



COPPER RIVER
Wild Alaska King, Sockeye & Coho

www.copperrivermarketing.org

Copper River/Prince William Sound Marketing Association



PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND
WILD ALASKA SOCKEYE

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FALL 2013

President's Letter

To all area E gillnet permit holders:

With the 2013 gillnet season behind us we have a few months of reflection before it's time to do it all over again. The big flats closure hurt not only our pocketbooks, but also many of those who didn't get the fish they had marketed to sell. CRPWSMA received and responded to many phone calls from people who thought the Copper River season ended in June this year.

As frustrating as it was, the lesson is if we aren't catching fish then what are we marketing? CRPWSMA is writing letters to the ADF&G outlining the effects of the closure on marketing efforts as well as stating our support for an in-river fishery that potentially could have prevented this unprecedented closure. Both these letters are not of the political realm and are within the legislative guidelines that define our organization.

Once the season was underway in PWS, we received a lot of positive feedback from our Ester ice barge. Our unusually hot summer, combined with lackluster returns to the Eshamy District, along with slush bonuses helped make the second ice barge a success. The second ice barge nearly doubled the cost of the program but still allowed us to stay within our tradition of splitting our efforts 50/50 between Copper River and Prince William Sound. This financial policy was initiated because our 1% tax, that supports our budget, averages about equal revenue between the 2 fisheries.

Finally, we'd like to send a big thank you to departing board members Thea Thomas, Bill Webber Jr., Brian Rutzer, David Salmon, and Scott Thomas. We welcome elected board members Tom Caprenter, Bob Smith, and Jeff Olsen, as well as recently appointed Jim Kallander and Paul Owecke.

I hope everyone has a good winter and is ready for the first opener!

Mike Mickelson
F/V Mariah
President



Board of Directors

- Mike Mickelson
- Micah Ess
- Bill Bailey
- Danny Carpenter
- Derek Blake
- Tom Carpenter
- Bob Smith
- Jeff Olsen
- Bill Myer
- Paul Owecke
- Jim Kallander

Righting misconceptions with education

by Thea Thomas

One of the long-term strategic goals of the CRPWSMA is to educate consumers and chefs to the fact that the Copper River fishery lasts longer than two weeks. It has been a stubborn misconception in the marketplace that the fishery is over by June. This year with the two-week closure after just 3 openers, it was reinforced. We heard that during the closure seafood markets took their Copper River signs down and never put them back up.

In a continuing effort to counter this misconception, for the 5th year in a row CRPWSMA invited writers and chefs to Cordova in July to show them that we are harvesting sockeye until late July. This year we had a star studded group including Chef Nathan Lyon from the Food Network, Ron Ruggless of Nation's Restaurant News, Rebecca and Fred Gerendasy who publish food videos on the website Cooking Up A Story, Tara Desmond who is currently working on a cookbook for children and pregnant women, and Nick Davidson from Outside Magazine.

We have these writers and chefs as a captive audience for 4 days. During that time we teach them as much as we can about Copper River salmon, the Copper River watershed, the fishery, the processing and shipping of the fish, and sustainability. This summer the group visited Miles Lake sonar counter, toured the Copper River Seafood's processing plant, met with ADF&G managers to learn about sustainability and of course went out gillnetting. Cordova's natural beauty, friendly residents and delicious salmon worked its charm. This tour already has generated several blog posts, an article, a video, and lots of social media chatter across the country.

In addition to the summer media tour, we also invited a chef and writer to Cordova in September to highlight Copper River Coho salmon. We were very pleased to welcome Chef Chad Greer from Lark Creek Blue restaurant in San Jose and documenter Chris Chowanec with Edible Silicon Valley. Besides learning all about Copper River Coho, they hunted for mushrooms with experts of the Fungus Festival. Chef Greer used his expertise with salmon and mushrooms to cook for the Wild Harvest Dinner. Many diners agreed that the cedar-planked roasted salmon with Dijon dill sauce was some of the best salmon they had ever eaten!

Marketing Program Updates

MEDIA TOURS:

Chef Scott Romano

Chef Matt McCallister

Ron Ruggless, Nation's Restaurant News

Tara Matazara Desmond, cookbook author

Rebecca & Fred Gerendasy, Cooking Up A Story

Nick Davidson, Outside Magazine

Chef Nathan Lyon, cookbook author & Emmy winner

Chef Chad Greer, Lark Creek Blue

Chris Chowanec, Edible Silicon Valley

Our team uses multiple outlets to reach out to the retail, food industry, and consumer audiences. Brand Enhancement is one of the strategic priorities attached to our mission statement.

Our social media reach grew greatly this summer. The Facebook page is nearing 30K followers and continues to be a source of delicious recipes for the consumer. Twitter keeps us in the conversation when anyone is looking for information on the fishery. Our second year on Pinterest showed growth in a collection of recipes. This summer we debuted Instagram, a photo social media that gives the consumer a backstage pass to Cordova and the fishing fleet.

SAMPLING PROGRAMS

Fresh Catch Crew

9 bloggers were sent shipments of Copper River sockeye, Prince William Sound sockeye, Copper River coho, and a sampling of shelf stable products. We received recipes that were used for our social media outlets and as website content. They also scouted their area for stores and restaurants serving Copper River salmon and inputted it in the Locator App. The bloggers kept conversations going on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest: extending our reach farther into the social sphere.

Season For Flavor

This summer we sent shipments of Copper River sockeye, Prince William Sound sockeye, Copper River coho, and a sampling of shelf stable products to [Fine Cooking Magazine](#), [Women's Health Magazine](#), [Family Circle Magazine](#), and [Beer West Magazine](#) (in partnership with Alaskan Brewing). The salmon was very well received and ideas for articles are already rolling in.

Sound Bounty Crew

3 budget-minded bloggers were sent 3 Prince William Sound shipments this summer: a whole sockeye, filets of both pink and keta, and burgers plus canned salmon. It was a great start in getting people excited about what the Prince William Sound has to offer.

Letter from a New Director:

Greetings CRPWSMA members,

I would like to take this opportunity, as a newly elected member of the CRPWSMA board, to thank every member of CRPWSMA who cast their vote in my favor. As was said in my campaign letter, if I'm elected you can expect major changes in the direction your association heads in the future. As a board member I will do my best to see that this happens. I'm sure the board would agree that we all want to see in the future, an association where all the members, or at least a large majority of them, feel, that we have an association that works in the best interest of the entire membership.

I would also like to thank all members who did not cast their votes in my favor, but cared enough about our association to cast their votes. This association exists to benefit all of its membership. Thanks for your participation.

As you may or may not know, this spring a petition was circulated to decertify the 1% tax that funds CRPWSMA. This petition was deemed invalid by the State of Alaska; because a very few of the signatures in the petition were illegible. Because of this the State of Alaska was unable to determine the validity of the signatures. Further this petition did not



distinguish between setnetters and gillnetters.

Such petitions and possible decertification elections are written into our founding legislation to ensure that the board of RSDA's is always answerable to their membership. This petition regarding CRPWSMA was an expression of the profound dissatisfaction that many members feel with previous board policies.

It is to be hoped in the future that member dissatisfaction will not rise to this level, and that the board will institute policies that will address the concerns of membership before they rise to such a level.

Please feel free to contact me at any time in the future with your concerns. I can be reached at 907.429.6869.

Thank you,

Bob Smith

Association Launches Seasonal Market Reports to Track Quality and Consumer Knowledge

For the first time, this summer we implemented a market report program alongside our established press releases. Our annual press release campaign has been successful since it was launched in 2012 and has resulted in significant media hits in both trade and consumer publications.

This year we expanded the campaign towards monthly seasonal market reports. We thought that it was important to gather insights and information from the retailers to gain a broader understanding of the marketplace. Some of the questions we explored were: What are customers saying about Copper River? What are they leaning towards in terms of price and quality? Are all retailers presenting the salmon with the same knowledge base? How is the fish being labeled? Can the fishmongers, who are acting as our ambassadors, speak knowledgeably about the product?

Melissa Trainer of Melissa A. Trainer Communications conducted monthly visits to retailers throughout Seattle and wrote five comprehensive reports during the season. While visiting many markets, along with restaurants, Missy would “interview” the fishmonger or server on duty, document quality and pricing, and photograph the product if possible. By doing so, Missy gathered information that can’t easily be found online or in trade publications. The reports will be discussed in greater length at this year’s annual board meeting held in Cordova in November, but in the meantime, here are some of the highlights:

Excitement in May- In May, everyone was happy to have Copper River back and the signage at stores and restaurants around town was excellent. Fishmongers at PCC and Costco reported they couldn’t package the salmon quickly enough. It was flying out the door.

Pricing and Sockeye— In the beginning of the season, some retailers were selling Copper River sockeye for \$29.99 a pound. Others were listing it at \$19.99. Overall, many retailers said that customers were happy with sockeye and weren’t asking for CR king.

Handling the Closures- When the fishery was closed, the season took a hit. Retailers were still featuring Copper River well into the closure and many only ran out right towards the end. During this time, the signage at stores and restaurants was removed and never replaced for the season, declaring the season “over” at that time. On July 2, in direct response, we sent a press release over PR Newswire indicating that the Copper River season was continuing and strengthening.

Quality Commitment at the Fish Counter—The quality commitment at the fish counter varies. The board at PCC, Seattle’s longtime co-op, made a conscious decision before the season started to serve its members by towing the line in terms of quality and price when selling Copper River sockeye. This was evident early on. Their fish looked spectacular and was flying off the shelf. Interestingly, another very high-end retailer in the same neighborhood reported that their CR salmon wasn’t selling as well. But, observations were that their sockeye price was significantly higher (\$29.99) than PCC’s and the quality didn’t look as good. Clearly, the customers knew the difference.

Education Needed -- While interviewing many of the fishmongers it was obvious they need a Copper River “refresher” or primer course. Some at a very high-end natural foods store were completely ill informed about geography and had no understanding of how long the Copper River/PWS season lasts. Some stated that there is “no such thing as a Copper River coho.”

Labeling Weakens as Season Progresses-In May and June, the Copper River salmon were being labeled properly. As more Alaska salmon flooded the marketplace in July, the labeling became generic. By August, the salmon labeling overall had weakened and many wild salmon were simply being labeled “Domestic Wild Salmon.”

Overall, the market reports generated information that can hopefully act as fodder and food for thought while the Board of Directors considers brand enhancement plans for the 2014 season.

Ice barge key to Setnet conversion to slush ice

by Paul Owecke

In the short time that the ice barge has been sited in Main Bay, the conversion to slush ice by setnetters has increased dramatically. This past season 30%+ of setnet permit holders were bleeding and slush icing all their fish. Response from processors has been mixed with only one Whittier based processor consistently paying a bonus for bled and slushed setnet fish. The bonus program this processor has with myself and other setnet fishermen has greatly influenced our ability to absorb the cost of slush bags and even repowering skiffs for the greater weights. Most important is the higher quality product that we deliver, allowing processors to market a greatly improved product that is in demand for higher value fresh and fresh/frozen sales. Without improved quality there is no other effective means for processors to capture greater value that can be passed to fishermen.

The ice barge and the collaborative effort between the Marketing Association and processors is the single most important means, and cost effective means, we as a gear group have to improve the quality and value of our fish. No processor has the ability to go it alone in providing the quantity of ice needed to bring about a fleet wide slush program. The unquestionable improvement to our quality faces one large hurdle at this point in the quest for overall increased quality and value, and that is convincing the remainder of both the set and drift fleet to step up to making the commitment to quality. The greatest potential for capturing optimal value will be when all fish are optimal quality.

It would be a step in the right direction to see a fast phase out of boats delivering dry bags of unbled fish to any tender, and an end to tendermen marking fish tickets iced or slush on deliveries that have a couple shovelfuls of ice on top of 900 pound bags. A bag of bled and slushed fish pulled out of any boat is unmistakable. When that is the new normal in the fishery then we will have real leverage to capture the greatest value for the entire fleet. If you currently slush ice you know the ease and benefits; tell your friends about it. Converting to slush ice benefits everyone.



Marketing Partnerships

Alaskan Brewing Company - Worked cooperatively on Iron Fork and Phoenix Cooks; partnered in sampling program for 2 writers.

Alaskan Airlines – The third partner in the Iron Fork event; hosts the annual Copper Chef Cook-off.

Outdoor Gourmet – Donated planks for our sampling program; sponsored Fall Coho Tour.

St. Louis Food Media Forum – Cooked Copper River coho 2 ways for the conference participants.

SAVOR Central Coast – Cooking demonstration by celebrity chef Nathan Lyon for a Sunset Magazine wine and food event.

Chef's Collaborative – Educated the public with a “taste off” and incorporated smoked salmon into a conference wide breakfast, serving over 300 chefs.

To chill or not to chill

by Bill Webber

This is the age old question many fishermen ask themselves as they ponder an investment to mechanically make cold water to store their catch onboard their vessels. Interestingly enough, many fisherman also have varying ways to calculate a return on this investment they might make in this ability to chill their catch. By far and at the first thought, the most economical method is to use ice that is provided for free by the local shore based processors. It is also widely held that these costs borne by the processors are in essence deducted from the price we receive for our fish. This can be argued in many ways but the simple fact is, one cannot physically carry enough ice to do the job properly 100% of the time.

This is where mechanically making cold water can be the answer at a literal flick of a switch. We can wait till we run out onto the grounds to pump the start water (approx. 30-50 gallons) into the hold and start chilling on it therefore not burning extra fuel to pack the ice out with us. These systems in this article are belt driven off the engine so when the engine is running, one can be chilling down the water and the fish as they are being caught.

Having these systems can also provide for payback in the sense of going to the far ends of our legal fishing districts and perhaps when there are no tenders available. There just might be some fish around and no one else to help you catch them, but you can and also keep them chilled and run them back to town or a nearby tender. There are many other ways these systems provide for an improved financial return other than getting \$.25 or \$.35 more at the dock.

Provided here are two companies for those interested in investing in an RSW system to help keep their catch in top quality and always have enough cold making ability at the flick of a switch; [Pacific West Refrigeration in BC Canada](#) is fast becoming the innovative leader in a multitude of systems offerings that fit the smaller gasoline powered jet boats all the way up to the larger tenders. The simplest systems out there just might be a [belt driven system off your main](#). These systems will work gasoline engines to

dominate our fleet by way of using a hot gas by pass valve that makes this system work through the wider rpm ranges. Twin-engine boats can simply double their chilling ability by having two belt driven compressors, one off each engine to make their system even more efficient. The price for a system like this will be around \$13,000.00 before installation. This system is so well engineered that installation costs can be significantly lowered. If your fish holds are not insulated, having this done well can be a significant cost that will only help your overall system work as intended and ultimately produce a higher quality of product that has your name attached to those fish. Being a quality producer is definitely worth the while.

Another company on the east coast, [Sea Frost](#) that has roots in refrigeration ice boxes, primarily in the sailboat arena, in recent years has come out with a smaller belt drive system that might have some appeal for the smallest of boats and budgets in the fleet. The [cost for this system](#) provided in component form ranges from \$3000.00 to \$6500.00 and some assembly is required. Adding insulation to any hold would be prerequisite for consideration of any RSW system.

It is without a doubt in my mind that RSW is the way to go and motivating this fleet to gravitate this direction would definitely yield more cold fish produced in the region. This is the tack Bristol Bay on. Each year more fishermen are investing in RSW systems.

This short discussion has primarily been on engine driven belt drive systems. There are types of systems that are engine driven, electric driven and hydraulic drive. Talking to a knowledgeable person can help you make the best decision to fit your needs and budget. In fact, Pacific West will be at Pacific Marine Expo later this month and I am told they will have one of their belt driven systems on display.



Snapshots of the Summer



Chef Greer at the Wild Harvest Feast



Copper River at Iron Fork Event



July Media Tour Group



Copper River in the market



Delicious canned salmon recipe from the Fresh Catch Crew



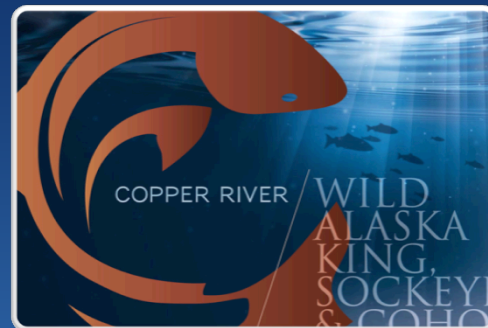
Bloggers received PWS salmon

Dear Fishermen:

By way of your Fall Newsletter, I'd like to say "hello" as your new Executive Director. After rolling off the ferry on Memorial Day, I parked the pick-up and went to work keeping your summer projects rolling. And what a summer it was! From supporting the ice barge to hosting press tours to maintaining media attention to holding elections to even exploring new ways to collaborate locally – it's been a very busy season at your RSDA.

As this newsletter goes to print, your Board of Directors are embarking on an ambitious Fall Retreat, featuring a board member training and updating our Strategic Plan. This comprehensive business meeting and conference will be held in Cordova November 12th-15th. For more information on observing the process (or reviewing its outcome) drop by the office in the Labor Hall next to CDFU for a complete agenda.

Or for any reason. For those of you I haven't met yet, I invite you to stop by and say hello and remind me to make coffee. To those of you who have already popped into the office, I thank you for welcoming me aboard. It's truly a privilege to be involved at such an exciting point in the organization's story. I look forward to working hard on your behalf to increase the value of your fish through quality initiatives and brand enhancement.



Happy Holidays,
Kim Ryals
Executive Director