

YAKUTAT REGIONAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 16, 2026 AT Kwaan Plaza & Virtual

This meeting was postponed from March 28, 2026 when there was not a quorum available.

Attending in Person: Debra Lekanoff, Larry Bemis, Enoch Schertel, Icker (James) Ross, Devon Fernandez, Tom Rohloff, Sheri Nelson, Melenda Lekanof, Jonathan Pavlik, Jesse Pavlik, James Woodbury Jr, Travis Ross and towards the end of the meeting Mark Liam Sappington joined with a guest.

Attending Virtual: Kathy Hansen, Consultant; Rick Hoffman, ADFG Regional Biologist; and at 10:00 Flip Pryor, ADF&G, Chief of Statewide Aquaculture Planning and Permitting Section

Meeting was called to order. A quorum was determined to be present.

Introductions were made for attendees in person and online.

Larry moved/Devon seconded a motion to approve the agenda with a friendly amendment from Sheri to change the meeting minutes date from 2026 to 2025 on the agenda. Motion passed with no opposition.

3. ELECTIONS:

Kathy reported that the fall/winter set net election results reelected Sheri Nelson and elected Tom Rohloff to set net seats with the term expiring 2029. Glenn Israelson (Hand Troll permit) and Casey Mapes (Power Troll) have submitted resignations. The resignations were acknowledged by the board.

Non-fisherman seats that need to be filled and the term expiration dates are Sport fish (2029); Processor (2027); Subsistence User (2029); Reg/Village/Stakeholder rep (2028); City Liaison and an alternate. Kathy informed the board that they could fill the two fishermen's seats vacant due to resignations (Bylaws – section 2.1 last paragraph). Kathy notified the board that the city has not responded to the letters sent asking for a representative for the vacant seat. Nick Holcomb filled the city liaison seat for a long time and in answer to another question that the city seat could be an assembly member, city employee or an interested individual the city nominates. The following nominations were made based on individuals who contacted YRAA with interest in serving on the board:

Sport Fish: Mark Liam Sappington

Processor: Greg Indreland

Subsistence User: Jonathan Pavlik

Reg/Village/Shareholder: Melenda Lekanof

Alternate: Jesse Pavlik

Hand Troll (2027): James Woodbury

Iker/Devon made a motion to approve the slate of candidates as presented. Motion passed with no objections. The new Board members in the audience were seated.

5. ELECT OFFICERS

The following nominations were made for the Board officers. Devon made a motion to nominate Larry Bemis for President. Iker made a motion to nominate Jesse Pavlik for Vice-President. Devon made a motion to nominate Kathy as a non-voting Secretary after discussion about why the board has previously made this nomination. By being an officer of the Corporation Kathy is able to sign legal documents, file reports and deal with banking tasks. Jonathan nominated Melenda Lekanof as Treasurer. All nominations were accepted.

Devon/Sheri made a motion to approve the slate of officers as nominated. Motion passed without any objections.

6. APPROVE MINUTES/MEETING NOTES

Devon/Melenda made a motion to approve the October 2025 minutes and Dec 2025 meeting notes. Kathy commented that the reason the Dec meeting is listed as notes is that there ended up not being a quorum to conduct business but many of the agenda items were discussed. Motion passed without any objections.

9. CONTRACTORS REPORT

Thera spoke about her preliminary steps on organizing a salmon recovery summit to improve coordination between different organizations and agencies like the City, Tribes, Forest Service and ADF&G. the summit aims to address how various entities work together on salmon recovery projects, including discussions about culverts, roadless rules, and habitat restoration. She met with Flip and Lorna from ADF&G and Tina from Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association to learn more about hatcheries and potential salmon recovery approaches. The board discussed extending Debra's contract through May. Debra mentioned possibly looking at an employee status vs a contract status moving forward. She stated that one of her strengths would be working on modernizing administrative and financial management processes. The meeting focused on discussing habitat restoration and salmon enhancement efforts in the area. Concerns were raised about entities conducting restoration work without proper oversight and consultation/information sharing. It was suggested that YRAA could be the conduit to have

all the entities sharing the work they are doing. Larry brought up that YRAA 2% enhancement tax was voted in with the condition of repealing the city tax used by the Yakutat Salmon Board (YSB). The Yakutat Salmon Board use to do a lot of restoration work including culvert work and stream projects. Jesse reminded the group to maintain focus on the YRAA's primary mission as an aquaculture association rather than becoming a habitat restoration board. Sheri commented that we needed to be involved in both enhancement and restoration as we are losing our fish. Larry again reminded the group that we took over the functions of the YSB in repealing that city tax and they did lots of restoration work.

(Note: In December, the consultants were tasked to try to gather as much information as possible on the Yakutat Salmon Board activities. The city and forest service were both contacted for information.)

The board discussed the concerns the fishermen are raising about what is being done with their tax money. Iker suggested that **we send out a newsletter letting the fishermen know what is going on, and some basic financial information.** Kathy explained after questions were asked, that three surveys had been sent – one while doing the Yakutat Salmon Comprehensive Salmon Plan: Phase II (approx. 2013) and with the election ballots in 2023, & 2024 a very simple survey prioritizing enhancement, restoration and repealing the tax. Kathy jumped to the financial pages and the final set tax amount to be paid to the organization for the 2025 season in late July '26 of \$39,350.92 and a graph & table that shows the amount received yearly for salmon enhancement taxes (SET) 2013 to 2025 and a breakdown between amount paid by set net fishermen and trollers. She explained the process of repealing the tax but went on to explain that the assumption that the tax would be paid back to the individual fishermen was not possible. There is no way due to confidentiality rules in the State of Alaska to know how much an individual paid or even who paid in. So, if the tax is repealed, the choice for the money YRAA has is to donate it to an association doing restoration work or maintaining the YRAA board to disperse the funds in collaboration with other agencies until the funds are gone. If the end result was to disband YRAA, no enhancement of salmon would occur in the region. YRAA needs to exist because that is where you get the RPT members and without RPT members you don't have a key component of enhancement permitting. The board's discussion further highlighted the need for better communication about current and future plans to the stakeholders. It was discussed that **YRAA needs to send out another survey to gather input from stakeholders about preferred future directions for salmon restoration/enhancement efforts.**

7. ADF&G PRESENTATION ON REGIONAL PLANNING TEAMS (RPT) by FLIP PRYOR

Flip Pryor started his presentation at 10:12, rather than the time certain of 10:30. He introduced himself as the Section Chief of ADF&G Statewide Aquaculture, Planning & Permitting which includes enhancement of salmon and mariculture. The Division consists of four individuals including himself, Lorna Wilson, PNP Coordinator; Heather Fulton-Bennett, Statewide Resource Development Biologist; and Michelle Morris, Permit Coordinator.

Presentation covered ADF&G Mission Statement, Intent of Salmon Fishery Enhancement in Alaska; Alaska Statutes that guide Salmon Enhancement; Regional Aquaculture Associations; Types of Enhancement and definitions; User pay – Enhancement programs intended to be self-supporting; Authorized Use of Proceeds; Program is Stakeholder Driven; Regional Planning Teams (RPT); Salmon Planning Regions, What the RPT does, RPT's & Comprehensive Salmon Planning & Plans; RPT has oversight of Hatchery permits.

Following the presentation there was a long discussion about the presentation and then discussion about possible programs. Based on a comment in Flips presentation, Kathy expanded on the Phase I Yakutat Comprehensive Salmon Plan (CSP) prohibiting any type of salmon enhancement, but in Phase II of the plan which YRAA supported and was approved by the Commissioner does allow enhancement.

The participants discussed small scale king salmon hatchery options. Flip shared the information about a previous small scale Chinook project in Skagway that used a 20x20 shed with incubators, though the program no longer exists. Tom stated he had discussed with DIPAC small king salmon programs and DIPAC would be willing to raise small batches of king salmon (handful of pairs) at no cost with YRAA only needing to cover the transport costs.

Discussed the possibility of incubation egg boxes on the Situk. Skagway wasn't ideal for incubation boxes due to freezing and high-water events in the fall. One of the board members had talked to an individual that was involved in the Skagway project, and he thought Yakutat would be an ideal place to try due to the streams and lakes which Skagway doesn't have. The placement of the fry will be an important decision, and the use of unfed fry is better and significantly cheaper. Whitehorse had a very successful unfed fry release with a 6-8% survival but that might be partly due to the length of the Yukon River and the time that took the unfed fry to navigate. The Whitehorse Hatchery ended it's program due to a fire. Flip explained that while egg boxes along the river have been used successfully in some remote areas, hatcheries provide more secure and reliable results due to better insulation, protecting the eggs from freezing and preventing bears. But depending upon the size of the project and whether you are releasing unfed fry or holding fish for a year influences the size of the building you would need. A small project for unfed fry could be as

small as a garden shed. Flip explained that these types of projects still require a hatchery permit. There was a discussion about how unfed fry would help the set net fishermen but not the trollers. The trollers can be very successful catching the kings at net pen sites. The group decided that both unfed fry and net pens needed to be considered. Rick Hoffman, ADF&G biologist commented that the Situk produces naturally in the wild zero check Chinook. The question was asked if the production from this type of project would count towards the escapement, thereby reducing the restrictions on the fishermen, allowing for more fishing time. Most likely in these situations, the hatchery fish would count towards the escapement goals. Flip clarified that fish used for broodstock should come from the same local stock to prevent genetic issues. The discussion covered potential permits needed for transporting eggs, fry and fish. Rick answered to a question asked, that most years there would typically be sufficient king salmon available for broodstock collection. The conversation ended with an understanding of plans to follow up on information of the Skagway Chinook project, other small-scale projects at other hatcheries including Kodiak and Whitehorse, incubator technology and possible funding sources as well as a net pen project and an unfed fry project.

At 11:19 Flip and Rick left the meeting.

SHORT BREAK

ELECTION OF RPT MEMBERS

After discussion and review of RPT responsibilities the following nominations were made:

Devon, Melenda and Jonathan with Jesse as an Alternate

Jesse/Iker made a motion to approve the slate as presented: Devon, Melenda, and Jonathan with Jesse as an Alternate. Motion passed with no opposition.

FINANCIAL

The board was shown the latest Bank statement showing a bank balance of \$402,849.22

Due to a problem with screen sharing the IRS 2025 990 form was not reviewed.

SET Tax was discussed during the contractor's report.

Kathy then explained that in October we passed several bank resolutions when Debra was on the board and voted in as secretary. Before the resolution for banking signatures were submitted she decided she would be more helpful as a consultant to the association than a board member, therefore the changes passed in October were never implemented.

When we failed to have a quorum in December, we were not able to correct the situation, so we are now in the situation of having to redo the Banking resolutions.

Banking resolution 2026-5-16-1 is for the business checking account for who will be the signers on the account, to remove the individuals that are not listed on the resolution. It maintains at this time the requirement for two signatures on any Check but allows for Electronic Fund Transfers with a single signer if pre-approved by the board.

Iker/Devon made a motion to approve Banking Resolution 2026-5-16-1 with Larry Bemis, Jesse Pavlik, Melenda Lekanof, and Kathryn L Hansen to be check signers. Motion passed unanimously.

Banking Resolution 2026-5-16-2 authorizes Kathryn L Hansen to transfer money from the business checking account to Certificates of Deposit so that we are earning at least a minimal amount of interest on our funds. The same signatories that are on the checking account in Banking Resolution 2026-5-16-1 will be authorized as signers on the Certificates of Deposit.

Iker/Devon made a motion to approve Banking Resolution 2026-5-16-2 to have Kathryn L Hansen set up several Certificates of Deposits up to \$250,000.00 and transfer the funds from the checking account ending in 0903 with Larry Bemis, Jesse Pavlik, Melenda Lekanof, and Kathryn L Hansen authorized to be signatories on the Certificates of Deposit. Motion passed unanimously.

Kathy explained that one of the big reimbursements that happens yearly is the Directors & Officers Liability Insurance. By the time they send the bill in late June/early July there has not been enough time to send a check to Yakutat get two signatures and then sent to the company so I usually ended up paying for it and eventually being reimbursed. Based on the banking resolution just passed, I would like authorization to make the payment by an electronic transfer. When asked Kathy explained D&O liability insurance is a form of coverage designed to protect individuals from personal losses if they are sued as a result of serving as a director or officer of a business or other type of organization.

Larry/Melenda made a motion to authorize Kathryn L Hansen to pay the Directors and Officers liability insurance by electronic transfer requiring only one signature in June/July of 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

Kathy showed on the screen her reimbursement requests #19 which were to be presented at the March meeting that got cancelled and Reimbursement #20 which is from March to May 14th. There is time spent on YRAA business on May 15 & 16, 26 in preparation for and this meeting that is not in the requests. I sent to Larry the receipts for the items being reimbursed earlier in the week to review.

Iker/Jesse made a motion to approve reimbursement and payment to Hansen Fishery Consultants for reimbursement requests #19 & #20 totaling together \$5215.25. Motion passed unanimously.

Debra's contract expired at the end of March. Contract and invoices were sent in the March board packets. She has continued to work in April and May and therefore it would be appropriate to extend her contract to cover April and May. **Jesse/Devon made the motion to extend Debra Lekanoff's contract through April to May 31, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.**

This was followed with a discussion about a new contract with a new scope of work for Debra through December 31, 2026. After discussion a sub-committee was formed of Larry, Jesse, Devon, Sheri and Kathy to work with Debra on the scope of work and contract. **Motion was made by Iker and Travis for the sub-committee to develop and authorize a contract (with scope of work) through December 31, 2026 for Debra Lekanoff. Motion passed unanimously.**

Next the Board discussed the proposals from Elgee Rehfeld, a Juneau auditor that consulted with YRAA when we were first starting up and is used by other Hatchery associations for audits or other levels of financial review. YRAA has never been audited since it first started in 2011, and we are not legally required at this time to have done an audit. It is being discussed because of the SET tax collected from the fishermen. Based on the information and previous discussion points in December and earlier in the meeting, it was determined that until fiscal policies and more modern financial systems are in place an audit wouldn't be helpful. They decided against consulting with Elgee & Rehfeld at this time.

The board developed a sub-committee consisting of Larry, Jesse, Melenda, Kathy and Debra to develop financial and operational policies and procedures, code of conduct, and director's handbook with a target completion date of September. The full board will be notified of any meeting being held and they can attend if they wish.

The board also requested that they be sent quarterly financial reports.

COMMISSIONERS LETTER TO RPT's ON CHUM AND PINK 10- YEAR MORATORIUM

The Commissioners letter to all the regional RPT's was sent to YRAA as the Yakutat RPT had not met for many years. Due to a board of fish proposal at the Statewide meeting which the Board did not take action on, the Commissioner stated his intent to work with the Aquaculture association to extend the current moratorium and the Board of Fish directed him to work through the regional planning teams to develop 10-year agreements for a Pink and Chum moratorium. Kathy had sent a letter to the Board of Fish from her consulting

business basically saying that YRAA was not necessarily looking at a pink or chum program but they didn't know what the future held as they tried to get a project that will put fish in the water. It was discussed if a response was needed and **Travis/Jesse made a motion for Kathy to send a letter to the Commissioner that a moratorium was inappropriate for YRAA.** Motion passed. After the letter is sent, it is to be sent to the full board and then send the Commissioners letter, Board proposal and response to the partnerships that are trying to be developed through the salmon summit.

Iker/James motion to move to Executive Session. The one non-board member left the room.

Iker/Sheri made a motion to move out of Executive Session at 12:54 pm.

No actions were taken following the Executive Session.

Sheri/Devon Motion to adjourn at 12:57 pm passed unanimously.

Minutes were adopted on October 2, 2026

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy", followed by a long horizontal line.

YRAA Secretary 10/7/26

YAKUTAT REGIONAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION

Annual Meeting Agenda

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Attendance & Quorum Determination**
- 3. Election Results & Board Representation**
 - **Set Net Seats Election Results**
 - **Non-Commercial Fisherman Seat Election Results**
 - Representation includes:
 - Sport Fishing Representative
 - Seafood Processor Representative
 - Subsistence User Representative
 - ANCSA/Sealaska/YKI/YTT Government Representative
 - City and Borough of Yakutat Liaison and
 - Alternate
- 4. Adopt Agenda** (as working guide)
- 5. Election of Officers**
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
- 6. Approve Minutes** (Oct 25, 25 minutes & Dec 9, 25 meeting notes)
- 7. Presentation & Discussion: RPT & Hatchery Enhancement- Time Certain: 10:30 AM**
 - Virtual Presentation and discussion with Flip Pryor, Alaska Department of Fish and Game regarding:
 - Regional Planning Team (RPT) process
 - Permitting requirements
 - Types of enhancement projects and regulatory considerations
- 8. Elect RPT Representatives (3)**
- 9. Old Business**
 - Contractor's Report: Salmon Roundtable & Summit Updates
 - Yakutat Salmon Board Records & Document Request Update
- 10. Financial Business**
 - Financial reports, budget review, and discussion
- 11. Election of Regional Planning Team (RPT) Members**
 - Election of three (3) RPT representatives
- 12. New Business**
 - Additional items brought before the Association
- 13. Public Comment & Member Discussion**
- 14. Executive Session**
- 15. Adjournment**