

WILD SALMON CENTER

# Recommendations for the Creation and Functioning of an Advisory Council for the Kol River Salmon Protected Area

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## CASE STUDY



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**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
FOR THE CREATION AND FUNCTIONING OF AN ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE KOL RIVER  
SALMON PROTECTED AREA

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I. Introduction: The Kol River Salmon Zakaznik and the Purpose of an Advisory Council

The Kol River Salmon Zakaznik (regional protected area), established in April, 2006, is located in a relatively remote and sparsely populated region on the west coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula. The Kol watershed has no permanent residents, although a small number of people use the territory of the zakaznik on a seasonal basis: members of the Ivanov obschina (who maintain hunting leases in the PA), as well as a very limited number of fishermen, tourists and scientists studying the salmonid populations of the Kol and Kekhta Rivers. The closest permanent settlement is the village of Sobolevo, located approximately 60 kilometers from the zakaznik boundary, with a population of about 2000 people.

In spite of the region's sparse population, interest in the Kol River Zakaznik is fairly significant, particularly due to the fact that it is the world's first protected area created for the purpose of conserving wild salmonids, arguably Kamchatka's most important economic and ecological resource. Moreover the protection and study of Kamchatka's salmon species involves a number of different stakeholders, including various government and nature protection agencies, as well as scientific institutions and NGOs.

International experience and practice have demonstrated the importance of functional feedback mechanisms for successful management of protected areas. One such feedback mechanism may be a multi-stakeholder advisory council, the various members of which are united by their interest in the operations and development of a given PA.

The creation of an advisory council for the Kol River Salmon Zakaznik should:

1. Make additional resources available to the Kol River Zakaznik Administration, in the form of consultations and recommendations regarding protected area management (including, for example, recommendations on monitoring and scientific research, protection and enforcement, environmental education, ecotourism and other forms of use of the PA);
2. Create a means to improve coordination and cooperation between multiple stakeholders, allowing them to collaborate more effectively;
3. Contribute to information-sharing and the expansion of local support for the Kol PA and salmon conservation.

II. Creation of an Advisory Council for the Kol River Zakaznik: Type of Council, Organization of Meetings and Recommendations for Initial Operations.

In Russia there exist several different types of advisory councils whose activities are focused on protected area management or realization of environmental health and conservation goals (Mikhailova, "A Review of Russian Advisory Councils"). Therefore an advisory council for the Kol River Salmon Zakaznik could take on one of several different forms. We consider the most appropriate form for an advisory council for the Kol River Zakaznik to be a so-called "Scientific-Technical Council" (STC).

The creation of a scientific-technical advisory council for the Kol PA will allow for discussion of a range of topics relevant for the management of the zakaznik: STCs consider a broad spectrum of questions related to scientific research, nature protection, recreational use and environmental education.

A scientific-technical advisory council is generally comprised of specialists in the fields of nature protection, sustainable natural resource use and environmental education, including both the staff of the protected area itself as well as representatives of outside governmental and non-governmental organizations. We recommend that a STC for the Kol River Salmon Zakaznik include representatives of the following agencies and organizations: Kol River Zakaznik Administration (2 representatives); Kamchatka Regional Administration; Sobolevo District Administration (2 representatives); Rosprirodnadzor; Rosselkhoznadzor; KamchatNIRO; Sevvostrybvod; Kamchatka Forest Service; Pacific Institute of Geography (Kamchatka Branch); Wild Fishes and Biodiversity Foundation; Wild Salmon Center. Members of these organizations would take consistent and formal part in the council's decision-making process, and have a right to vote.

At the same time it will be important to find truly interested participants in the advisory council, and not to invite people simply for the sake of representing all of the organizations and agencies listed above.

It is critical to keep in mind the quality, expertise and professionalism of scientific-technical advisory councils, whether they are created for zapovedniks, national parks, nature parks or zakazniks (Mikhailova). For this reason we do not recommend formal inclusion of any NGOs other than the Wild Fishes and Biodiversity Foundation and Wild Salmon Center in a Kol River STC. In this sense an STC is a more closed form of advisory council than, for example, a public council. Nonetheless meetings of the Kol River STC should be open to the public and announced in the media, and the council may accept proposals for discussion topics from outsiders, invite outsiders to its meetings, and so on.

We recommend that the Kol River STC be created under the Kol River Zakaznik Administration (rather than, for example, under the Sobolevo District Administration) by a decree issued by the director of the Kol River PA. Regular meetings of the STC should take place twice a year in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky or in Elizovo.

In parallel with the creation of a scientific-technical advisory council for the Kol River Zakaznik we strongly suggest conducting a local working group meeting 2-4 times per year in Sobolevo for the local population and workers based in the Sobolevo district: fishermen, inspectors, Forest Service staff, hunters, and Sobolevo residents. The purpose of this working group meeting should be to inform locals about the current situation on the Kol and the work of the zakaznik (including the work of its advisory council), listen to their opinions and suggestions, and solicit their advice and participation in concrete activities. Meetings should be conducted by Kol River Zakaznik staff (or the PA Administration) or a representative of the Sobolevo District Administration.

#### *Alternatives.*

Other examples of Russian advisory councils considered as alternatives to the creation of a scientific-technical advisory council for the Kol River Zakaznik, include so-called public advisory councils, consultative advisory councils and coordinating committees.

The main purpose in creating a public advisory council is to ensure the participation of local residents and users of a given protected area in the PA management and decision-making process. As there are no permanent residents living within the boundaries of the Kol River Zakaznik, and only a handful of seasonal land-users, we consider the public council option to be less appropriate. In the case of the Kol the most important questions are those of effective collaboration between various agencies and organizations responsible for salmon protection and management. It is essential, however, to inform and

involve local residents, and this objective can be realized through conducting local working meetings, as suggested above.

Effective consultative councils usually bring together representatives of one interest and organization, who consult among themselves and then bring the result of their internal discussion to the attention of, for example, a scientific-technical council.

Coordinating committees generally operate on a higher level than STCs, and accordingly they discuss questions of a greater weight. For example, in Russia interdepartmental coordinating committees have been created under the governor of a region or the regional administration in order to address questions of protected areas and their management. A PA director may propose that such a coordinating committee examine a management question that has already been discussed and analyzed at a meeting of the given PA's scientific-technical advisory council. The task of the interdepartmental coordinating committee is then to identify an appropriate mechanism to effectively and efficiently resolve this question.

If a network of salmon protected areas is established on Kamchatka, we suggest considering the creation of a coordinating committee for this network. For example, there exists a "Coordinating Committee for the Zapovedniks of the Southern Russian Far East," which includes the directors of the zapovedniks and national parks in the southern RFE and which is chaired by the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources's Vladimir Andronov, who is responsible for the protected areas system of the Far Eastern Federal District.

#### *Formation of a Kol River Advisory Council and Initial Operations.*

After the *polozheniye* (bylaws) for the creation of a Kol River scientific-technical advisory council are drafted, we recommend sending the draft *polozheniye* together with a letter from the Zakaznik Administration to the directors of all relevant agencies and organizations, requesting that they or their representative(s) participate in the Kol River STC.

Prior to a first meeting it may also be advisable to consult individually with each potential council member in order to explain the council's goals and objectives, possibilities for its activity and types of questions it may consider. This may also help to convince potential members that the council will be an effective mechanism for consultation and decision-making.

We recommend that the first council meeting be devoted to reaching final agreement on the text of the *polozheniye* and defining a short, concrete mission statement for the council, which all council members can agree upon in spite of the different interests of the organizations and agencies that they represent. Defining a mission may not be an easy task, but an effective mission statement can serve as a bottom line uniting all council members. For example, the mission statement for the Hood River Watershed Council (Oregon, United States), which is read aloud at the beginning of each of its meetings, is "to sustain and improve the Hood River watershed through education, cooperation and stewardship."

It will be important to give all council members sufficient time to get well-acquainted and to take the time to build trust between them, thus laying the foundation for effective long-term cooperation. This process should not be delayed, as it will be more difficult to build trust in the future.

We also recommend that limits to the rights and authority of the council, as well as its concrete role, be clearly defined both in the council *polozheniye* and during the first council meeting, in the presence of all council members.

The question of how meeting agendas are created should not be ignored. Agendas should not be created spontaneously or at the last minute, which will likely lead to too many diverse topics being raised for effective discussion, or to the council having nothing to discuss.

### III. Key Objectives and Possibilities for Practical Work of a Kol River Advisory Council.

Ideally the Kol River Advisory Council should recognize itself as a body that can supervise successful implementation of the management and monitoring plans for the Kol River Salmon Zakaznik, as well as effectively communicate the goals and objectives of the PA, and will take on these responsibilities accordingly. The council may also identify new possibilities for the work of the zakaznik (for example, new projects or programs to be conducted together with local residents or international organizations) and may create separate working groups, to include not only council members, for concrete realization of these possibilities.

We recommend that the council also always keep in mind the question of how it can further the economic development of the region.

Some key objectives and functions of a Kol River Advisory Council may include:

- Evaluation of the ongoing work of the Kol River Salmon Zakaznik and development of management recommendations (including, for example, recommendations on monitoring and scientific research, protection and enforcement, environmental education, ecotourism and other forms of use of the zakaznik; potential new projects or programs, etc.);
- Suggesting ways to improve local environmental and socio-economic conditions;
- Study, synthesis and application of international experience in resolving environmental problems; facilitating collaboration with Russian and international agencies and organizations;
- Making suggestions about the use of budgetary funds received by the zakaznik from both the government and other sources; supervision over appropriate use of allocated funds;
- Improving dissemination of the zakaznik's experience and information access; collaboration with mass media in order to inform the general public about the Kol PA and the activities of the advisory council.

We suggest that the Kol River Advisory Council consider inviting specialists to meetings that may be devoted to in-depth discussion of a particular issue, as well as outsiders particularly interested in the given topic. For in-depth analysis of a particular issue the council may also want to form separate working groups or conduct special sessions.

### IV. Conclusion.

We recommend that the organizers of an advisory council for the Kol River Salmon Zakaznik continually study the experience of the most successful and long-lived Russian advisory councils, and, when possible, learn about their work first-hand from council members. For example, a consultative advisory council on indigenous peoples has existed under the Kamchatka Regional Administration since 2002, and its experience has been very positive.

Ultimately, the key to the success of any advisory council, no matter its form or name, will always be the level of interest of its members and their readiness to participate in the resolution of those questions before them.