

Yakutat Regional Aquaculture Association  
Meeting Notes December 9, 2025  
Virtual and Kwaan Conference Room

1. Meeting called to order at 6:04
2. Attendance: Present at Kwaan Conference Room: Debra Lekanof and Devon Fernandez  
Virtual: Casey Mapes, Larry Bemis and James Ross, Kathy Hansen  
Quorum requirements were not met so the meeting was informational only. (A quorum is the majority of seats filled on the board, but 51% present must be in commercial fishing seats, currently a quorum would be 6 with 4 needing to be fishermen representatives.)
3. Agenda not adopted but roughly followed as no quorum present
4. Elections and resignations: Debra Lekanof had submitted her resignation to be discussed later and was emailed to the board. We did not receive in writing any nominations for non-fisherman seats. Other open seats were discussed. Possibly Melenda Lekanof, John Vale or Matt Anderson would be interested. Glenn Israelson is thinking about resigning. Kathy has only received one nomination for the two set net representative seats, but nomination is open through December 22.
5. Did not review or approve minutes from October 1, 2025
6. Financials:
  - a. Kathy did not change the check signers on the account as she was aware of Debra resigning and determined waiting until the annual meeting with the fishermen elections over before making the changes, so it doesn't have to be done twice.
  - b. The information in the financial binder was discussed and reviewed. This included a discussion about the process and cost to repeal the salmon tax assessment. This is a vote of all permit holders (over 2000) would be held through the Dept of Commerce after the YRAA board voted to repeal the tax. Ballots would need to be mailed out twice and a public meeting held. The cost to implement the tax in 2013/2014 was \$19,362 and so the cost now would be substantially more. Once repealed it would be unlikely you would be able to start the tax again. Another item from the financial discussed in further detail was about the Directors and Officers liability insurance. Nonprofit directors and officers (D&O) liability insurance helps cover the defense costs, settlements and judgments arising out of lawsuits and wrongful act allegations brought against a nonprofit organization. Board

members may be held personally liable for the actions of the organization, D&O insurance helps protect against personal liability.

- c. Bank balance as of 11/28/25 bank statement is \$411,854.22.
- d. Website is up with all YRAA's documents. The cost for the website developer to install all the information on the website was \$332.23 plus Kathy's time to put all the information together. Kathy's hours for the website were also time spent concurrently in putting the YRAA history and Timeline together. Board discussed the history and timeline, and newer board members appreciated the history. In the discussion of YRAA's history and timeline, the Yakutat Salmon Board was brought up. While a few of the documents are on the website from the Salmon Board, the group decided to write a formal letter to the City requesting a copy of all the grants and projects implemented and planned by the Salmon Board. Debra will take a first shot at writing the letter in consultation with Kathy with final approval and signature by the President Larry Bemis.
- e. Kathy explained what was in the reimbursement request, but no action was taken since there wasn't a quorum.
- f. Kathy explained at the October 1<sup>st</sup> meeting we had moved by the information about how to move forward with staffing needs for the association. I had presented two options, one where I stepped away and you hire someone with more time or I stay on providing some help and YRAA hires someone in Yakutat to provide help. There was a discussion about if the board needed to decide the direction and have a plan before you hire help. Kathy laid out how she thought it would be best to move forward and why you need some help now. She thinks after the election – early February or so to hold the annual meeting, advertised in Yakutat to try and bring the public in and hold informational presentations from ADF&G local biologists about status of the stocks, where they have concerns and work they may be doing, ADF&G hatchery section representatives to go over the processes, the regional planning team etc., contact other State of Alaska non-profit regional aquaculture association to find out information about their programs, possibly bring them into the meeting as a presenter, US Forest Service, Yakutat Kwan and Yakutat Tlingit tribe, BIA Roads transportation and other agencies (DNR) that might be doing salmon work or would have an involvement in salmon work YRAA might be interested in. In fact, Debra and Kathy had met the previous day with ADF&G Hatchery section personnel (Flip Pryor, Chief of Hatchery section and Lorna Wilson) virtually. Debra said she found it very informative. (More on this under section

7 Program information). Debra said this opportunity to work for YRAA is a better fit for her than serving on the board, and why she resigned. She is very interested in the opportunity. Kathy said she had planned to ask the board to form a small committee with Larry (President) and Casey (Vice-president) with herself and possibly one more member of the board to discuss and negotiate with Debra for a contract. Her preference was for a contract not an hourly wage. Kathy suggested some of the parameters would be for a 6-month contract and then determine where the association is at and where they are planning to go. Develop a workplan and expectations. The board will look at the final contract at a future meeting. In the meantime, the board members agreed to allow Kathy to work with Debra in the meantime under previous motion made by the Board to allow Kathy to hire help as necessary in the interim until the board meets and can take action. (4/27/2019 Board minutes: Herb/Pat made a ***motion to authorize Kathy Hansen to hire technical consultants and experts as needed.***)

7. Program Informational

- a. Review of ADF&G meeting with Debra and Kathy.

## **ENHANCEMENT VS REHABILITATION**

Enhancement is putting fish in the water for economic gain & in the freezer

Rehabilitation is putting fish on the spawning grounds

Need a “hatchery permit” for either option – there is only one permit to allow both types of activities

ADFG will never give a definitive positive answer until permits are actually submitted and through the review process. Ultimately, the approval decision is made by the Commissioner, who considers ADF&G staff and the Regional Planning Team’s recommendations. ADF&G will work with the applicant throughout the process but there is no decision on approval until the review process is completed. They might be able to give you a definitive no if they see you pursuing something that is totally unfeasible.

There are restoration/rehab activities that don’t need a hatchery permit but other types of permits mostly an ADF&G habitat permit – simpler application and timeline than a hatchery permit. These include beaver dam removal, shoring up stream banks, clearing out silt & debris in spawning beds & Lake fertilization etc.

## **CHINOOK PROGRAMS**

- Yakutat has ocean-type chinook where they leave the stream during the summer after emerging from the gravel rather than staying in-river or lake for additional year.
  - Raising Chinook for harvest to catch would benefit the sport fishery but not allow for more commercial time as a long term Chinook hatchery program you would try to put the Chinook in a location that is reasonably segregated from the Situk, hatchery strays are what the big issue right now is with hatchery programs and hatchery Chinook would need to be marked and would not count towards escapement and therefore would not provide the benefit of opening the commercial fishery because there are more Chinook in the area. This type of program is common in Alaska.
  - A one life-cycle rehabilitation program (5 years) could benefit by providing for more fish on the spawning beds contributing for the long-term increased productivity/escapement. This program would probably be possible in Yakutat but . . . This type of project could be done one of two ways instream incubations boxes (cons are if the area installed freezes and destruction by bears and wildlife) Could also do a remote egg take and store in some type of shed with water flow and drains (possibly city?) which protects from weather and wildlife but additional cost in transporting to and from the location. This type of program is rare in Alaska (none currently active).
  - Smaller incubation programs are possible for other species
  - We talked about the Salmon Enhancement tax most of the information was already covered but in addition we talked about the comment made at last meeting about if the tax was to be repealed to reimburse the fishermen who had paid the tax. This is not feasible as there is no legal way to trace the amount paid by the individual fishermen due to the State's confidentiality laws regarding fishery resources.
    - b. Moving forward – plan the annual meeting as previously discussed with all the presentations, explore the remote egg take program the Salmon Board had looked at. Look at Chinook restoration, instream incubation and or incubation restoration (unfed) at a site other than instream. Check with Kodiak about their current saltwater incubation program. Debra and Kathy will work on this research and bring information back for the board to consider, looking at what has worked and what hasn't and why. Also check with Oregon and Washington hatchery and tribes for descriptions of what methods they are using. Larry commented how helpful it was when he and Sheri when and toured DIPAC and NSRAA on better understanding enhancement possibilities.
8. Next meeting which will be the annual meeting was discussed for early February after the election is over.

9. Other Business: Kathy asked for feedback on the YRAA website. On current board members do we list any contact information. Board consensus was to check with individual board members and post information for those who give approval and also to make a page for all the previous individuals who have served on the YRAA Board. Debra and Kathy was tasked with making a financial summary for posting on the website and providing at the annual meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm

YRAA Board of Directors approved the meeting notes at their annual meeting May 16, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn LA", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Secretary 5/18/26