



BRISTOL BAY

Regional Seafood Development Association

BBRSDA Board Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2025 – 9:00am AKT

Hotel Captain Cook | Anchorage, AK

1. Call to Order/Establishment of Quorum

Chairman Sabo called the meeting to order at 9:13am AKT. Present in-person and telephonically are board members Andrew, Elwell, Johnson, Morgan, Niver, and Schonberg; members Cook, Stier, Heyano, Bloom, Gibbons, Friis-Mikelson, Goodmanson, and Montecusso; and staff members Bursch, Dunn, Machain and McNeil. **A QUORUM WAS ESTABLISHED.**

2. Member Comments

Tim Cook shared a picture of Bumblebee flavored smoked coho salmon and pointed out the ingredients listed “medium red salmon”. He feels this is misleading since “red salmon” is usually associated with sockeye. Cook would like the BBRSDA to ask the FDA to change this labeling and possibly underwrite genetic testing to identify and verify a country of origin, currently listed as Thailand.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

a. November 19, 2024

Schonberg moved and Elwell seconded to approve the meeting minutes from November 19, 2024. **MOTION CARRIED WITH UNANIMOUS CONSENT.**

4. Approval of Agenda

Johnson moved and Morgan seconded to approve the agenda with the adjustment of moving legal executive session discussion to earlier in the meeting and move the CFBB discussion to executive session. **MOTION CARRIED WITH UNANIMOUS CONSENT.**

5. Update on Federal Pebble case – Scott Kendall (CGL)

Legal Counsel Scott Kendall joined the meeting to give an update on the current Pebble Mine coalition. Kendall noted that the change in administration may affect the lawsuit. He does not expect a change in permit denials under the Trump administration.

Johnson moved and Niver seconded to enter executive session at 9:33am AKT. **MOTION CARRIED WITH UNANIMOUS CONSENT.**

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Johnson moved and Niver seconded to exit executive session at 10:04am AKT.
MOTION CARRIED WITH UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

6. Executive Director Report

Sabo opened the floor for questions and comments on the provided executive director report. Schonberg inquired about the salmon enumeration project. Bursch provided an update, noting that several meetings have been held and a plan will be developed over the summer. While data collection timing and methods are set, discussions are ongoing about when to integrate AI. WSU students may contribute, with the goal of developing a more affordable and tailored AI solution. The immediate focus is on capturing drone footage this year. Dunn added that a grant professional is searching for funding opportunities.

a. Non-member fees & Fish Finder update

Dunn has proposed a \$750 annual fee for non-members wishing to participate in the organization and be included in our Fish Finder webpage. She explained the amount is slightly less than the average 1% assessment and is intended for individuals who are not members but may be direct marketers (DMs). The idea was developed in consultation with Christa Hoover at CRPWSRSDA.

Sabo clarified that the board could adjust the fee amount annually if needed. Dunn confirmed the fee is separate from the DM program.

Schonberg moved and Johnson seconded to approve the non-member annual fee of \$750. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. Partnership Conduct Policy

7. Program Updates & Committee Business

a. Marketing Program

McNeil gave a verbal update of the marketing program including a high-level overview of the most recent Marketing Committee meeting and upcoming events.

b. Sustainability

Niver gave an update on a state bill effort to protect the Bristol Bay watershed from mining, noting it will be a 2-3 year long process to get the bill passed all the way through.

i. CFBB Proposal

This was moved to executive session.

ii. Email vote ratification – Digital Observer/FRI

On January 23rd, the board held an email vote to review the Digital Observer – FRI proposal submitted by Mark Buckley. The vote had full participation but was not unanimous and the motion failed 5-2.

Elwell moved and Schonberg seconded to ratify the email vote from January 23, 2025. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

iii. Possible RFP for Sonar Project

The board discussed expanding ADF&G's sonar, currently used only in Nushagak, to other rivers for better fish counting. Sabo asked the Sustainability Committee to develop the project scope and RFP, with proposals due for the November budget cycle and implementation in 2026.

iv. Foregone Harvest report

McKinley Research Group prepared a report on the value of foregone harvest at the board's request. Before sharing this report publicly, BBSRI and Michael Link would like to review it and offer their perspective on the conclusions. The board would like to address this issue and have a plan in place before BOF proposals are due.

c. Quality

i. SBS Proposal

The project seeks to further improve the "quality" of drift net harvested sockeye by using slurry ice machines on tender vessels to rapidly cool (without freezing) the sockeye at the point of offload; and then maintaining this consistent lower temperature or "cold chain" throughout the tender transit, subsequent storage, and ultimate processing into its final value-added form. Their proposal requests \$150k from BBRSDA (25% of the cost of the project) to fund the rental of totes and vans, additional tender crew wages and a portion of the additional processor wages. The Company will draw upon retained earnings to fund the remaining 75% of the project plus fishermen handling incentives.

Dunn shared this is a huge step in the right direction for quality fish coming from Bristol Bay and the relationship between BBRSDA and Silver Bay Seafoods. As a priority for the BBRSDA, we would help with retail partner education on slurry ice and other improvements with the intention to bring higher quality sockeye to market. Schonberg

expressed appreciation for Silver Bay and their goal to use this technology that is a globally proven model. **No action was taken.**

d. Outreach / Organization

Bursch gave a verbal update on Outreach and Organization activities, including:

i. Town Halls

Staff is encouraged by the positive reaction of processors and their willingness to attend these meetings and share with their fleet. In addition to the March 5th and 6th member meetings, we plan to have meet up opportunities in Naknek in June and a member meeting in Bellingham at the end of September in conjunction with SeaFeast.

ii. Get Out the Vote

So far, over 60 members have submitted updated contact information and text messaging appears to be the preferred method of communication. Bigger opportunities for increasing these numbers are coming up with a plan to send a postcard specifically asking members to share/update their info going out in March and asking for updated info in our in-person meetings this week.

e. Finance

i. Bank balances

ii. Approval of Q4 2024 Financials

Andrew moved and Morgan seconded to approve the Q4 2024 Financials as presented and recommended by the Finance Committee. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

iii. 403b Retirement Plan transition

Morgan moved and Elwell seconded to approve the transition of the 403b retirement plan out of the Multiple Employer Plan to a stand-alone plan with Mutual of America. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8. Miscellaneous Business

Sabo opened the floor for additional member comments.

Member Buck Gibbons commented on our place in market share and competing with slave labor. He asked the Outreach committee to get beyond public notices and take a leadership role to reach out to delegations and ask for support. He requests to be invited to future committee meetings for additional discussion.

Sabo shared emailed and written member comments from Coyle, Ramond, Volk, and Jackson.

Dunn shared a drafted statement for the organization to put out regarding farmed fish. Elwell moved and Niver seconded to approve the statement with the small addition of the word "Alaska". **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Dunn announced that Alaska Airlines is offering a 5% discount for Bristol Bay fishermen for travel between June 8-18 and July 18-28. The discount code will be shared with fishermen upon request. Alaska Airlines would like to improve their relationship with Bristol Bay and has offered to host a reception at PME or this meeting next year.

9. Future Meetings, Events, and Agenda Items

March 25 – Marketing Committee meeting

March 26 – Market Update Presentation (McKinley & Bank of America)

April 29 – Marketing Committee meeting

May TBD – Finance Committee meeting

May 13th or 14th – Board meeting (teleconference)

June 10-11 – Naknek Member Meet-ups

July – Wegman's and Whole Foods visiting the bay

10. Executive Session

The board entered executive session at 11:36am.

The board exited executive session at 12:25pm.

Johnson moved to approve funding for CFBB with an amended amount of \$22,500. Seconded by Schonberg. **MOTION FAILED 4-2.**

11. Adjourn

Niver moved and Johnson seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:30pm AKT.

MOTION CARRIED WITH UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Total meeting time: 2 hours, 47 minutes

Board members in attendance: Andrew, Elwell, Johnson, Morgan, Niver, Sabo, Schonberg