

UNFA PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

as we enter a new paradigm.

The Unalaska Native Fishermen's Association is an advocacy organization formed to promote the health and well-being of Unalaska Bay and the people of our community that depend on it for sustenance and to make a living. Our mission statement is:

To create and preserve opportunities for the subsistence and the small boat fishermen of Unalaska Bay, recognizing the natural environment as a critical component to both.

We did the creating back in the 90's, when due to our own small boat efforts, during certain qualifying years, an allocation was awarded to us. Not only were we the ones catching the fish, UNFA was the only organization from anywhere in the State to stand before the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and request an allocation for our small boats that were fishing here in the Bering Sea. This was during the sector split of the 90's that would become a feature in Amendment 64. A new sector was born. It was to be called the Under 60' fixed gear sector.

Now it's time to preserve.

Since 2003, after the NPFMC had declared " the fixed gear cod fishery of the BSAI was fully utilized", the Under 60' sector experienced a massive increase in the number of boats participating. Since 2008 there has been an explosion. This year around 40 boats fished the State and Federal season. The fishing season began Jan.1 and ended Feb. 24. And that was it. We might have a B season and we might not. If we do, Iccicle Seafoods is going to send the Gordon Jensen up to St. Matthew with it's fleet of Super 8's. If that is the case, the B season will be very short. For the small boats of Unalaska who depend on cod, either scenario will be a disaster. In order to mitigate these perilous issue's Unalaska's small boat fleet is facing, we must create a mechanism similar to a Community Quota Entity, (CQE) in order that a Community Fishing Association,(CSA) may receive the un-caught fish from the Jig sector in the form of a rollover. The rollover would then be made available to the small boat fixed gear fishermen of Unalaska and Akutan.

May I digress...

We are entering the last phase of a paradigm shift from open access to privatization. It began with Halibut and Sablefish and is now ending with the last open access fishery, Cod. That process will begin in October. The City needs to get it's mind around that and the impacts it is going to have on our local small boat fleet. The days of a young man from town buying their own small boat and going fishing will be gone. The City must support a CQE that will become an initial Issue during the rationalization process. The City must think of the body of fish held by the CQE as a community asset. This fish can be made available to the new entrants of the future. Where else is that fish going to come from? During rationalization many boat owners and corporate entities will become owners of the resource. The young fishermen of the future will

have to buy in. Is it any wonder why we don't see more young fishermen filling in the ranks today? Halibut quota is out of reach, crab is about untouchable and pollack is impossible. What happens when the last entry level fishery is gone? We absolutely, as a community need to own the fish. We cannot let cod get away. This is going to be the only way to preserve our fishing culture and heritage. Planting our flag on the Jig rollover is our first move in this process.