For more than 20 years Cook Inlet gillnetters have fought to defend their industry and way of life. This eroded into a series of legal battles that seek to bring federal oversight to a management program that has often failed Cook Inlet fishermen. Unfortunately, United Cook Inlet Drift Gillnetters Association’s (UCIDA) efforts to change, or even eliminate, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (Council) Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) could swamp fishermen in Copper River, False Pass, and Southeast. A 9th Circuit Court ruling won by UCIDA has forced the Council to craft regulations for three areas previously removed from the FMP. The ruling is on appeal to the Supreme Court, but has not yet been heard, so the Council must move ahead.

The FMP was established in 1978 under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), which charged eight management councils with developing fishing plans for species harvested in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The 70’s was a chaotic decade for trollers. Salmon stocks along the coast were depleted. The state was young and developing its management program and the federal government was taking control of federal waters and ejecting foreign vessels. The Northwest Tribes wanted Alaska brought under the Boldt Decision and discussions had begun that ultimately led to the Baldrige Stipulation and Pacific Salmon Treaty. Limited entry was implemented; power trollers in 1975 - hand trollers not until 1983. From 1960-1977 significant restrictions were put in place by the Board of Fish and Council to protect king salmon; cooperative management was conflicting, acrimonious, and disruptive. Areas were closed and fishing gear was modified or eliminated. ATA supported conservation measures, but questioned some of the biological assumptions, considered some rules unnecessary, and wanted a uniform management program. ATA’s team of scientists and attorneys did battle in the regulatory arenas and court. There were successes and failures; dual management prevailed and made for mischief and a lot of frustration as we worked through treaty and allocative changes in the 1980s.

In 1990, the Council deferred management authority to the state. Salmon were doing well in Southeast, largely due to a mature and successful state management program. The Pacific Salmon Treaty and the Endangered Species Act provided ample federal oversight, so the Council agreed to hand over daily management to the state. Only the troll fishery has been managed under the FMP; state management with only occasional Council action has been far better for the fleet.

The FMP has been amended several times, most recently in 2012 (see ATA Fall 2011). Amendment 12 ensured consistency of the FMP with MSA and new requirements for annual catch limits and accountability measures. As part of the FMP review, the Council removed three net areas from the FMP and gave full regulatory authority to the state in those federal waters. While False Pass and Copper River fishermen supported those measures, UCIDA and part of the Cook Inlet fleet did not - they believe federal oversight will improve their situation.

UCIDA filed another lawsuit that asks the court to scrap FMP Amendment 12 and start over. What that could mean is disruption for trollers and no fishing in the EEZ for the three net fisheries until a new plan is finalized. Regional NMFS Director, Jim Balsinger, warned the court of the commotion this could cause and said a new FMP would take at least three years. UCIDA says they no longer support vacating the FMP, but it’s unclear whether the case has been dropped.

In April, the Council started plotting a course. A preliminary range of alternatives will be reviewed at the October 2017 meeting and the Council plans to form a stakeholder workgroup. ATA will work with Concerned Area M Fishermen, Copper River District Fishermen United, and others, to keep management in the hands of the state and defend against unanticipated consequences for any fishery under the FMP.
Sometimes decisions come harder than others; there are those rare moments of seemingly perfect clarity offset by times when you know that nothing you do will be ‘just right’. The 2017 spring fishery will go down in my personal journal as the latter.

The burning question: Should ATA complain about closures, or support? Should we demand more conservation action in the sport and net fisheries - perhaps insisting they be shut down along with us? The answer seemed simple to some... ‘if we sit out, they should, too!’ Well, the Juneau and Haines anglers did, but the cheery derby atmosphere in other ports just rubbed salt in troller’s wounds. A few folks were concerned about what they thought was biased decision-making on the part of ADFG, but most seemed to think total closure for others was a bridge too far. So, what would I do if the decision was mine to make - and what action should I call for on behalf of the fleet? Quite frankly, the ‘right’ answer still escapes me. ATA must walk a delicate line, supporting conservation in our fishery and calling for an appropriate sharing of the burden in the others; the key word being ‘appropriate’. Not all management actions are equal when it comes to saving fish, even when optics might make it appear so.

I gathered information in hopes of seeing a path forward on what is likely be a multi-year problem. In the process, management decisions were questioned and fleet concerns expressed. I asked ADFG to review management actions ...with an eye towards more equitably distributing the conservation burden amongst the fleets; and also to liberalize fisheries wherever possible to do so without compromising weak runs. ADFG responded with a rationale for restrictions in the commercial and sport fisheries that was based on best available data and various management goals. This is not to be confused with scads of rock solid information - most ADFG managers will readily admit that more is needed. Nor does it mean that ATA supports all of the stated goals, but at least the conversation has begun.

Southeast king stocks have been strong for decades, so the state has been able to manage them effectively with less data than the current situation demands; dwindling research dollars have been used on more pressing needs, both for the stocks in our region and others around the state. Escapement goals were studied and improved, but understanding migration patterns by stock, with precise estimates of harvest by fleet, has had to wait. ADFG can draw conclusions on 4 of the 34 king rivers from limited tagging data, but troll catches are more heavily sampled than the other fleets, making it difficult to trust that ADFG has a handle on who harvests how many fish, where and when. That said, we can’t deny that our own fleet impacts local stocks.

OK, we needed to cut back, but did the other fleets do their share? And where do we go from here? I’m still puzzling with my final answers and the ATA Board will tackle it this fall after all the numbers shake out. What I do know is that we must review data, talk to other users, carefully weigh our actions, and focus on sustainability in 2018 and beyond. No one can afford to see the Board of Fish designate stocks of concern in this region. Fish First.
The Wheelhouse View  President Steve Merritt, F/V C’est La Vie

In the days of my youth we only had Ratz Mountain radio and the sideband for long-range communications and the VHF and CB for short. The challenge at that time was conveying your top-secret fishing score to your partners without giving the same information to eavesdropping fishermen. Just the tone of your voice could screw it up. We had elaborate codes some of which were so complex that your own coding partner ended up being misled! Fishing wasn't just fishing, it was a technological cold war and many captains had equipment on board that would rival that of a CIA spy. All of this led to small groups of trollers knowing the best places to fish before the majority of the fleet figured it out. Consequently, the fleet's catch rate was slower and made it more manageable for the department to accurately hit the harvest target before closing the Chinook fishery.

Now, with the development of scramblers, face book, in-reach, cell and sat phones, the fleet is getting on the fish quicker, resulting in higher daily catch rates. The down side of this is that the pace of this fishery has increased substantially, particularly in years of high abundance, and too often the department has had to basically make an educated guess at the total number of fish being caught. If we fish over the quota in its entirety there are long range consequences that most of us fishermen don't fully understand. Catching too many kings in July means a shorter August opening, or none at all. If we fall too far short of the mark, we may not get to harvest our entire quota – and we definitely understand what that means!

Fishermen happily use computers and advanced communications to better their efficiency on the grounds, but we should also use these things to keep the department up to speed, so they can make the most accurate decisions about the management of our fishery. That’s where the call-in program comes in.

ATA realized years ago that having fishermen call from the grounds would help keep the department better informed about the actual status of coho. We used to have the 'traditional' 10-day closure in August, but most of us knew that was longer than necessary to achieve the goals of moving fish to the inside fisheries and conservation, so ATA developed a call-in program. Eventually this became a cooperative effort with ADFG. The success of the program is shown by the fact we haven't had a 10 day closure for many, many years.

We all need to use the call-in program to help the department do the best job they can. With treaty negotiations in full throttle and the quota quite low, the department's tendency will be to err on the conservative side and I believe that will be true for the future management of this fishery as well.

The more information ADFG has, the better off we will be. Think about calling ATA or ADFG this summer to regularly report your scores, especially during the king openings or at key coho assessment times mid-July to early August. As those of us who participate know, your information is carefully guarded – the goal is to provide opportunity to keep hooks in the water.

Good Fishing!
Steve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winter Fishery</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Permits</th>
<th>Landings</th>
<th>Avg. Wt.</th>
<th>Avg. Fish Ticket Price</th>
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<td>2017 - Preliminary</td>
<td>43,884</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>3,606</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>52,292</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>3,873</td>
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<td>5-year Average (2012-2016)</td>
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<td>3,036</td>
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<td>10-year Average (2007-2016)</td>
<td>25,664</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>$7.54</td>
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</table>
2017 ATA Raffle

The results are in and a slate of fortunate people secured a passel of great prizes. A few still to be mailed, so bear with us. Many thanks to the merchants and participants who support ATA each year and help to make the raffle a fun and rewarding event. Next drawing will take place during the 2018 Board of Fisheries meeting in Sitka. Tickets on sale now!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>City</th>
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<tr>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<td>ATA</td>
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<td>Kevin Beam</td>
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<td>$500</td>
<td>Mark Ritter</td>
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<td>John Garner</td>
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<td>Gift Bag</td>
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<td>Juneau</td>
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<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>Joe Emerson</td>
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<td>Juneau</td>
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<tr>
<td>$100 Gift Certificate</td>
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<td>Glacier Auto Parts/NAPA Juneau</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Hats &amp; a Cozie</td>
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<td>Glacier Auto Parts/NAPA Juneau</td>
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<td>$300 Custom Processing</td>
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<td>$75 Gift Basket</td>
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<td>Sitka</td>
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<td>Richard Atwood</td>
<td>Breakaway Adventures</td>
<td>Wrangell</td>
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<td>Wooden Wheel Cove Trading Post</td>
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<td>Rie Munoz Gallery</td>
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<td>Old Harbor Books</td>
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<td>One Ton of Ice</td>
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<td>$75 Gift Certificate</td>
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<td>2 hrs In-Shop Welding</td>
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<td>Precision Boatworks</td>
<td>Sitka</td>
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<td>Jerilyn Fairbanks</td>
<td>Tom Pope</td>
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<td>Alaskan Home Pack Box</td>
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<td>ATA</td>
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MMMA

Last fall NMFS announced plans to move handtrollers, dinglebar, and jig fishermen from Category 3 to Category 2 under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The reason is that a jig fisherman and his crew working near Kodiak were anchored up a couple years back and a humpback whale got tangled up with the anchor line and drowned. That one whale put several license categories over the allowable take provisions of the MMPA, earning them an ‘upgrade’ in status and some new rules to boot. If Category 2 had been approved, a bunch of unrelated license holders could have been required to register with NOAA, carry certificates, and pay an annual permit fee. Further, NOAA could have put observers on these vessels at any time. Jig, troll, and dinglebar fisheries were lumped by NOAA because CFEC does. The difference is that CFEC is not managing a fishery, it just lumps some fisheries for fee assessments. NOAA’s mash up could have been costly and disruptive for small boats.

At one time the IRS wanted to seize permits as property, it is CFEC who fought and won that and other legal battles aimed at dismantling limited entry. Their work on cases like Carlson (permit fees) has saved the state millions. CFEC assists fishermen on related issues. They worked on the payout portion of troll treaty mitigation program and helped with the seine buyback. Last year, CFEC joined with ATA on a Marine Mammal Protection Act issue that could have created unnecessary rules and expense for handtrollers, dinglebar, and jig fishermen. They provide analyses to the Board of Fish on gear and other matters. Sure, CFEC’s workload is less than the early days and its budget and staff has been trimmed accordingly - maybe too much, since they haven’t been able to fill important staff positions or clear up the back load of work.

(Continued on p.6)

<table>
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<th>Don Power</th>
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Calendar

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<td>17</td>
<td>DEADLINE: Board of Fish AGENDA CHANGE REQUESTS</td>
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<td>Sept</td>
<td>Rainforest Festival Petersburg</td>
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<td>7-10</td>
<td>Petersburg</td>
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<td>25-27</td>
<td>United Fishermen of Alaska Board of Directors</td>
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<td>Nov</td>
<td>Fish EXPO</td>
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<td>16-18</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**State of Alaska Hosts Transboundary River Workshop**

Lt. Governor Mallott recently hosted a workshop to update the public and take comment on implementation of the Statement of Cooperation (SOC) that Alaska negotiated with British Columbia last year. The SOC falls under a broader Memorandum of Understanding and is aimed at promoting the protection of water quality, quantity, and watershed integrity in our shared rivers. A Bilateral Transboundary Working Group was formed and includes the commissioners of three key Alaska agencies and their Canadian counterparts to share information and concerns regarding the progress of six large mines in the transboundary watershed, and the Mt. Polley mine where a catastrophic failure of a tailings dam occurred in 2014. A Technical Working Group will gather baseline and other data. The Parties say they will share information in a timely manner and collaborate with Alaska and B.C. citizens and tribal governments. Unfortunately, the agreements are non-binding and specifically state that no money is committed to the endeavor.

A crucial element missing is financial protection for State of Alaska and residents in the event the mines cause damage. The legislature held a hearing on the TBR mines and the congressional delegation has been working hard to start this discussion between the US and Canadian. To make headway they will need strong and visible backing from the state and all of us. ATA will continue to work with others and speak out on this issue.

(cont. from p. 5) CFEC is the only agency that takes in more than it spends and since 2013 ADFG has received $17 million of that surplus. This has helped secure important ADFG programs, which industry supports, but it is crucial that CFEC maintain adequate resources and the flexibility necessary to do its work and defend against any future attacks on the program.

Last year, Governor Walker issued Administrative Order 279 to move some of CFEC’s functions and $1.3 million a year to ADFG. The state never adequately explained to industry how the additional money would be used, or how a new structure would protect core aspects of the CFEC program from political meddling in the future. An individual filed a lawsuit, which was eventually taken over by UFA. The judge ruled against industry, because AO 279 had not yet been implemented, so no harm has been done. UFA was considering an appeal when the governor placed a moratorium on AO 279 and called a meeting to look for common ground.

In October, a number of UFA groups met with Governor Walker to discuss CFEC; we asked him to drop AO 279. A workgroup was formed with a mission to meet the state’s goal of cost cutting across all agencies, while protecting the integrity of CFEC. We developed a white paper on CFEC and suggested an approach. In May the Governor issued AO 285, which revoked AO 279 and introduced legislation that will, among other things, reduce the commissioner’s salaries. UFA has agreed to drop the lawsuit and support the bill. We very much appreciate the governor working with industry on this!
Welcome New Members
(As of April 19, 2017)

New

Kelsey Sullivan
Lindsey Johnson
Tyler Emerson
Eric Wilkerson
Andrew Wilkerson

Boat
Cheri D
Sika
Elf
Sunmore
Sunmore

Home Port
Bellingham
Haines
Juneau
Juneau
Juneau

Type
PT
PT
PT
PT
CW

Upgrades

Hans Wienberg
Matt Lawrie
Bruce Weyhrauch

Patience
Born Again

Sitka
Sitka

PT/G
PT/S
B/S

Did we miss you? Give a call!

We’re grateful for the support of ATA’s Business Members and encourages your patronage of these fine establishments...

Alaska Glacier Seafoods
Bruce Weyhrauch, Juneau
City of Craig
City of Port Alexander
City of Pelican
Delta Western, Sitka
E.C. Phillips & Son, Ketchikan
First Bank, Ketchikan
Hammer & Wikan, Petersburg
Hoonah Cold Storage
House of Liquor, Sitka
Ice Seafoods, Petersburg
LFS/Murray Pacific, Sitka
Madison Lumber, KTN
Pacific Pride of Alaska, KTN
Petro Marine, Anchorage
Port Townsend Shipwrights
Precision Boatworks, Sitka
Qi Hooks, Sitka
Savage, Inc., Seattle
Seafood Producers Co-op
Sea Mart, Sitka
Seattle Marine, Seattle
Seaview Boatyard, Seattle
Service Auto Parts, Ketchikan
Shoreline, Pelican
Sitka Boatwatch, Sitka
Sitka Sound Seafoods
Southeast Pilots, Ketchikan
The Office Bar, Hoonah
Timber & Marine Supply, KTN
Tom Pope, Marine Surveyor
Tongass Trading, Ketchikan
Trading Union, Petersburg
Triad Fisheries
Union Machine Shop, KTN
US Seven Oceans, Mulbiho
Yakutat Seafoods, Yakutat

April 2017

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Aquila, Ketchikan

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Mai Tai, Handtroll

Staff
Dale Kelley, Executive Director
ata@gci.net

Treaty Representatives
Howard Pendell, Chaos
Dennis Longstreth, Shearwater
Dale Kelley, ATA
Join Today!

Name: _________________________________________________
F/V: _________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________
City/ZIP: ____________________________________________
Phone/Cell: _______________________________ E-Mail: _________________________________
Add to eNews List?  Yes___  No ___________
Other Fisheries: ____________________________________________ Call-In Program? Yes___  No ___
Are you willing to volunteer some time and/or expertise to ATA? Yes ___  No ___
EXTRA DONATION: $ _______ Please use my donation for: Legal ____  Treaty ____  General Purposes ____  Publicity ____
T-SHIRTS: Men’s: Limited Colors and Styles Trolling is Good... (XXL - ONLY); Black w/logo (L - ONLY)  Women's: OUT OF STOCK

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Power</th>
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<th>Processor</th>
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For Your Convenience...
You may include dues & contributions to these groups along with your ATA dues:
ATA Legal / Treaty Fund (any amount)  United Fishermen of Alaska ($175)  Halibut Coalition (any amount)

Method of Payment: Check _____  Mastercard _____  Visa _____  Account #__________
Exp. Date: _______ Amount: $ _______
Signature: ________________________________________________________
Print Name: ________________________________________________________
Email: ____________________________________________________________

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Alaska Trollers Association
130 Seward #205
Juneau, AK  99801
(907)586-9400 ph / ata@gci.net
www.aktrollers.org

Spring 2017

Need a Receipt? Yes___  No ___
A receipt for tax purposes is sent to all members in late January. Check only if you want an extra receipt & add email.