BRISTOL BAY
Regional Seafood Development Association

BBRSDA Board Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2026 |7:30am AKT
Hotel Captain Cook | Club Room 2 | Anchorage, AK

1. Call to Order/Establishment of Quorum

Chair Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:38 am AKT. **A quorum was established.**

Present were board directors Morgan, Elwell, Guffey, Andrew, Coupchiak, Johnson, and Niver, and staff members Dunn, Machain, and Clemens. Members Tav Ammu and Forest Wagner were present via teleconference.

2. Member Comments

Ammu suggested prioritizing a year-round fish reporter position in Bristol Bay for KDLG, noting that there is enough newsworthy information year-round to justify the position.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

a. **January 28, 2026**
b. **February 2, 2026**
c. **Marketing Committee Minutes: January 27, 2026**

Johnson moved and Elwell seconded to approve the board of directors meeting minutes from January 28, 2026, February 2, 2026, and the marketing committee meeting minutes from January 27, 2026.

4. Approval of Agenda

Johnson moved to approve the agenda. Elwell seconded the motion.

Johnson suggested to amend the agenda to add a conflict-of-interest disclosure statement prior to the executive director report.

5. Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Johnson noted involvement with the marine advisory program in Dillingham and renting apartments to individuals who work at BBEDC and BBSRI. Johnson also noted once advocating for a person who was applying for an executive director position.

Morgan stated that he had worked with an individual who had submitted a proposal to BBRSDA in response to the sonar RFP. Morgan also stated he has never received any financial payment from this proposer and that he would recuse from voting on sonar project proposals.

Bill Hill, a candidate running for Congress, briefly interrupted the meeting to introduce himself and his campaign, expressing interest in learning about issues important to BBRSDA and its members.

Resuming conflict of interest disclosures, Elwell stated that he was a founding member of Silver Bay Seafoods in Naknek and served on their board from 2013-2023. He recruited much of the original fleet for Silver Bay and was not paid for any of these actions.

Guffey stated he had no conflict of interest to disclose.

Andrew stated involvement with the seafood division at BBNC, which owns several longline boats.

Niver stated that his son owns Surrender Salmon, a direct marketing seafood business.

Coupchiak stated that she went on a cruise paid by BBRSDA years ago and that she works with CFBB. Coupchiak stated that she would remove herself from voting on matters dealing with CFBB.

6. Executive Director Report

Dunn provided a verbal report on highlights from the written executive director report. She noted industry engagement for vertically integrating and skin pack displays. Dunn also noted steady inventory movement and increased prices making room for farm-raised Chilean coho, and social media strategy for addressing parasite concerns, with plans to work alongside ASMI on scientific messaging approaches for consumers.

7. **Program Updates & Committee Business**
    a. **Sustainability Program**
        i. **Sonar RFP**

Johnson questioned the amount of money spent to date on this project. Guffey clarified that $85,000 has been spent to acquire the sonar unit.

Morgan gave a status update on the project, stating the focus of the 2026 was to test the equipment on the Naknek River, rather than the Nushagak. The goal is to develop and improve the implementation to potentially have broader benefit to fisheries science.

Elwell added that beginning data collection by June 1st would be ideal to count sockeye salmon runs on the Naknek River as there are no counting towers on the Naknek.

Morgan and Guffey noted that relationships with BBFC partners remain positive and that they are welcome to use the data and tools BBRSDA develops with this project. Dunn added that we aim to keep the information usable and transparent for all possible users and that had BBRSDA delayed purchasing the sonar unit, they risked missing data collection for the 2026 season.

Coupchiak and Morgan discussed the potential for other proposed sustainability projects from BBFC. Morgan noted the potential leftover funds from the sonar project that could be potentially used for other projects in partnership with BBFC. Dunn clarified that these potential projects would need to first be discussed with the sustainability committee and reminded the board of the action item regarding the two sonar proposals recommended by the sustainability committee.

Coupchiak cautioned that data may be detrimental to fishing time and could possibly be used in ways that do not serve members. Elwell and Guffey responded that the benefit of increased data collection is clear and sustainability of the resource remains a priority. Andrew added that the primary goal is to increase value of the fleet by reducing the 40 million fish in foregone harvest, and that conservation of other species is a possible added benefit.

Morgan noted that the project proposal from University of Washington would only be able to be implemented in the Nushagak River and BBFC partners expressed they would prefer the BBRSDA sonar project to be implemented outside of the Nushagak. This would leave only the SeaSignal proposal as the only potential project.

Machain clarified that the $85,000 already spent on the sonar unit would be deducted from the total spent on the proposal selected.

Niver motioned and Elwell seconded to fund the SeaSignal project proposal for $210,000. **Motion passes with 6 in favor; Morgan abstained from voting.**

ii. Drone Salmon Enumeration Grant Updates

Clemens provided a verbal update on the aerial drone salmon enumeration project, highlighting the receipt of $70,000 from the Acme Smoked Fish Foundation, purchase of drone equipment, and word towards hiring interns for the project. Dunn will formally accept the Acme Seafood Industry Climate Award during a reception event during SENA in Boston.

At 8:43 am AKT the board moved to recess for a 15-minute break. The meeting reconvened at 8:59 am AKT.

iii. Pebble Lawsuit Update – Scott Kendall

Scott Kendall joined the meeting and discussed the status of a lawsuit challenging the EPA's 404C decision regarding Pebble Mine, which has been consolidated with related litigation. The anti-Pebble entities have filed their briefing in opposition, joined by multiple other parties, while the Department of Justice filed a 120-page brief that did not reverse their previous position. The legal team indicated that oral arguments should be scheduled within 60-90 days, with a decision potentially coming before the end of the year and noted that if both the Army Corps permit denial and EPA watershed assessment are upheld, it would effectively end the possibility of the Pebble Mine project.

Niver motioned and Andrew seconded to enter executive session. **Entered executive session at 9:05 am AKT and exited executive session at 9:52 am AKT.**

The Board entered executive session to discuss a confidential matter related to organizational governance. Following executive session, the Board provided direction to the Executive Director regarding appropriate follow-up actions.

Johson asked if BBRSDA had an official position on the Nuyakuk project or had any outreach to the fleet regarding the comment period. Morgan clarified that there is no official board position on the project. Coupchiak mentioned that members are aware of the comment period and that documents provided by UTBB are helpful. Dunn stated BBRSDA will post facts and direct members to information, but specific timelines and contacts are required to do so.

b. Finance

i. Q4 2025 Financials

Machain highlighted figures from the written financial statements and reported being in a good cash position. Machain also reported that this year's assessment is expected to be $2.3 million, compared to $1.6 million the previous year.

Elwell motioned and Morgan seconded to approve the Q4 2025 financials. **Motion carries with unanimous consent.**

ii. Budget Update Recommendations

Machain reported the finance committee recommended a $48,780 budget increase for specific marketing, rent, anniversary, equipment, travel, and media tasks. Morgan clarified that the sonar is a separate capital investment separate from the budget.

Guffey motioned and Johnson seconded to approve the committee-recommended $48,780 budget increase. **Motion carried with unanimous consent.**

iii. Resolution 26-01 Vanguard Signers

Machain reported that Vanguard requires an updated resolution to reflect current authorized signers on the organization's accounts. Johnson moved and Coupchiak seconded to approve this resolution. **Motion carried with unanimous consent.**

c. Marketing Program

Dunn provided a verbal update on the marketing program activities, including upcoming participation in SENA.

d. Outreach/Organization

Elwell provided a brief update on the progress of developing insurance opportunities for Bristol Bay fishermen.

Johnson and Coupchiak commented on drafted fleet communications regarding regulatory changes resulting from the Board of Fish Bristol Bay Finfish meeting, suggesting the addition of Ekuk setnet guidance and receiving feedback from Tim Sands. Clemens confirmed she will communicate with Sands.

Dunn reported that marketing staff are developing uses for the nutrition data from Edacious.

i. 20th Anniversary

Dunn reported that BBRSDA will have its 20th anniversary in May, and staff would like to build up to a 20th anniversary celebration at PME in November. Dunn noted that there is $5,000 currently set aside in this year's budget for 20th anniversary activities, including a nicely written 'look-back' report. Dunn and staff are looking for more ideas to celebrate the milestone.

e. Quality

Guffey and Elwell brought up the importance of fleet outreach on the importance of quality.

Dunn stated that quality is what maintains markets for Bristol Bay sockeye and noted that members are only responsible for the quality practices on their own boats. Processors and tenders have their own responsibility in quality practices, and the BBRSDA marketing team helps educate on quality at the retail level.

Dunn noted the success of skin pack and processors are interested in ways to get product to skin pack. Dunn also highlighted the importance of food service education for frozen product and product diversity available to consumers.

8. **Good of the Order**

Machain reminded the board to attend the fleet and industry meeting that night at the Hotel Captain Cook.

Dunn reminded the board of the opportunity to attend SWAMC Fish Friday, where she would be speaking on a panel.

9. **Future Meetings, Events, and Agenda Items**
   March 15-17: SENA (Boston)

10. **Adjourn**

Niver motioned and Elwell seconded to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 10:36 am AKT.

Total meeting time: 2 hours, 44 minutes

Board members present: Doug Morgan, Doug Elwell, Sean Guffey, Peter Andrew, Casey Coupchiak, Fritz Johnson, and Mark Niver.