

Regional Aquaculture Associations and Planning Teams

Their Role in Alaska's Salmon Fishery Enhancement Program

Flip Pryor

Statewide Aquaculture Planning and Permitting Section, Chief

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Commercial Fisheries

ADF&G Mission Statement

To protect, maintain, and improve the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state, and manage their use and development in the best interest of the economy and the well-being of the people of the state, consistent with the sustained yield principle.

The Intent of Salmon Fishery Enhancement in Alaska

- 1974 PNP hatchery act: “It is the intent of this Act to authorize the private ownership of salmon hatcheries by qualified nonprofit corporations for the purpose of contributing, by artificial means, to the **rehabilitation** of the state’s depleted and depressed **salmon fisheries**. The program shall be operated without adversely affecting natural stocks of fish in the state and under a policy of management which allows reasonable segregation of returning hatchery-reared salmon from naturally occurring stocks”

The Intent of Salmon Fishery Enhancement in Alaska

- There is a State constitutional mandate that natural resources shall be utilized, developed and maintained for **sustained yield**
- Statutes, regulations and policies are intended to provide for salmon fishery enhancement without adversely affecting natural production.
- There is a statutory priority for protecting wild stocks.

Alaska Statutes Guiding Salmon Enhancement

Alaska Stat. Title 16, Ch. 10, Art. 9

« TITLE 16. », « CH. 10. », « ART. 9. »

Article 9. Salmon Hatcheries.

Section

- 375. Regional salmon plans
- 380. Regional associations
- 400. Permits for salmon hatcheries
- 410. Hearings before permit issuance
- 420. Conditions of a permit
- 430. Alteration, suspension, or revocation of permit
- 440. Regulations relating to released fish
- 443. Department assistance and cooperation
- 445. Egg sources
- 450. Sale of salmon and salmon eggs: use of proceeds; quality and price
- 455. Cost recovery fisheries
- 460. Inspection of hatchery
- 470. Annual report
- 480. Contracts for the operation of state hatcheries

Cross references. — For legislative findings and purpose related to AS 16.10.375 — 16.10.560, see § 1, ch. 59, SLA 1979, in the 1979 Temporary and Special Acts and Resolves.

Regional Associations

AS 16.10.380 Regional Associations

(a) The commissioner shall assist in and encourage the formation of qualified regional associations for the **purpose of enhancing fish production.**

Regional Associations

AS 16.10.380 Regional Associations

(a. continued) A regional association is qualified if the commissioner determines that it:

- (1) Is comprised of associations representative of commercial fishermen in the region;
- (2) Includes representatives of other user groups interested in fisheries within the region who wish to belong; and
- (3) Possesses a board of directors that includes no less than one representative of each user group that belongs to the association

Regional Associations

AS 16.10.380 Regional Associations

(b) A qualified regional association, when it becomes a nonprofit corporation under AS 10.20, is established as a service area in the unorganized borough under AS 29.03.020 for the purpose of providing salmon enhancement services.

(c) In this section “user group” includes, but is not limited to, sport fishermen, processors, commercial fishermen, subsistence fishermen, and representatives of local communities.

Enhancement Definition and Types

- **5 AAC 40.990 Definitions (5)** “enhancement” means a strategy designed to supplement allowable harvest of natural freshwater and anadromous species; enhancement activities are primarily designed to implement artificial or semi-artificial production systems or to increase the amount of productive natural habitat.
- In Alaska, enhancement is primarily done with a hatchery.
- Non-hatchery enhancement includes fish pass construction, instream incubation, spawning channels, lake enrichment and stream and lake rehabilitation projects.

Benefits of Forming a Regional Aquaculture Association

- Formal representation of stakeholder desires through participation in developing and defining salmon fishery enhancement goals and guidance for the region
- Oversight of regional salmon fishery enhancement permitting through regional planning team (RPT)
- Eligible to for funding sources.

The “User Pay” Approach: Enhancement Programs Are Intended To Be Self Supporting

- Regional Aquaculture Associations (RAA) are eligible to receive Salmon Enhancement Tax (SET)
- Cost Recovery Harvest of hatchery returns by the Hatchery Operator within a Special Harvest Area (SHA) is the primary funding source
- Cost Recovery Harvest of hatchery returns within a SHA/Terminal Harvest Area by the Commercial Common Property Fishery may all be done through an Assessment (tax)
- Eligible for State grant money for RAA organizational and planning purposes.

Authorized Use of Proceeds

- **Sec. 16.10.450. Sale of salmon and salmon eggs: use of proceeds; quality and price.** (a) Except as otherwise provided in a contract for the operation of a hatchery under AS 16.10.480, a hatchery operator who sells salmon returning from the natural waters of the state, or sells salmon eggs to another hatchery operating under AS 16.10.400 - 16.10.470, after utilizing the funds for reasonable operating costs, including debt retirement, expanding its facilities, salmon rehabilitation projects, fisheries research, or costs of operating the qualified regional association for the area in which the hatchery is located, shall expend the remaining funds on other fisheries activities of the qualified regional association.

Alaska's Program is Stakeholder Driven

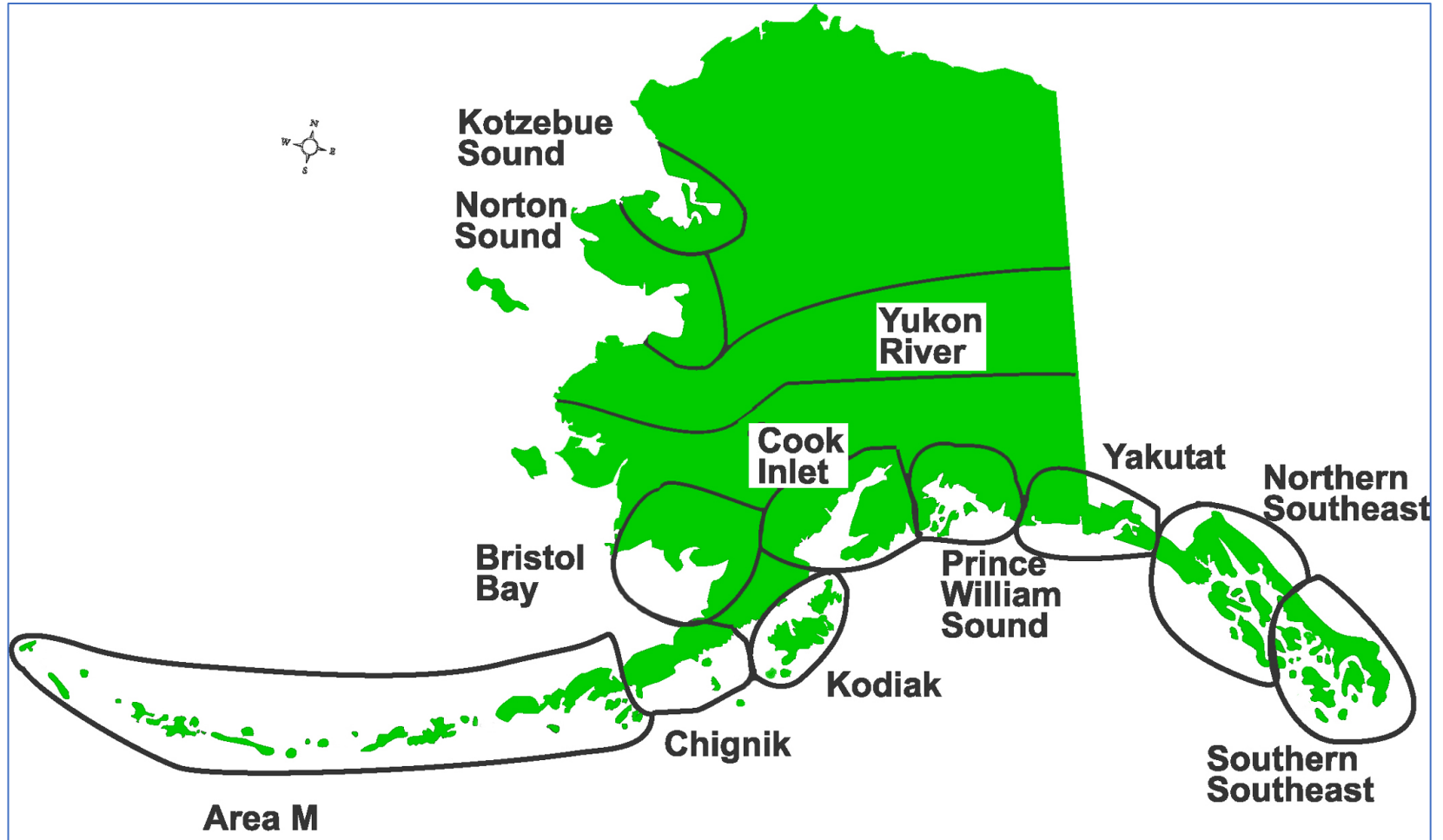
- The users of the resource within each region determine what fishery enhancement is desirable.
- The ADF&G determines what is appropriate within their mandate to protect natural production.
- The mechanism for this cooperative effort is the Regional Aquaculture Association working with ADF&G within the Regional Planning Team (RPT) process.

Regional Planning Team Guidance in Statute

AS 16.10.375 REGIONAL SALMON PLANS.

The commissioner shall designate regions of the state for the purpose of salmon production and have developed and amend as necessary a **comprehensive salmon plan** for each region, including provisions for both public and private nonprofit hatchery systems. Subject to plan approval by the commissioner, comprehensive salmon plans shall be developed by **regional planning teams** consisting of department personnel and representatives of the appropriate qualified regional associations formed under AS 16.10.380 .

Salmon Planning Regions



How the RPT is Established

- The Commissioner of ADF&G establishes Salmon fishery enhancement regions statewide, each with a RPT.
- The Commissioner appoints 3 ADF&G voting members to each RPT.
- Each ADF&G Commissioner approved RAA appoints 3 voting members.
- The ADF&G Commissioner sometimes also invites ex-officio (non-voting) members.
- The 6 voting members select a chairman who has specific duties described in 5 AAC 40.320.

What the RPT Does

The RPT meets annually, or as necessary, in order to fulfill its advisory role to the Commissioner of ADF&G on regional salmon fishery enhancement activities by:

- Drafting the regional salmon plan, and updates, and providing them to the Commissioner for approval;
- Reviewing hatchery permit applications and alteration requests and making recommendations to the Commissioner;
- Reviewing hatchery AMPs and making recommendations to the Commissioner;
- Reviewing certain aquatic resource permit applications and making recommendations to the Commissioner.

RPT Guidance in Regulation

5 AAC 40.300. Regional planning teams in general

The commissioner will establish regions and regional planning teams for the **primary purpose of developing comprehensive salmon plans** for various regions of the state. The provisions of 5 AAC 40.300 - 5 AAC 40.370 govern the structure and functions of each regional planning team and the development of a comprehensive salmon plan for each region.

5 AAC 40.310. Regional planning team composition

- (a) Each regional planning team consists of six members. Three are department personnel appointed by the commissioner, and three are appointed by the board of directors of the appropriate regional aquaculture association, qualified under AS 16.10.380 .
- (b) The commissioner will, in his or her discretion, request the involvement of representatives of federal and state agencies to assist a regional planning team if their contribution will aid in the development of the regional comprehensive plan.

The Primary Responsibility of the RPT is Regional Comprehensive Salmon Planning

5 AAC 40.340. Regional planning team responsibility

Each regional planning team shall **prepare a regional comprehensive salmon plan**, for the appropriate region, to rehabilitate natural stocks and supplement natural production, with provisions for both public and private nonprofit hatcheries. Each region planning team shall consider the needs of all user groups and ensure that the public has opportunity to participate in the development of the comprehensive salmon plan. Each regional comprehensive plan must define regional production goals by species, area, and time.

Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plans

- ☐ Yakutat – Phase II 2014
- ☐ Kodiak – Phase III 2010-2030
- ☐ Cook Inlet – Phase II 2006-2025
- ☐ Southeast– Phase III 2004
- ☐ Yukon River – 1998
- ☐ Norton Sound/Bering Strait – 1996-2010 (Phase II in draft)
- ☐ Prince William Sound – Phase III 1994
- ☐ Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands/Area M – 1993
- ☐ Chignik – 1992-2001
- ☐ Sikusuilaq/Kotzebue Sound – 1992
- ☐ Bristol Bay – 1989

**CHIGNIK REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE SALMON PLAN
1992-2001**



**Developed by
Chignik Regional Planning Team**

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Carl Rosier, Commissioner
June 1993**

The RPT Has Oversight of Hatchery Permits

5AAC 40.170 Regional planning team review

- (a) The appropriate regional planning team, as established under 5 AAC 40.300, **shall review each application to determine if the proposed hatchery is compatible with the appropriate regional comprehensive salmon plan.** The regional planning team shall use the following application review criteria:
- (1) the contribution the proposed hatchery would make to the common property fishery;
 - (2) the provisions for protection of the naturally occurring stocks from any adverse effects which may originate from the proposed hatchery;
 - (3) the compatibility of the proposed hatchery with the goals and objectives of the comprehensive salmon plan for the region; and
 - (4) whether the proposed hatchery would make the best use of the site's potential to benefit the common property fishery.
- (b) An applicant may review the regional planning team determination and comment on it by letter to the commissioner.

5 AAC 40.850. Notice of permit alteration

- (c) The regional planning team may, if the commissioner so requests, review and make a recommendation to the commissioner on the permit alteration request.

The RPT May Review Hatchery Annual Management Plans

5 AAC 40.840. Annual management plans

- (a) Beginning with the first year of operation of the hatchery, and on an annual basis after that, the department will prepare, in conjunction with the permit holder, an annual management plan to guide and condition hatchery operations for the succeeding calendar year.
- (b) The PNP coordinator will organize the appropriate department staff and the permit holder in preparing a draft annual management plan. The appropriate **regional planning team** and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development **may also review the plan**. This plan must organize and guide the hatchery's operations, for each calendar year, regarding production goals, broodstock development, and harvest management of hatchery returns.

Questions?