned into the Dept for review. Next the RPT would review the draft and if they deem it ready it goes out for public comment followed by another RPT meeting. Discussion about ways to provide more public education on what YRAA is doing such as websites and public media.

4/3/2014: Received a letter from DIPAC stating that they would be willing to provide up to 10 million chum broodstock with the conditions that would need to be met before they would provide the eggs.

9/18/2014: Yakutat Comprehensive Salmon Plan Phase II signed by ADF&G Commissioner

Sept 2014: Field Report: Spring Measurements Aug & Sept 2014 received

12/10/2014: YRAA Board Meeting. Nate provided an update of the summer activities and search for a hatchery site. Handouts provided packet with maps, Sawmill Cove performance, Field Report, YRAA Hatchery Hydrology – Memorandum; & letter to Mr. Harris YKI about land lease. Biggest issue is chum broodstock and water. YKI facility is not going to work. Motion made to negotiate with Yak-Tat-Kwaan at the log/dump site/Sawmill Cove. Get hydrologist (Ed Neal) to determine water quality & quantity. Re-submitted CAPSIS request for funding.

2015

3/7/2015: YRAA Board Meeting. Administrative issues, staffing time was cut when reviewing the budget to try and keep expenses within the amount received thru the SET tax and the following project update.

PROJECT UPDATE / PLANNING: Nate updated the board. He handed out Ed Neal's Preliminary Hydrologic Assessment of Puget Cove Ponds Near Yakutat Alaska. He met with the City several times but needs more analysis before determining what we need to lease. Puget Cove has 70 feet of head water from pond to ocean. Looking at a minimum of 200 gallons (gpm) per minute for 10 million eggs. For a 40 million egg release would need 800 gpm. Need to measure amount of water available for use. In general, it appears enough for 200 gpm but not 800gpm. The Pond could be used as a storage tank. At this point we can't rush the process. We need to find a source of water that will work for us. The city is willing to work with us. For the state paperwork you need the work done by a hydrologist and full analysis. Larry asked a question and Nate answered look at the front page of the report, don't know the elevation but look at the contour lines on the Kwaan land. Use the city land as a back-up plan. Nate went on to say he has also been working with the Sawmill Cove but the Kwaan is reluctant to lease the land because of the fear of the property being taxed by the City. The city said that they would work with us. The Kwaan is considering extracting gravel at Sawmill Cove. We might have to look at Redfield. Puget Cove is listed in the Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC) but doesn't shut down the project necessarily, it is looked on a case-by-case basis and won't say anything until permit is turned in. Could possibly pipe in water over to Sawmill Cove from the smaller ponds. Wayne asked what do we need to get an answer, where is the best chance and what the cost would be to make a determination. Nate said it might be possible to get a quote. **The Board made a motion which passed to approve Nate hiring Ed Neal for additional water studies at Puget Cove (Wayne/Nick).** Sheri mentioned meeting with the Kwaan and explained what is going on.

The Board discussion moved to looking at the whole area and then finding the spot that works and then worrying about the land and a lease. Both sites are close to the same. Good

high-quality water is necessary, not at the point where we have to give up. We have areas where there is enough water for a 10 million egg release. We still have data from the Sawmill Cove site if things change.

Chum sampling was discussed and still don't have final data from the labs as they are working only when they have time because there is no dedicated funding for the project. But preliminary information is that the following numbers of samples were collected. Akwe 43; Italo 0; East Alsek 95; Alsek 2; and Situk 13 (1 at weir and 12 from commercial fishery).

Nate mentioned that he had looked at AK SSSF for a few million dollars for different projects, more on the habitat and restoration end of issues. Casey said that he had also looked at the funding through ATA. It was mentioned that this wasn't the best news but keep in mind where we are now and that this is a long-term project.

11/2/2015: Submitted NOAA Grant funding request

2016

1/29/2016: YRAA Board Meeting. The Board was updated on the various grant applied for from NOAA and Forest Service. Motion was made to have Nate work with the CBY surveyor on the Puget Cove site and continue to do testing and water sampling. Board suggested an RPT meeting be held.

5/28/2016: YRAA Board Meeting. Seated newly elected board member, elected officers. Review chum program. Kwaan is reluctant to discuss a lease because of concern over property taxes. Chinook instream incubator boxes were briefly discussed. Board made a motion to pursue a lease/permit/agreement with the Kwaan and a hatchery permit if a lease is agreed to.

12/29/2016: Request to City Assembly for resolution regarding possible land lease with Yak-Tat-Kwaan

2017

1/5/2017: CBY Resolution 17-270 signed

2/13/2017: Request to Yak-Tat-Kwaan for a land lease

4/3/2017: YRAA Board meeting. PROJECT UPDATE/PLANNING:

Kathy led off this discussion. We won't be discussing the land lease as I notified the Board through email on March 23rd that the Kwaan didn't teleconference me into their Board meeting and that it had been suggested to not spend any more money in pursuing a land lease/site on YTK land. The following day I had resent the report on the Puget Cove site.

With this site it would have to be a smaller program as less water is available. The question was asked if you can use chlorinated water for hatching the eggs. Kathy didn't know the answer but found out later that chlorinated water could be used but had to be treated and de-chlorinated. For the Puget Cove site the next step would be to have Tetra Tech come in and look at the engineering necessary for water collection and feasibility. Talked to Tetra Tech earlier today and they would want to take this slowly and small step at a time – stopping work if it appears that the site wouldn't work. Estimate would be approximate \$5,000 to \$10,000. A question was asked about the number of fish returning from a 12 Million egg release. Kathy said a 12 million release would return approx. 114K fish for cost recovery and 170K fish for commercial fisheries. Larry suggested that we look at several smaller projects around town. Sheri asked when she took the tour at DIPAC they had mentioned dropping the fry in a lake and how does that work?

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Kathy said that DIPAC raises unfed sockeye fry and drops them in a lake but you still need a site with water and a building in order to raise the eggs. It's also done with coho. Kathy has been checking and still is but has not found a successful program where the project is done wholly in river without a separate water source. Several she checked on using river water with the silt caused problems with the project. It was asked if the Little Dock site was ever looked at with any of the studies we have done yet. She was asked what it might cost to look at both the Puget Cove site and the Little Dock site. Don't think it would double the cost maybe 1-1/2 times. Herb mentioned that a gravity fed site is more cost efficient.

Herb/Nick made a motion for Kathy to pursue additional feasibility / information necessary for development of a site for both the Little Dock site and Puget Cove with Monti Cove the next site to be looked at if possible up to \$10,000. Motion passed with no opposition.

Herb/Nick made a motion to include within the minutes documentation on the money spent on the YTK site feasibility analysis, the suggestion from YTK that we don't spend any more money on the Sawmill Cove site and why the board is switching gears at this point. Passed. *(As requested, approximately \$88,091.00 has been spent on water quality testing, analysis, engineering but does not include K LH consulting time or staff time. The following information was received by phone call from Matt McDaniel, that the YTK Board was not interested in having the lease discussion on the agenda. That said the message when given to me by Matt McDaniels was that he would recommend that YRAA not spend any additional funds at this time for this site (email sent to Board 3/23/17.)*

Kathy went on to suggest that the board make a motion if either of the two sites (Little Dock or Puget Cove) become promising to approach the City about pursuing water rights as

those need to be secured before a hatchery permit can be submitted. **Nick/Wayne made a motion to approach the city about water rights if the site looks promising. Motion passed with no opposition.**

CHUM SAMPLING: Kathy just read the information in the email that she received from the Dept on the Chum Sampling. We did not have to pay to get the sampling results although we offered. Email is attached to the minutes. It was suggested that we follow up and try to get more understanding of the details of what stocks they compared the samples to and possible spatial separation.

Discussion came back around about who the Salmon Board worked with on grants; can you incubate wild stocks in the river. Casey suggested that we write Fish and Game (*was done*) and if there are any cooperative projects that we can do with YRAA's Funding that would help with some of the systems/stocks that are struggling in the Yakutat region such as Lost River.

Long financial discussion ended with the Board making the decision to close the office at Raven's Table, end the office assistant position, reduced consulting fees, water testing and planning.

6/1/2017: Close YRAA Office located at Raven's Table

2018

2019

4/27/2019: YRAA Board Meeting.

PROJECT PLANNING AND UPDATE: Sheri explained that she is now the chair of the Kwaan fisheries committee, and they paid her expenses for a joint trip with Larry to tour DIPAC and the Sitka hatchery. The Sitka hatchery is more what YRAA would be looking at. The Kwaan developing a fish committee and showing interest in working with YRAA is due in large part to Lowell's efforts and a change in Board and management makeup. The Kwaan fishery committee's meeting was postponed due to Sheri being sick but the plan is to have a meeting next week. It appears that the support is now present at the Kwaan but there are still a few that aren't. All communication from YRAA should go to the fisheries committee.

Kathy followed up with information that the Kwaan had invited Bart Watson from Armstrong Keta last summer to educate the board on hatcheries. She provided a handout she received from Bart through email and a list of the documents that he sent to the Kwaan as a follow up to his meeting. These documents show a lot of what YRAA has been doing to date.

Casey presented some background information about the work YRAA had previously done for the education of the new board members, but we had started with looking at Sawmill Cove which has a better water source for a hatchery but then we switched our efforts to looking at City land at Puget Cove. Herb clarified that the looking at Puget Cove occurred when the Kwaan basically told us no and to look at other options. It was brought up that the salmon return was a large wake up call to the town and some that were on the fence about a hatchery started to realize that it might be needed.

Kathy said that she believes that path forward would be to put a request forward to both the City for Puget Cove and Kwaan for Sawmill Cove and pursue a lease, water authorizations and a hatchery permit. She explained that you need the permission of the owner of the land or a lease to pursue water authorization rights and you needed the water authorization rights in order to receive a hatchery permit. You can apply for both at the same time but should get started on the water authorization first. Each water right application is approximately \$1,000 - \$1,200. Herb/Pat made a **motion to pursue both options (City & Kwaan) including a lease, water rights and hatchery permit**. Motion passed unanimously.

Casey brought the board members' attention back to the letter that was sent in 2017 and the response we got back from ADF&G. Casey provided the background of why the original letter was sent to the Dept. He receives a lot of comments from fishermen about the 2% SET tax they are paying for and not getting anything while the returns are getting worse through beaver dams, silted in spawning beds etc. Why isn't the YRAA board doing anything? It was also brought out that when the 2% SET tax was put in place, the city tax that did not show up on your fish ticket was rescinded. The board discussed this and if the Dept will ever allow incubation boxes to help get more chinook and sockeye released back into the system so more would hopefully come back. Nick made a motion that was seconded to send another letter to **ADF&G asking about possible joint rehabilitation projects in the Yakutat area**. Motion passed unanimously.

2021

6/5/2021: Update sent to Board of Directors

6/22/2021: Letter to Borough Manager for information on City Property near where water testing had taken place. No response ever received.

2022

11/16-17/2022: YRAA Board Meeting – have recording but not been transcribed to Minutes

2023

March 2023: An advisory question was put on the fishermen's ballot asking to prioritize Hatchery Incubation facility/program
Restoration and stream habilitation type projects
Repeal the Yakutat Regional Aquaculture Association.

May 2023: An annual meeting was being planned for May but when non-fisherman seat notice wasn't posted, the meeting didn't occur as re-scheduling would have happened in the fishing season.

2024

2025

9/27/2025: YRAA pre-Board Meeting. Meeting was for the elected fishermen board members to discuss nominations for non-fishermen board seats. While not scheduled, the group started an informal discussion about thoughts for moving forward away from a chum program and to Chinook instream incubation and restoration work.

10/1/2025: YRAA Board Meeting minutes still be drafted.