



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

211 Fourth Street, Suite 110
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1172
(907) 586-2820
(907) 463-2545 Fax
E-Mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org
www.ufa-fish.org

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CONTACT:
Bob Thorstenson, Jr., UFA President –
(907) 463-5080 or (907) 723-8267
Jeff Steele, UFA Vice President – (907) 487-2248
UFA Office – (907) 586-2820

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On Wednesday, March 24th, United Fishermen of Alaska President Bob Thorstenson, of Juneau, and Vice President Jeff Steele, of Kodiak, selected their first ever UFA Executive “MAN OF THE YEAR” - Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Kevin Duffy. This October, UFA will select its “MAN OF THE YEAR” in Alaska politics, as well as its “FISHERMAN OF THE YEAR” from members of the commercial fishing and processing community. Naturally women are included as potential recipients.

Commissioner Duffy’s progressive fisheries management style in both state and federal waters fisheries has earned him this title for 2004 as well as the respect and admiration of fishing families represented by the UFA across the state. In 2003, his first year as ADFG Commissioner, Commissioner Duffy oversaw the first Executive Order allowing increased harvest of Cook Inlet surplus sockeye salmon as well as a marked increase in pink salmon harvested in Prince William Sound which would have been impossible without quick, decisive action. Although there were further surpluses in both areas, there was a healthy balance struck which had been missing in prior Commissioner decisions. Prior Commissioners lacked the initiative to enact the Emergency Order authority that is critical in real-time, scientific-based fisheries management. Commissioner Duffy has also been at the helm of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council for several years and in continuing this leadership, is responsible for working through the complicated scenarios for Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Rationalization.

In this capacity as the state’s representative he is responsible to work within the council process in actively implementing the Bering Sea and Aleutians Islands Crab Management Plan passed by the Council by an 11-0 vote in June 2002, during former Governor Tony Knowles administration. It was in this capacity, as Knowles’ selected appointee, along with 5 other Knowles appointees, that Commissioner Duffy voted with the unanimous majority to implement the Bering Sea and Aleutians Islands Crab Management Plan that June. In a recent U. S. Senate Forum in Kodiak on March 17th,

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Crab Coalition • Alaska Dragger’s Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association • Alaska Trollers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association
Bristol Bay Reserve • Chignik Regional Aquaculture Association • Chignik Seiners Association • Concerned Area “M” Fishermen • Cordova District Fishermen United
Crab Rationalization and Buyback Group • Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association
Kodiak Seiners Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Pacific Scallop Cooperative • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
Old Harbor Fishermen’s Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association
Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners Association • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
United Catcher Boats • United Salmon Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association • Western Gulf of Alaska Fishermen

former Governor Knowles recanted that approval of the plan, saying that he had instructed Commissioner Duffy to vote for a 70-30 Processor Share split rather than the 90-10 split that Commissioner Duffy and the other five Knowles appointees inevitably voted for. (It might be worth mentioning that the “harvest” will be undertaken exclusively by Bering Sea and Aleutians Islands Crabbers, many of whom are members of UFA, but that the 90-10 refers to the historical community and processing rights).

UFA firmly believes that Commissioner Duffy acted under orders from the Knowles administration, without prejudice, along with the other five Knowles appointees on the Council. Furthermore, UFA firmly believes that Commissioner Duffy is carrying out the will and long-term fisheries plan of the current administration under UFA-endorsed Governor Frank Murkowski.

“Along with our unflinching 100% support for the entire Murkowski administration, we also include Commissioner Duffy and his entire staff in this appraisal of the job they’ve done this past 16 months”, said Bob Thorstenson, UFA President since June, 2000.

“Furthermore, the Commissioner and his staff’s understanding of the complex issues surrounding the state’s sport fishing, hunting and subsistence fisheries make him the most well-rounded Commissioner we have seen in the history of this great state of Alaska.”

Commissioner Duffy joined the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1981, working on statewide comprehensive salmon issues in the department’s planning and development section. He worked his way up to Deputy Director of Commercial Fisheries, Deputy Commissioner, and Alaska’s Commissioner of the Pacific Salmon Commission under the Knowles administration before becoming Commissioner under the Murkowski administration. Commissioner Duffy also has extensive experience in comprehensive salmon planning and salmon management, fisheries development for all shellfish, finfish and groundfish fisheries, and regulatory development and oversight. Commissioner Duffy is a graduate of the University of Washington and holds a Master’s Degree in Public Administration.