

## Executive Summary

In recent years, the State of Alaska's fiscal challenges have eroded its ability to maintain its fishery management systems. The Bristol Bay Fisheries Collaborative (BBFC) is a grass-roots initiative developed in 2016 by stakeholders to help stem the erosion of financial support for the Bay's fishery management. In October 2016, the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute (BBSRI) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that established a formal structure for collaborative working relationship between the two organizations. The BBFC MOA requires the formation of a working group (WG) that is charged with providing an annual report each year. This is the first such report since the MOA was signed. The annual report summarizes WG activities, BBFC project results, and an accounting of funds raised.

Within eight months of signing the MOA, \$687,539 was pledged to fund salmon monitoring projects in whole or in part for the 2017 season. Expenditures on BBFC-supported projects in 2017 were less than forecast (\$481,824) largely because other sources of funding were used to offset those needed by BBFC. Lower-than-forecast expenditures resulted in more funds pledged than were needed (\$205,715). Those funds raised that were above project expenditures will likely be applied against the 2018 fund raising goal for BBFC.

The inaugural year of BBFC was a success. The goal of BBFC to resurrect management capacity lost due to budget cuts in recent years was met. Fish stocks were better utilized, important long-term datasets were maintained, all in a more coordinated manner than would have occurred without BBFC. ADF&G's Bristol Bay budget was not cut for its fiscal year starting on July 1, 2017. Cost recovery test fishing was not implemented in 2017. None of the funds raised were spent to administer BBFC. The size and impacts of budget cuts on ADF&G's ability to manage the fishery are better understood among many stakeholders.

A draft of this report was released on November 6, 2017. The BBFC Working Group met on December 7, 2017 in Anchorage to review and finalize the scope of the 2018 program and incorporate the results from the meeting into the final report. The entire Core Program for Bristol Bay, as defined by the WG, requires approximately \$2,775,000 annually (not including the regional personnel who spend part of their work year on Bay matters). Of this total, BBFC would seek to raise \$815,000 (29%) for salmon-related components, with the remainder, \$1,912,000 coming from the current State budget (if it is not changed during the legislative session early in 2018). The Togiak herring assessment project is kept separate from those for salmon, and it would require an additional \$61,000.

The 2018 fund-raising goal of \$815,000 for salmon will be reduced by \$128,000 if funds raised in 2017 that were more than actual expenditures are applied to the 2018 program cost. It appears that this will be the case and therefore, the fund-raising goal for salmon in 2018 is likely \$687,000 (\$815,000 minus \$128,000).