

FISH RAP

Highlighting releases, returns, policy and legislation affecting the Southeast Alaska salmon fisheries

Change Service Requested

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Debt Free!

Ladd Macaulay was instrumental in founding DIPAC. His children, Andy, Cindy and Amy Jo hold a check representing the \$42.5 million debt DIPAC has repaid to the state.



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DIPAC & NSRAA Get More Salmon To The Fleets

It took 20 years for Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC) to pay off almost \$11 million of the \$23.3 million it borrowed from the state to build its hatcheries and programs. That doesn't include interest. So it's no wonder that Eric Prestegard, DIPAC Executive Director, and the rest of his crew expected it to take another 20 years to pay off the remaining debt.

That was in 2007, but last December – a mere five years later – DIPAC made the final payment of a debt that, combined with interest, totaled \$42.5 million.

“The debt got quite large due to the interest,” says Eric. “I was shocked when we added it all up.”

Paying off a debt of that size is no small feat.

Prestegard and his staff have worked diligently to pay it off, but the recent rise in salmon returns and prices allowed them to make increasingly substantial payments toward the loan over the past several years. Though there were years that DIPAC was able to pay \$1 million or more toward the loan, between 2009 and 2012, it was able to increase its payments to approximately \$6 - \$8 million per year.

Now that the debt is paid off, DIPAC no longer requires the large cost recovery harvests it once did and suddenly has more money than it needs for its operations.

“Now we have to figure out how to get some of these fish to the fleet or, if there is excess revenue, how to get that to the fleet,” says Eric.

Last year, DIPAC opened Amalga Harbor to the seine fleet (a catch value of roughly \$3 million) and plans to do the same this year. But its two cost recovery locations – where the majority of DIPAC's fish return each year – pose numerous obstacles in its effort to get more fish to the fleets.

“We can't operate like Deep Inlet where you have rotations,” explains Eric. “There is a public boat launch right in the middle of our Amalga SHA, which makes commercial openers of any length pretty hard to do. We need to identify other ways of getting the fish to the fleets. We're looking at some additional remote release sites, but finding new sites is a time-consuming process.”

Last spring, DIPAC worked with a consultant to find creative ways to get more of its fish – or, at a minimum, the excess funds – back to the fleets. While it works to find new locations for remote releases (where the fleets would have access to 100 percent of the returning fish) DIPAC is considering ways to use its excess funds to get more common property salmon to fishermen.

As part of that effort, DIPAC is making a \$1.5 million contribution to NSRAA this summer. NSRAA will use this contribution toward the \$1.868 million it would have collected from cost recovery operations, effectively reducing its need for cost recovery to a mere \$368,000 – an amount small enough that NSRAA staff feels comfortable keeping the Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area open for the entire season and doing its cost recovery outside that area.

“DIPAC contributes \$1.5 million to us and that money transfers to the common property fisheries because they will get the \$1.5 million in fish,” says Steve Reifentstahl, NSRAA General Manager. “Deep Inlet will be open for the entirety of the season, without any closure.”

The primary goal of a private nonprofit hatchery is to contribute to the common property fisheries – ideally, roughly 70 percent of its annual return. To date, NSRAA's contribution has averaged 80 percent annually. Due to its large debt, however, DIPAC's annual contribution has been closer to 50 percent. That is about to change.

“Last year, we got it up to about 62 percent, but due to the high value of salmon, it was still quite a bit of money,” says Eric. The extra fish caught in Deep Inlet this season will go toward DIPAC's contribution total.

This year's transfer is just the beginning of finding creative ways for DIPAC to provide more common property salmon.

“In a sense, we're just getting our feet wet in this concept,” says Steve. “As long as salmon prices stay high and marine survival is good, we expect there will be more opportunities for transfer payments to benefit common property fisheries.”

*DIPAC is making a
\$1.5 million
contribution to NSRAA
this summer*

Hatchery Reports

Hidden Falls Prepares for New Dock

A new docking facility will be installed at NSRAA's Hidden Falls hatchery this summer, wrapping up the final stage of a project that has required two years of preparation.

Hidden Falls' aging dock has become a safety concern in recent years, says Adam Olson, Hidden Falls Hatchery Manager. The structural supports for the elevated walkway are degrading rapidly, causing it to shift and slam during storms. Though the floating structures have been improved over the years, there has been little to no work done on the dock itself, a structure Adam estimates is at least 25 years old.

In the spring of 2011, NSRAA began work with O'Neill Surveying, LLC. of Sitka and PND Engineers, Inc., of Anchorage, to have the dock evaluated and replaced. There were numerous drafts and revisions before NSRAA adopted its final plan and began the permitting process in the spring of 2012.

Clifton Enterprises, LLC. of Sitka is scheduled to begin construction of the new docking facility in May. The work should be complete by mid-July.

The construction project includes the installation of a new concrete barge ramp; a 14- by 160-foot, pile-supported pier, an 8-foot-wide gangway, new concrete dock floats, and a 3-ton crane at the end of the pier.

The completed docking facility features a number of improvements for Hidden Falls, says Adam. The new boat launch will allow access to the site at any tide. The new dock floats will accommodate four additional small vessels and provide access for larger tender vessels delivering freight. The new gangway will be capable of supporting small, motorized vehicles and the crane will help staff load and unload large freight.

Hidden Falls has not had access to a crane previously. Until now, the staff has used a work float to bring freight to shore, a process that was tide-dependent, due to a timber bulkhead on the shore. The crane – and the other improvements – should greatly increase the staff's efficiency for work at the dock.

Though construction has been scheduled at a time to minimize impacts on hatchery operations, it will require the use of a temporary docking facility to allow uninterrupted access by small vessels and floatplanes.

"The new pier and docking facilities will greatly improve the versatility and efficiency of the hatchery to handle the increasing volume of freight necessary to run Hidden Falls," says Adam.

The project is funded by a State of Alaska legislative grant for deferred maintenance.

Hatchery Reports cont. on page 3

General Manager's Notes

The Importance of Partnership

A major milestone was crossed this winter: Douglas Island Pink and Chum (DIPAC) paid off every last cent of its \$42.5 million debt. That total includes principal plus interest and it is all back in the state coffers waiting for the next hatchery startup. This milestone is symbolic, and it should be celebrated, but the larger story is the vision it took for the state to invest in enhancement, the key individuals who never let up in their pursuit, and the partnerships it took to get from then to now. DIPAC has contributed well over \$100 million to commercial salmon fisheries in the past 30 years, NSRAA over \$200 million. Neither did it alone. It has been a joint effort from the



early days when some board members served on one board and then the other, developing collaborative programs. The alliance has never been stronger than it is now. This goes beyond Southeast to statewide partnerships, but that is another story.

Years ago, DIPAC foresaw they would pay off their debt and began looking for creative ways to increase common property contributions. Last year, they opened much of their Amalga Harbor Special Harvest Area for two brief seine openings that resulted in a catch valued at over \$3 million; this was something that had never been tried before. Now, in an innovative 'carbon trade' concept, DIPAC has offset NSRAA's 2013 Deep Inlet cost recovery by providing us with \$1.5 million. In effect, DIPAC will contribute \$1.5 million of value to fishermen at Deep Inlet this year. This contribution means NSRAA won't close the Deep Inlet terminal harvest area for cost recovery, allowing us to keep Deep Inlet open to fisheries for the entirety of the season. These are examples of big, visible events, but these big things don't occur without the small things that happen along the way, the long term relationships, and the mutual respect among board members, fishermen, and staff. It has been a great journey of economic significance – DIPAC and NSRAA have many more milestones and waterways to navigate, so stay tuned.

I wish all a productive and rewarding year. Have a great fishing season, and please stop by if you get a chance.

Steve Reifentahl

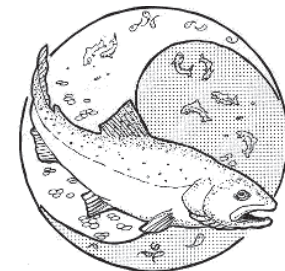
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Any interested party may also receive **Fish Rap** free of charge. Send your address to NSRAA.

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James Moore	Troll
Mike Nilsen	Gillnet
Dan Pardee	Gillnet
Sven Stroosma	Seine
Karl Wolfe	Interested Person

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NSRAA FY14 Budget

Projected Income - FY14		
Year	Income Source	Amount
2012	Enhancement tax	\$1,512,846
2013	Chum HF Assessment	\$1,793,731
2013	Chum Cost Recovery- Deep Inlet	\$368,000
2013	From Reserves	\$0
2012	100% Excess CR'12	\$91,074
2012	FY14 Revenues - coho, chin	\$464,863
2012	FY14 Revenues - incidentals	\$5,657
2012	FY14 Revenues - roe	\$122,056
2012	FY14 Revenues - carcass	\$224,514
RESERVES	Facilities & New Production Acct.	\$0
2012	Rental Income	\$40,500
2012	Investment Earnings (net of fees)	\$166,400
2012	NSE account	\$1,500,000
Total		\$6,289,640
Projected Expenses - FY14		
Expense Source	Amount	
Operational Budget	\$5,897,186	
Capital Budget	\$392,454	
Contingency	\$0	
Total		\$6,289,640



Chum fry from Medvejie are off-loaded into net pens at Deep Inlet.

Hatchery Reports, cont. from page 2

Improving Efficiency At Medvejie

Since becoming Medvejie's interim hatchery manager earlier this year, Angie Bowers has focused on improving all aspects of the hatchery's operations at Medvejie – from fish culture to measuring the success of program changes, to preparing for emergencies.

Only two employees live on-site at Medvejie. At least one employee must be on site at all times to respond to alarms and in the event of an emergency. But if there were ever a large-scale emergency, such as loss of water to the fish, one person might not be enough to prevent the hatchery from a catastrophe. After all, Medvejie is raising as many as 75 million fish at a time.

"If there were ever a serious emergency, it would be very difficult for one person to effectively respond to all of the eggs, alevin and fish," Angie explains.

But NSRAA is working to cover that gap. This fall, contractors will begin construction of a new housing duplex at Medvejie. The building will provide housing for two additional on-site employees. The increased around-the-clock coverage will provide added security for the hatchery and its fish.

"This additional housing will give peace of mind to everyone," says Angie. "We'll all sleep better knowing that we can effectively respond to emergencies."

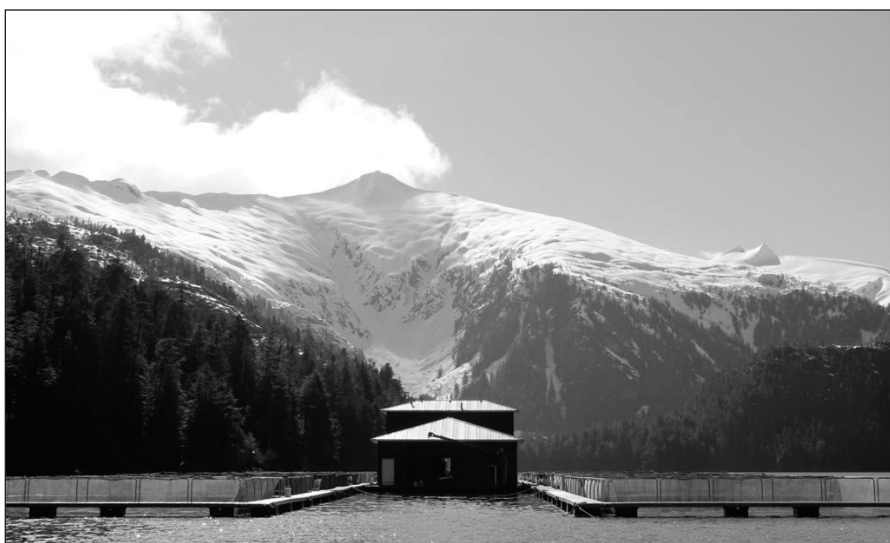
This summer, NSRAA will install new windows and siding to the aging hatchery buildings, which will not only improve their appearance but also make them energy efficient. Currently, most of the heat in those buildings is lost through the leaky windows.

NSRAA is using grant monies to cover the expenses of both projects.

Other improvement projects include lining the cracked and leaking concrete raceways and installing a new alarm system that will alert employees to the precise location of a problem, if there is a sudden change in water flow in any of the buildings, for example.

The staff at Medvejie is investigating more energy-efficient means of transporting water to the hatchery by getting additional water without the use of a pump. They are also exploring ways to get more out of the water once it's in the raceways, such as using an airlift system that would provide increased oxygen levels while using less water and simultaneously cleaning the raceways. Changes like these have risen in priorities as electricity rates rise.

"We're excited for these and other future changes," says Angie. "We look forward to feeling a greater sense of security for the fish and having better management of electrical use."



Another day at the office. A dramatic view of the Takatz chum rearing site.



The deck of Hidden Fall's new dock was fabricated in Prince Rupert and was towed to the hatchery in April.

Board Member Profile: John Blankenship

John Blankenship has seen a lot of changes in Sitka. After all, he's lived here almost all his life.

The town has almost tripled in size since John was a child in the 1960s, and cruise ships and modern conveniences are now common. John remembers when the barge made deliveries only once in a while.

"We didn't have much fresh fruit from south," he says. "Everyone in this area was more hunter-gatherer. You had to fend for yourself a little bit more."

Fortunately for John, his mother, a Native Tlingit, grew up primarily living off the land and the sea and taught him to do the same.

"I spent a lot of time finding crab and fishing whenever I could," he says. "My mom really liked sea urchin eggs and gum boots, so whenever I could, I'd bring some home for her."

When John was young, his elders told stories of the old days, when the fish were plentiful at fish camp. But John says it was a lot harder to catch salmon on the ocean when he was a kid than it is now.

"The fishing has definitely gotten better," he says. "When I was in my teens and twenties, you didn't catch fish every time you went out. I won't say I catch them every time now, but it's definitely easier."

John credits the greater ease of fishing in part to new fishing technology, but also to the work NSRAA has done over the past 30 years. Not only are there more fish, he says, but a greater variety than there were 30 – 40 years ago.

For example, these days there are opportunities to catch kings around Sitka where there never were before.

"There were no king salmon streams around here," John says.

Though John is not a fisherman by trade, he's worked in most of the fisheries over the years, including operating charter and sightseeing boats.



NSRAA Subsistence Representative John Blankenship.

John left Sitka for several years in his late teens and twenties. He studied refrigeration at the University of Alaska in Palmer and marine diesel in Seward. Since returning home to Sitka, John has worked at Sitka's Harbor, in the pulp mill, as a certified diver on a mining project and charter fished.

For the past 20 years, John has been working for the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC), a nonprofit tribal health consortium. He began his career there as a maintenance technician before moving into remote maintenance, a position that took him around Southeast Alaska to provide technical assistance and training for the various water and wastewater facilities in SEARHC's 18 rural villages.

"I've been everywhere from Metlakatla to Port Protection, from Port Alexander all the way up to Yakutat and most every community in between – and some places they don't even consider communities," he says.

Now the SEARHC facility manager, John is in charge of all the facilities on the Sitka campus. There are no slow days in this position, but he loves the challenges involved with his job.

John spends much of his free time on the water.

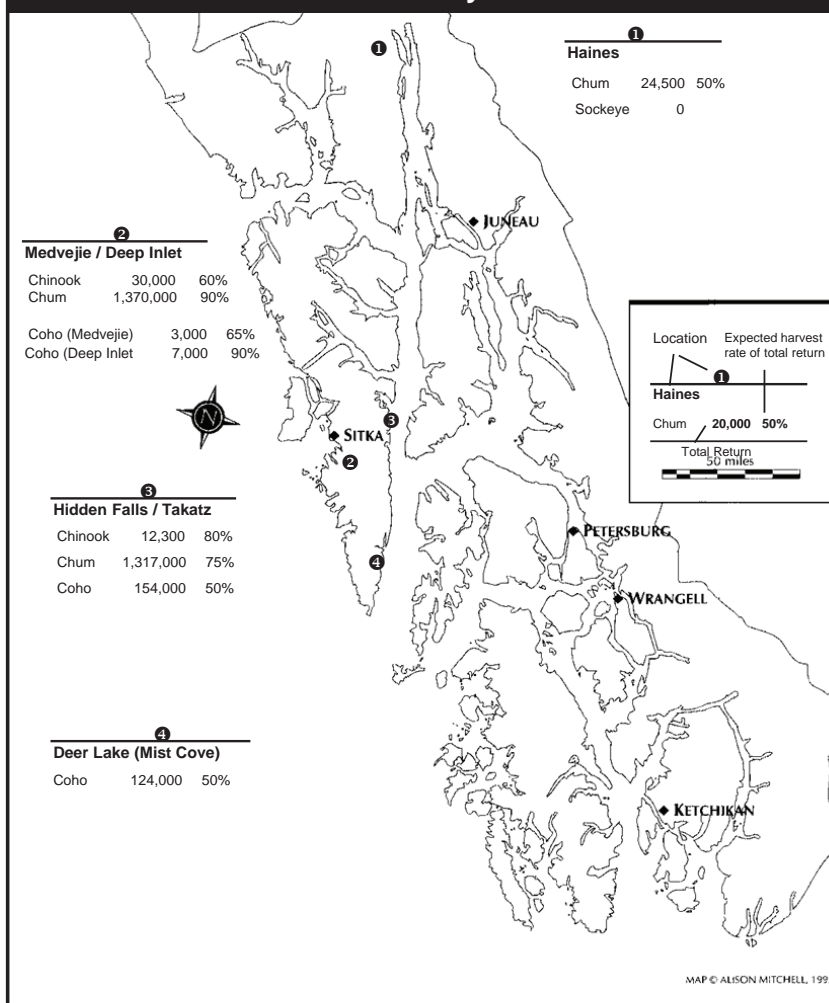
"I like the water, I like boating," he says. "I do some subsistence halibut fishing and shrimping. I target king salmon, but mostly I keep whatever I catch that's legal to keep."

John joined NSRAA's board of directors four years ago, when the former subsistence representative retired. After watching NSRAA's work over the years, John was happy to "give back" and be a part of the association's decision-making process.

"NSRAA has really developed an efficient way of producing fish," he says. "I think they're some of the leading experts in the world as far as what goes on in a hatchery. They've had some real quality people over the years that really take pride in what they do. Working with Steve (Reifenstuhl, NSRAA General Manager) has been a real pleasure. He keeps pretty high standards and his crew is the same way."

2013 Projected Returns to NSRAA Projects

Catch + Cost Recovery + Broodstock



Congratulations to the 2013 NSRAA Scholarship recipients!

Justin Cabe
Laurel Eliason
Cody Warhatch

Salmon Market: Outlook Mostly Favorable

Consumers may not be thrilled that Alaska's high salmon prices have held strong in recent years, but it's been a welcome trend for fishermen and others in the salmon industry. Though there are some factors on the horizon that threaten to pull prices down a bit this season, there are no signs of a major upset any time soon.

The demand for Alaska salmon – and corresponding prices – have grown dramatically over the past decade, says Gunnar Knapp, Interim Director at the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska in Anchorage. He attributes this upward growth to several factors, including an increased global demand for salmon, more diversified markets and Alaska's marketing efforts.

"Over the past decade, there's been a marked improvement on markets for Alaska salmon," Gunnar says.

"That's a big change from the salmon value crisis of the early 2000s, when both prices and catches were low," says Andy Wink, Seafood Analyst with the McDowell Group.

Farmed salmon production has increased more than 10 percent annually over the past two years – growth that hasn't been seen in a decade, says Andy. In contrast to the early 2000s, however, when prices for Alaska salmon fell sharply in response to that growth, there has been relatively little impact on Alaska salmon prices this time – an indication that many consumers now differentiate between wild Alaskan and farmed salmon.

"There is definitely a distinction," says Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute's (ASMI) Tyson Fick. "People prefer wild and are willing to pay a little more for it."

Alaska's efforts to provide less expensive fresh and frozen options, such as chum (or keta, as the ASMI prefers to refer to it) and pink, have helped keep the demand for Alaska salmon up despite the uncertain economy.

The price of farmed – and wild Alaska – salmon soared in 2008 when an outbreak of the Vibrio virus in Chile cut farmed salmon production dramatically.

That rapid rise in farmed production caused a crash in farmed salmon prices midway through 2011 and contributed to lower prices for Alaska's frozen pink and chum salmon products last year.

"Alaska's value-added products are, in a sense, in competition with value-added products made from farmed salmon," says Gunnar. Fortunately, Alaska's marketing efforts have helped buffer prices, but the demand for pink and chum has weakened.

According to Kontali Analyse, a research firm specializing in farmed salmon markets, farmed salmon production is expected to be flat this year.

"The farmed salmon supply has been growing very steadily over the past 20 to 25 years," Andy explains. "So if you have a year without growth, it feels like a contraction in supply because the market is built around that ongoing growth. So I think the farmed salmon supply situation will be a lot better for Alaska than it was in 2011 and 2012."

If, indeed, the farmed salmon industry does not increase its supply this year, it could be good for Alaska.

"Since last fall, the farmed salmon prices have been rising dramatically, so the market is turning around," says Gunnar. "This is good news for Alaska, because it means our competitor's prices are rising. For that reason, I am cautiously optimistic for the coming season."

"We're at the very top of the (salmon market) pyramid," explains Tyson. "If farmed is high-valued, ours is valued a little bit more."

Forecasts indicate this season will be a big year for pinks, however, as pink returns generally are largest on odd-numbered years, "which would suggest the pink market would be dampened," Gunnar points out.

Not only are Alaska's pink harvests expected to increase this season, but also those in Russia.

"Russian pink production has increased significantly since 2008," says Andy. In general, prices for Alaska pink salmon have increased despite Russia's tremendous increase in production, a trend he finds very encouraging. Still, the demand for the frozen pink market is weaker heading into this season, making it likely more pinks will be canned this year.

On the other hand, predictions indicate a lower sockeye harvest, which could result in strong prices for sockeye and, perhaps, an increased demand.

The annual European Seafood Exposition (ESE) tends to be a good indicator of the season to come and there was a very strong demand for Alaska salmon this year – especially sockeye, says Tyson.

"There's a perception that there will be a shortage of sockeye, so the sockeye market looks pretty favorable," agrees Gunnar. "People will be lining up for sockeye."

Of course, changes in the global economy can also affect prices and demand, and one factor likely to play a part in this year's market is the lowered value of the Japanese yen.

Roe prices were at an all-time high last year, a factor Andy attributes to a strong yen, lower chum production in Japan and facilities damaged in the earthquakes and tsunami.

But while the yen was strong last year, it has since weakened considerably, which will limit Japan's purchasing power. There is also the question whether the market can sustain those high roe prices.

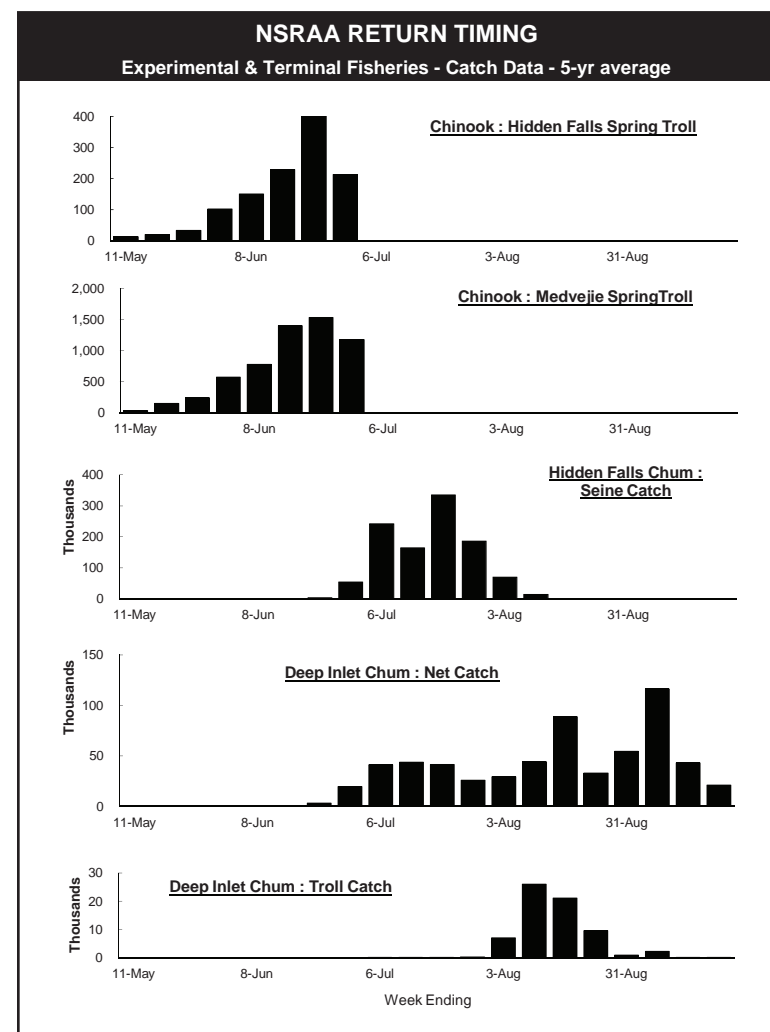
"We'll have to see if there's any market fatigue," Andy says. "It's hard to sustain high prices."

Many industry experts were anxious when the Alaska salmon fishing industry decided to withdraw from the pricey Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) eco-label program. But if the ESE is an indicator, "we will have demand and value for our salmon without the sticker," says Andy. "We'll be just fine, with or without it."

As with any year, nothing is guaranteed.

As Gunnar says, "Everything is always uncertain and there is always the potential for surprise."

But, all in all, the outlook is fairly good for Alaska this season.



Field Project Updates

A Successful Winter At Deer Lake

Fish numbers were high and mortality low as the Deer Lake crew prepared to release its overwintered smolts in early May, indicating another successful overwintering and – more importantly – that NSRAA may have finally found its strategy for success at Deer Lake.

“This is very exciting for us,” says Project Leader, Carrington Gordon. “We didn’t know if last winter’s success was luck or if it was something we’d be able to replicate. This year’s success shows that we can.”

Last year’s overwinter survival rate of 86 percent was the highest in the history of NSRAA’s Deer Lake project. Though NSRAA had yet to release and count this year’s smolts at the time of print, all signs indicated complete pen retention and an even lower mortality rate than last year – a mere 1.55 percent.

Considering there have been years when the fry to smolt survival rate was as low as 30 percent, this is cause to celebrate, particularly since NSRAA has struggled with high mortality and a host of problems, including overcrowding, escapement, predation and malnourishment, since it began overwintering fry in net pens at Deer Lake in 2007.

Last winter’s successful overwintering was a welcome relief. Still, Carrington wasn’t sure if it was the result of the crew’s diligent efforts or merely a fluke. This winter’s repeated success indicates NSRAA is finally on the right track with its overwintering program.

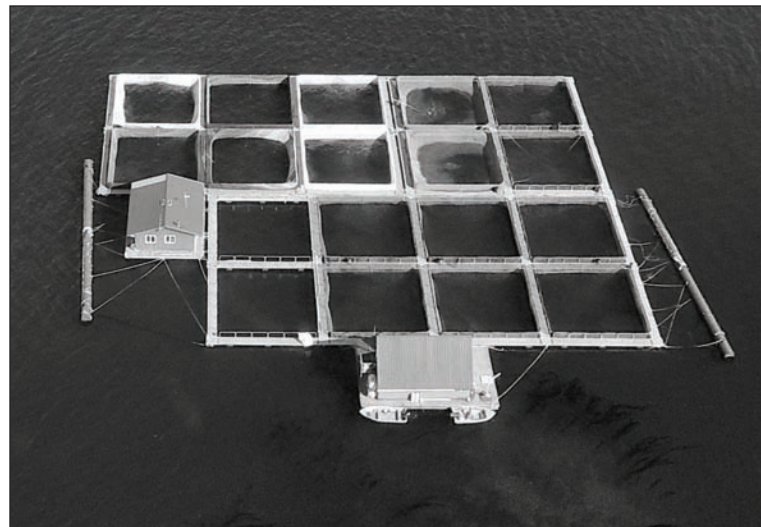
Last winter, the Deer Lake crew released about 90 percent of the fry just before the lake iced over. Only 10 percent remained in a pen for the winter. This year, the crew increased the number of pens held overwinter to four and held almost 30 percent of the fry. The goal, Carrington explains, is to release only about 50 percent before ice-over and hold the remaining 50 percent in pens, but NSRAA plans to move toward that goal gradually.

If release numbers this spring confirm the pre-release indications of record fish survival, Carrington says the crew plans to hold 43 percent of the fry in pens next winter.

“Last year was the first year that it all came together,” he says. “This year, we expanded on what worked and it worked again. After all this time, it looks like we have figured out how to produce high quality smolts at Deer Lake, year after year.”



The crew at Deer Lake is busy with the coho smolt emigration from early May through early June. Shown here are smolts on the weir in the lake outlet stream. Smolts are funneled into pipelines which transport them about 1/4 mile to saltwater pens.



Southeast Cove net pens. This is the first year of NSRAA’s 4.0 chum program at Southeast Cove near Kake. About 8.7 million NSRAA-reared fry will be released this spring. Gunnuk Creek and NSRAA share the rearing site.

NSRAA Works To Expand Haines Chum Program

NSRAA is evaluating several sites in the Chilkat Valley in an effort to expand its chum enhancement program in the Haines-Skagway area.

Last fall, Scott Wagner, NSRAA Operations Manager, began investigations to locate potential sites where NSRAA could construct new spawning channels and install additional incubation boxes using the funds from a \$620,000 legislative grant it received last year to expand its enhancement program in the northern Lynn Canal area.

NSRAA has located several areas in the Chilkat Valley that have potential for new spawning channels, though further evaluation is still required. NSRAA hired consultant Todd Buxton, a former NSRAA employee, to perform hydrology and site investigation work through the summer and next winter.

“We want to make the best use of this grant money,” says Scott, referring to NSRAA’s in-depth evaluation process.

To date, NSRAA has constructed four spawning channels in the Haines area, but only one – known as the Herman Creek spawning channel – has met the organization’s expectations. Scott believes the success of the other three has been compromised by low water flows, poor gradient and excess siltation due to the mainstream Chilkat backing up into the channels when it floods. The Herman Creek channel has the highest gradient and greatest water flow, factors Scott contributes to its success.

As NSRAA evaluates the potential sites, measuring gradients and monitoring water levels and flows through the winter, it will compare the information gathered with that of the Herman Creek spawning channel to gauge the potential success of each site.

NSRAA must also determine the specific landowner for each location and the potential cost to lease the land.

“Once we determine who the landowner is and whether it’s a suitable location or not, we can move forward,” says Scott.

All this work must be completed before NSRAA will know exactly how many new spawning channels can be built with the grant money it received for the Haines-Skagway spawning program expansion.

“We’ll build as many as we can, but we won’t know how many are possible until we’ve completed the initial cost estimates,” he explains.

The site evaluation should be completed by spring of 2014, with construction following that summer or during the winter of 2015. According to the stipulations of the grant, any work for the project must be complete by the end of June 2017.

NSRAA 2013 Return Projections								
Site	Projected Return	Range		Commercial	Sport	Cost Recovery	Brood Stock	2012 Return
		Low	High					
Chum								
<i>Hidden Falls</i>	1,315,000	484,000	2,171,000	1,155,000	-	-	160,000	1,240,087
<i>Medvejie/Deep Inlet*</i>	1,370,000	717,000	2,042,000	1,250,000	-	50,000	70,000	656,172
<i>Haines Projects</i>	24,500	12,300	36,800	9,800	-	-	14,700	20,000
	2,709,500	1,213,300	4,249,800	2,414,800	-	50,000	244,700	1,916,259
Chinook								
<i>Hidden Falls</i>	12,300	9,800	14,800	10,050	250	-	2,000	9,381
<i>Medvejie</i>	30,000	20,000	40,000	16,950	1,250	7,800	4,000	25,820
	42,300	29,800	54,800	27,000	1,500	7,800	6,000	35,201
Coho								
	<i>Marine Survival:</i>	6%	4%	10%				
<i>Hidden Falls</i>	154,000	102,800	256,900	55,300	4,000	84,700	10,000	36,471
<i>Deer Lake</i>	124,000	82,600	206,600	67,200	1,000	55,800	-	41,658
<i>Medvejie</i>	3,000	2,000	5,000	1,980	300	-	720	1,238
<i>Deep Inlet</i>	7,000	4,600	11,600	5,250	700	1,050		4,899
	288,000	192,000	480,100	129,730	6,000	141,550	10,720	84,266
ALL SPECIES TOTALS:	3,039,800	1,435,100	4,784,700	2,571,530	7,500	199,350	261,420	2,035,726

Deep Inlet Expected To Stay Open All Season

Thanks to a \$1.5 million contribution from Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC), Deep Inlet will be open to commercial fishermen for the entirety of the season this year.

“Instead of taking \$1.5 million in cost recovery, DIPAC provided a gift to fishermen, so we can open Deep Inlet solely for common property fisheries,” explains Steve Reifentstahl, NSRAA General Manager. “We will not do any cost recovery in Deep Inlet THA proper this year.”

On the off chance NSRAA is unable to collect sufficient broodstock at Medvejie this summer, however, the association may need to shut down the head end of the inlet briefly to collect brood.

In years of moderate returns like those expected for this year, NSRAA must close down the fisheries to meet cost recovery needs. The funds from the fish caught from cost recovery are used for NSRAA’s operating expenses. This year, the organization estimated it would need \$1.868 million to cover its expenses. By contributing \$1.5 million toward NSRAA’s cost recovery, DIPAC has effectively reduced NSRAA’s cost recovery needs to a mere \$368,000.

“Another way of saying that is that the money from DIPAC is paying for about 80 percent of our cost recovery needs at Deep Inlet, so we only have to collect 20 percent,” says Chip Blair, NSRAA Data Analyst and

Cost Recovery Manager. “We’re planning on that being a relatively small part of the whole harvest this year.”

If returns match this year’s forecasts, an estimated 1.37 million chum should return to Deep Inlet this summer. NSRAA needs 70,000 for broodstock. With the transfer from DIPAC, its cost recovery needs were reduced to about 40,000 -50,000 fish. That number is small enough that NSRAA staff plans to catch those fish outside of the terminal harvest area – east of Silver Point and Galankin Island – in an effort to minimize any impact on the commercial catch.

It is possible, however, that NSRAA won’t be able to meet its cost recovery, despite the small number. In fact, Chip anticipates it may be relatively difficult because many of the returning chum will be caught during the pink salmon directed openings in Eastern Channel.

“Since it’s a relatively small target, we’re not hugely concerned,” says Chip. “Given the small goal, the board of directors decided at the spring meeting not to have a cost recovery closure and to restrict the harvest area. We’ll give it our best shot. If we fall short, we’ll make up the difference with our reserves.”

The \$1.5 million transfer to NSRAA will go toward DIPAC’s common property fishery contribution at the equivalent value.

Deep Inlet 2013 Schedule

Reminders:

- Chinook management: The western Deep Inlet THA boundary is modified through the third Saturday in June to increase troll fishery access to enhanced king salmon. The western line is moved in to 135° 20.75’ W longitude to allow trolling between Long Island and Samsing Cove.

- Gillnet fishermen will be required to fish a minimum mesh size of 6 inches prior to June 15.

- Chum management: The 1:1 ratio of seine to gillnet fishing rotation in the Deep Inlet THA is in effect through 2014.

- Should the need arise for a broodstock closure in Deep Inlet, NSRAA will attempt to close the THA after a gillnet day, and reopen with a single troll day followed by a seine day. The schedule will then be adjusted, as needed, to return to the normal schedule.

The 2013 season will be split into three segments, each with a different schedule:

May 26-June 15: Chinook management with 4:2 days gillnet to seine.

- Seine – Sun /Wed
- Gillnet – Mon/Tue/Thur/Fri
- Troll - Sat

June 16-July 27: Chum management with 3:3 days gillnet to seine.

- Seine – Sun /Thur /Fri
- Gillnet – Mon /Tue /Wed
- Troll – Sat

July 28-end of season: Chum management with 45:45 hours gillnet to seine.

- Seine – begin on Sun / Thur; 22.5 hour openings
- Gillnet – Mon /Tue /Sat; 15 hour openings
- Troll – Wed/ Fri



Medvejie's new manager Angie Bowers with her daughter Wren and dogs Una and Waylon.

NSRAA Welcomes Three New Board Members

NSRAA welcomed three new members to its Board of Directors at its meeting in March.

William Bergmann of Petersburg was appointed to NSRAA's Conservation seat, replacing Bob Ellis, who retired after nearly 30 years on the board. Like Bob, William comes to the board with an extensive fisheries background. Now retired, he worked as a Fisheries Manager for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) for 37 years. He is completing the final two years of Bob's term.

"I'm very interested in salmon and how Southeastern Alaska is going to produce them," William says.

This is not the first time Wade Martin of Sitka has served on NSRAA's board. This time, he is taking over the Native Organization seat, replacing Doug Chilton. Wade is involved with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Indian Association. This, combined with his experience with NSRAA, made the native organization seat "a real good fit," Wade says.

"It made good sense to be a liaison for them. I'm very proud to be a part of the board."

Once an employee of NSRAA and of the ADF&G, Karl Wolfe now works as a private fish biologist in Sitka. He was appointed to the Interested Party seat, replacing Paul Johnson. He is starting a new term.

"I was at NSRAA for a lot of these projects and new programs," Karl says. "I'd like to see it continue in a positive manner."

Staff Profile: Angie Bowers

There is one detail in particular that stands out about Medvejie's hatchery manager: It's a woman.

In this day and age, when women are doing everything from running for President to fighting for our country, it may seem like no big deal. But Angie Bowers is the sole woman of the 28 private nonprofit (PNP) hatchery managers in the state and only the second woman to hold a hatchery manager position in the region, if not all of Alaska. (Andrea Tesch, now a hatchery manager for the Alaska Division of Fish and Game's Division of Sportfish, was the first.)

"Like Alaska's women fishermen, female hatchery managers are as tough as they come," says Steve Reifenstuhel, NSRAA General Manager. "What Angie has proven isn't that a woman can be a hatchery manager, but that if one works hard, is a team player and demonstrates leadership skills while at NSRAA, they will be recognized."

Angie may be the only female PNP hatchery manager in the state right now, but it's not something she thinks about much – if at all.

"I think sometimes it is a little more difficult to prove your worth" as a female in a male dominated field, says Angie. But she speaks highly of the guys on her crew and says "gender isn't really an issue."

Putting gender aside, Angie just wants to do her job and do it well. To her, that means Medvejie produces healthy fish for the fleets as efficiently as possible.

Angie grew up in a small town in central Wisconsin, far from mountains or salt water. She spent a lot of time outdoors; she canoed on the lakes nearby and fished with her family. But she didn't grow up dreaming she'd raise fish one day.

"I've always had an aquarium, so I've had fish all my life, just not quite the numbers I have now," Angie says, with a chuckle.

When she graduated from high school, Angie moved to Anchorage for a few years, worked in a coffee shop and focused on her photography. After five years of the working world, she returned to school to study general biology at the University of Wisconsin.

By the time she graduated, Angie was sure of one thing: she wanted to return to Alaska. She perused the American Fisheries Society website for job openings and applied for a job as a seasonal technician at NSRAA's

Hidden Falls hatchery. It was her first job out of college.

"I wasn't sure how I would like remote living, but I absolutely loved it," she says. By the end of the season, she was promoted to year-round freshwater fish culturist.

"Fish culture is a really fun and rewarding job," Angie says. "I love taking care of the little fry and watching them grow."

In 2009, Angie accepted a position as saltwater culturist at Medvejie, in part to be closer to her partner, Jamal. The couple now lives together at Medvejie with their three-year-old daughter, Wren.

Angie may not have dreamed of a career working with fish, but she's certainly found her niche. She is now enrolled in Oregon State University's online graduate program, studying for a graduate certificate in fisheries management. Angie was promoted to hatchery manager in February.

Being manager involves much more paperwork and time in the office, much less time with the fish.

"I find it challenging to stay in the office and not go out and take care of the fish, which is what I love to do," she says.

But the position also comes with its rewards: to help the crew raise and release healthy smolts, to see the adults return, and to have the opportunity to improve all aspects of the hatchery's operations, rather than just one project.

Angie admits there's still a lot more to learn in her new position as hatchery manager, but she's reached a comfort level where she's also able to look to Medvejie's future.

"I'd like to further our understanding of how the choices we make during rearing effect the marine survival of our fish," she says.

By using control groups when introducing new rearing strategies, such as photo-manipulation or changing fish densities, for example, NSRAA could better measure the success of each strategy. Angie also wants to increase the efficiency of all aspects of the hatchery operations.

"Our biggest challenge is to find innovative ways to lower our energy consumption and further utilize our water to reduce the need to pump well water – one of our biggest energy costs," she says. "Medvejie has an amazing crew with many years of experience and I am looking forward to seeing what we can accomplish as a team."