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January 13, 2014

Mr. Glenn Haight, Executive Director
Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

ATTN: Board of Fish Comments for Upper Cook Inlet Finfish

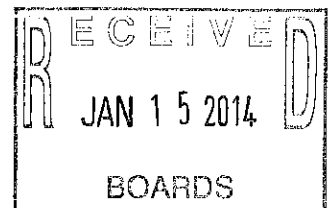
Dear Mr. Haight and Board of Fisheries members:

The Alaska Salmon Alliance is submitting this anthology of published articles regarding the Cook Inlet and Kenai River salmon fisheries conflict. The reason for the submission is to assist the Board of Fisheries and the commercial sector in recalling the myriad of articles that have been published in the last twelve months on Cook Inlet salmon fishery issues. The packet is also intended to inform the sport and personal use fishermen who have been encouraged by numerous parties to participate in this important Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries meeting. We are hopeful that some of the recruits to the Board of Fisheries process will take time during the course of the meeting to read some of these articles and we are hopeful they will gain some insights into how the commercial sector of the Cook Inlet salmon fisheries view management of the fisheries. We all need to understand the other person's point of view. In this case, we should be aware that approximately 70 per cent of the Cook Inlet commercial salmon fishermen share something in common with sport and personal use fishermen, they are residents of Alaska, who share a common interest in the future health and abundance of Cook Inlet salmon stocks.

Included in the selection are numerous articles that have been authored by commercial sector fishermen and representatives recommending mutual respect, sharing of the harvest, cooperation and dialogue to seek common ground and to work together on measures that will increase the abundance of the salmon resources.

Best regards for a successful meeting.

Arni Thomson
Executive Director





Arni Thomson

From: UCIDA ~ Audrey <info@ucida.org>
Sent: Friday, January 03, 2014 9:38 AM
To: UCIDA ~ Audrey
Subject: Fwd: Compass: Speak up, because the fish belong to you | Compass: Guest Columnists | ADN.com

<http://www.adn.com/2014/01/02/3255506/compass-speak-up-because-the-fish.html>

Compass: Speak up, because the fish belong to you

By KARL JOHNSTONE January 2, 2014

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On January 31 the Alaska Board of Fisheries starts a 14-day meeting to address the Upper Cook Inlet fisheries. The meeting will take place in Anchorage at the Egan Convention Center. This will present an opportunity to help resolve the "fish wars" that have been the subject of so many print, and electronic media outlets and talked about so often in various blogs.

There is no other process that is driven by the public as much as the board process at these meetings. It allows the public to be heard in many ways, not the least of which is the opportunity to provide oral testimony at the meeting. Each person is given three minutes to provide information to the board on whatever subject the witness believes to be important. The public is encouraged to speak with board members and to lobby for their interests. Written comments are encouraged both before and during the meeting. Committees are formed during the meeting in which the public can again have their voices heard. When deliberations begin the public can be assured that it has had ample opportunity to make their points.

I encourage all who have an interest in the Mat Su Valley, Anchorage and Kenai Peninsula fish resources to attend and make yourselves heard at the meeting. The board is ever mindful, and often influenced by the voices of those impacted most by our decisions.

We know that it takes an effort to attend these meetings. People have to work for a living, have families to attend, and in some cases just do not have time. We understand. Those able and willing to attend this meeting will be required to sign up to testify by not later than 9 a.m. of the second day of the meeting, which is February 1. People might be called to testify as early as the first day of the meeting and will be called in the order they signed up each day until all have been heard. It is not the same as being called as a witness in a courtroom.

There is no oath. There is no cross examination. You are there to help us and we value whatever you have to say.

Because of all the publicity surrounding these fisheries, I expect and hope for a large turnout. This is your chance to be part of the solution and help the board set the right policies for the management of your fish

resources. And they are your fish resources. Alaska's constitution plainly states that this va
be utilized for the "maximum benefit of its people". That is you it is referring to.



Whether you are a sports fisher, a dip net fisher, a subsistence user, or a commercial fisher, your input is important. The board members are just like most of you. We are not a professional body. Most of us on the board do not have specialized knowledge in fisheries management or biology. We get needed information to assist us in our decisions from experts in the Alaska Department of Fish & Game and from you, the public.

The management of the Cook Inlet fisheries has been very challenging, especially during the last two years. There appears to be fewer and fewer fish being chased by more and more people. As a result, sports, dip net, and commercial fishers have been restricted in their fisheries. The board needs to hear from you on what changes, if any, need to occur to resolve these challenges. Your voice is important.

So, consider using it at the Upper Cook Inlet meeting. You will be welcomed.

Karl Johnstone is chairman of the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

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King of a dream

January 2, 2014 – Peninsula Clarion By Les Palmer

On Tuesday night of this week, New Year's Eve, I caught a 55-pound king salmon. The event was so exciting that I woke up and couldn't get back to sleep.

I've dreamed about fish and fishing before, but this time was different. It didn't involve fishing, hooking or boating a big fish. Instead, it was only about having a king salmon in my possession, taking it home and eating it.

It's likely that I dreamed up this fish because I couldn't have it in the real world. The only king salmon I caught in 2013 was a small "feeder" king, taken in March on a charter boat out of Homer. Like most other people who were concerned about the poor runs of Kenai River kings in recent years, I didn't fish for them in 2013.

Thinking about this dream on the day after, I realized that it focused on what was most important to me about salmon fishing: the use of salmon for food. It's outrageous that salmon can be caught and released just for "sport," killing about one for every 15 caught while having fun and getting a photo of a "trophy" fish. And it's even more outrageous that catch-and-release of kings is allowed during runs when it's doubtful that the spawning escapement is adequate to sustain the stock.

Trouble is, a large and influential group not only wants to be able to catch and release king salmon, but needs to do so. In the 1970s, I considered commercial fishermen to be the main adversaries of those of us who like to fish with rod and reel, but no more. The biggest threat now is the sport-fishing industry, as represented by Kenai River guides and the Kenai River Sportfishing Association (KRSA).

So many guides now depend upon the Kenai River, they seriously impact other fisheries whenever the Kenai is restricted. Without catch-and-release fishing, fishing guides have little to sell their clients during years of poor runs. In years when an insufficient number of kings enter the Kenai to ensure an adequate spawning escapement, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game issues Emergency Orders. "EOs" that close the Kenai to king salmon fishing and EOs that allow only catch-and-release fishing make the fishery unpredictable. When it's unpredictable for two or three years in a row, guides start looking for other ways to make a living.

In 2002, Kenai River guides and the KRSA tried to ban all harvest, making the early run exclusively a "fun" fishery. "Catch-and-release only" for early-run Kenai River kings came very close to becoming regulation. Instead, with an aim to make the fishery more "stable and predictable," the Board of Fisheries slashed nearly all of the early-run harvest. Together with a non-retention, 40- to 55-inch "slot limit," the board slashed the annual early-run harvest to one-sixth of what it had been in prior years, from an average of 6,900 fish to less than 1,200. This action marked the first time ever that a traditional Alaskan salmon harvest fishery had been replaced by a catch-and-release fishery. This



regulation triggered years of conflict and divisiveness in the community, some of which lingers still.

At the February 2002 fish-board meeting, KRSA board member and fishing guide Pat Carter told the Anchorage Daily News, "The Kenai is so special it shouldn't just be treated as another meat fishery."

In the Clarion (Feb. 15, 2002), KRSA executive director Brett Huber said about the Kenai's king salmon fishery, "Perhaps it's time to treat this like other trophy fisheries, like we do with rainbow trout."

When local residents became fully aware of the ramifications of the new regulation, that the fast-growing sport-fishing industry was now powerful enough to sway the board into making catch-and-release a priority for king salmon, they became deeply concerned. If the board would do this on the Kenai River, they could do it anywhere. Were we now going to start managing Alaska's salmon like trophy trout, just catching and releasing them for sport? If so, as guide numbers increased, all accessible salmon fishing could end up being managed not for a harvest, but exclusively for fun fishing.

Those of us who consider the catching and eating of salmon almost a holy ritual drew a line in the sand. Realizing that the guides were in it mainly for the money, and that state bureaucrats weren't going to help, we set out to change the regulation and restore a reasonable opportunity for harvest. It took several months, but we eventually convinced the fish board that most Alaskans wanted to have an occasional salmon on their dinner table more than they wanted Kenai River fishing guides to have stable and predictable jobs.

Eleven years have passed since the guides and KRSA tried to make playthings of Kenai River kings. The danger that they could again convince the fish board to do this is greater than ever. If they decide to try when the board meets in Anchorage later this month, they should remember what happened in 2002. "Joe Fisherman" won't idly sit by while the industry converts the Kenai River king salmon fishing to "catch-and-release only." Taking home a king salmon should be more than just a dream.



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All Access
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Salmon reminder

Posted: August 29, 2013 - 2:07pm

By Les Palmer

We Alaskans occasionally need to be reminded of how fortunate we are to live where salmon still have a place to come home to.

In Washington, where I was born and raised, salmon abundance has declined dramatically over the past several decades. When people finally realized what had happened, lots of them blamed "overfishing." They were probably partly right, but they should've been looking in the mirror. In the name of "progress," they had ruined much of the state's salmon habitat.

It didn't happen overnight. Dams, farming, logging, road construction and urban development slowly made the environment unfriendly to fish. An estimated one-third of the wetlands in Oregon and Washington have been lost. According to studies, some 80 to 90 percent of the historic riparian habitat required by Pacific salmon no longer exists in the western states. Places where salmon once bred and reared no longer provide what they need to survive, let alone thrive.

Young people in the today's Northwest can't possibly feel the same way about salmon that Alaskans feel. The presence of salmon in Alaskan waters is why many of us came here and chose to live here. Salmon symbolize Alaska far more better than any bear, dog sled or northern lights.

Comparing the difference in how Alaskans and Washingtonians perceive pink salmon is telling. Nothing against eating a pink, but I can't remember the last time I did. By the time pinks are available, my freezer is full of sockeyes, and the silver run is starting. What's more, when pinks are biting, it's hard to get through them to catch silvers. Who needs pinks?

I'm far from alone in my attitude. According to statewide harvest numbers for 2011, the latest year for which the count is available, anglers in Alaska harvested about 575,000 silvers, 535,000 sockeyes and 128,000 kings. Though pinks are by far the most numerous Pacific salmon, anglers chose to take home only 95,000 of them.

It's an entirely different deal in Washington. In odd-numbered years, such as 2013, pink salmon return in large numbers to spawn, and people turn out in droves to catch them. Earlier this month, some Fred Meyer stores in Washington were running an ad that shouted, "SAVE now on Humpy gear at Fredmys!" Families were sunning themselves on the banks of the Skagit River in Mount Vernon while hoping for a humpy to bite. In 2009, the latest year for which numbers are available, anglers in Washington harvested about 349,000 silvers, 8,000 sockeyes, 124,000 kings and 558,000 pinks.

In other words, people in Washington don't catch and release pink salmon, as many Alaskans do. They eat them. The sport-fishing pink harvest in Washington is usually three to five times greater than it is in Alaska. This isn't because there are more anglers, but because pinks are so often the most exciting game in town.

Consider silvers and sockeyes. In 2009, while anglers in Alaska were harvesting 665,000 silver salmon -- and releasing thousands more -- anglers in Washington harvested only 349,000. Anglers in Alaska harvested 465,000 sockeyes, while in Washington, they took only 8,000.

If we Alaskans truly want to continue to have strong salmon runs, we'll have to make compromises that people in Washington chose not to make. We'll have to forego some logging and mining opportunities. We'll have to pay more for electric power. We shouldn't be able to farm or manufacture where it's necessary to take water from spawning and rearing streams. We'll have to pay more to develop land and to build roads in ways that don't spoil fish habitat. And we'll need to stay constantly vigilant about anything that threatens fish habitat.

Consider yourself reminded.

Les Palmer can be reached at les.palmer@rocketmail.com.



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Monday, Aug 12, 2013

Longtime fisherman gives insight on salmon decline

By Roy Huhndorf
Ninilchik

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I have spent most of my 73 years as a sports fisherman, having fished the Kenai River and the salt waters of lower Cook Inlet since the early 1960's. Therefore, I read with keen interest the articles and letters that appear in your paper discussing the decline of the King Salmon.

There are several reasons given and some no doubt contribute to the reduction in their numbers. Often cited causes are setnetters, drifters, trawlers and adverse ocean conditions. But rarely discussed is the effect of sports fishing on kings that have reached their spawning beds in the river. Unlike sockeye salmon, which spawn around Skilak Lake and the upper river, kings spawn mostly in large holes in the Kenai River from the Keys area just below Skilak Lake downstream roughly to Eagle Rock. Kings in the spawning mode become highly agitated and strike when a perceived predator (a lure) enters their spawning hole.

For many years there were two robust king salmon runs in the river. The first was the June run. Beginning in the 1960's, this run was expanding rapidly (no more fish traps after statehood) and its abundance was the delight of Anchorage and Peninsula sportsmen. The run began collapsing in the 1990's, even though commercial setnetting and drift gillnetting had been discontinued in May and June for decades. If gillnetting is not to blame, did adverse ocean conditions and trawling cause the decline during this period? Not likely. Remember, the Magnuson-Stevens Act became law in the 1970's, establishing the 200 mile coastal zone, it stopped high seas drift netting and prescribed trawling activity. This points strongly to over fishing the spawning holes as a major cause. At the time, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game said that the river was being managed mainly for the red salmon run, not the June kings.



This brings me to the July kings. Think about the timing of this run as a parabolic curve with one tail in late June and the other in early August -- meaning that the bulk of the run happens in mid to late July with the early and late fish arriving at other times. These mid-July fish are now virtually gone -- largely being blamed on setnetters, and other causes. But, lo and behold, the August stragglers have now become what used to be the July run. The parabolic curve has shifted to the late July early August time frame. Why? No small wonder. August sport fishing for kings has been closed for decades, leaving the August fish as the only successful spawners. The Department says the escapement is being met -- but in August. Again it is hard NOT to point to the June/July sport fishing in the spawning holes as the main cause of the decline.

It is clear to me that a medium sized river on the Kenai Peninsula can't continue to be the king salmon sports fishing mecca of the world with hundreds of fishing guides leading thousands of tourists to the best place on the river to kill a "trophy" king. The Department needs to take a much more activist stance -- limiting the taking of kings once they arrive in the spawning holes. If the legendary Kings of the Kenai are to remain in existence for future enjoyment, we need to look less to our own personal and commercial interests and join together in an effort to ensure that this magnificent race of giant salmon survive.



KRSA initiative to save kings misleading

By Frank Mullen

The Kenai River Sportfishing Association is currently pursuing an aggressive campaign to "Save our Kenai Kings." Perhaps you have heard their radio ads or seen their networking on social media. KRSA is using an interesting deception here. They seek to drive people to their website so that they can sign up to "Save our Kenai Kings." But, when you get to the website, you are funneled into sending the Board of Fish your comments in support of KRSA's favorite board proposals.

Interestingly enough, the board proposals you may support for the purpose of "Saving our Kenai Kings" will actually serve to "Save our Kenai River Guides" rather than the stressed kings. The proposals do nothing to address habitat issues in the Kenai River, which are critical to resolving the king problem.

I believe that the KRSA attempt to "Save our Kings" is a calculated distraction from the "big truths", because the following are not mentioned in their deceptive appeal to "Save our Kings":

1. Thirty-five years of heavy boat traffic have caused big wakes that constantly erode the riverbank and add to turbidity, thus degrading the spawning environment for Kenai kings. The accompanying engine noise, turbulence, and exhaust a foot above a spawning bed can not provide much comfort to king salmon who might like to spawn in peace.
2. Thirty-five years of overfishing on spawning beds. Up to 600 boats per day seek "the big one" in the summer.
3. Thirty-five years of thousands of hooks per day clawing through spawning beds.
4. Thirty-five years of targeting "the big one" have left a population of small kings. For the most part, "the big ones" are gone. There are other issues that KRSA leaves out of their campaign to "Save the Kenai Kings." Catch-and-release mortality is a huge one. There is currently no sanctuary for kings, no place that they can spawn in comfort. Why not provide this?

The issues KRSA wants you to support on their website are self serving, short sighted, and a real distraction from what many believe to be the issues of priority for REALLY improving the habitat degradations in the river, and thus REALLY saving the Kenai king.

Frank Mullen was born on a homestead on the banks of the Kenai River and is the son of one of Soldotna's first families. Mullen has been a commercial fisherman all his life, a businessman, and served on the Kenai Peninsula Borough assembly for three terms.

[Contact the writer](#)

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Who stole my salm

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Government, industries must work together to protect vital resource

ECONOMICALLY SPEAKING



By Don Dyer

No question about it, salmon is an iconic anchor of Alaska's economy. For the Mat-Su Borough, it contributes about \$120 million dollars to our local economy annually, almost entirely from sport fishing.

The following is an excerpt from the Alaska Constitution, Article 8 "Natural Resources"

"3. Common Use
"Wherever occurring in their natural state, fish, wildlife and waters are reserved to the people for common use.

"4. Sustained Yield
Fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands and all other replenishable resources belonging to the state shall be utilized, developed and maintained on the sustained yield principle, subject to preferences among beneficial uses."

What could be clearer? As many have experienced, the salmon management issue has become muddier than the Matanuska River at flood stage — and it gets personal real fast.

If someone had told me the following story I would probably have thought it was a fish story; however, this experience illustrates a conflict that is very real.

Recently, my wife, my three youngest sons and I went to the Kenai River for the dipnet sockeye fishery. The wait at the city boat ramp was more than two hours, so we put in six miles upriver at Eagle Rock. On the trip downstream, we passed hundreds of shore and trolling fishermen, most with guides who didn't wave back. At the dipnetting area, the boat count on the water was in the hundreds, but felt like thousands.

The experience of fishing with so many boats in such a small area with no speed limit and minimal concern for safety was close to pandemonium. I was amazed that no one was swamped or hurt. After almost 10 hours of fishing, we ended up with 18 fish. When comparing notes with many of the other anglers at the dock and friends by phone, we were lucky. According to the previous day's fishing catch, historical statistics and fish movement reports on multiple websites, our family should have done much better or limited out.

Back at the boat landing, most of the people blamed the poor fishing results on the opening of the commercial fishery that morning, kind of like slamming the gate at the mouth of the



Sockeye Salmon make their way up Fish Creek to spawn. Salmon is a large economic resource for the state and the Valley.

Kenai. I've been skunked before, but at least we had something. That is just the way fishing goes.

But something happened mid-day that left me more troubled than the poor catch. A friend had borrowed my boat the day before and left one fuel tank half empty. He told me I could buy gas at "a dock close to the boat ramp." Later in the day, I looked for a dock in the distance that I could see a fuel pump on. I went to the first one that I saw and asked a man standing at the pump if he could sell us some gas. He said "sure," so we tied up. I was walking down the dock when I heard a big thud, grinding metal and the voice of an angry man behind me yelling "get the @\$% off our dock. This dock is for commercial fishermen only!"

I turned around and the driver of the commercial-size skiff revved the engine and rammed my skiff into the dock a second time, and then four of five other commercial fishermen in the boat joined the chorus of expletives and demands for our exit.

"No problem," I responded as I made a hasty retreat. As it turns out, my friend meant a different dock.

At the Kenai City boat ramp, they sold me fuel. I asked the guy where the men's room was. He gave me a strange look, but could see from the look in my eyes that I had been in my waders a little too long. He then responded: "The only reason I will let you use the (public) restroom is because you bought fuel here. Do it fast, the commercial guys don't like dipnetters tying up here."

In the time it took for my son and I to make the quick trip to the PUBLIC restroom, a fisherman on a commercial fishing boat at the PUBLIC dock had already begun to complain about our presence.

I won't go into a PR lecture to that commercial fishing company here. Let's just say that they should be grateful they are not on YouTube.

As I drove home that day, I realized that I had just received a fast-but-weak education about the intensity of the conflict between the competing fishing interests in Alaska. Each side sees the other as having an advantage and stealing the other's resource. I can see how it must be frustrating to the commercial fishermen to see thousands of their competitors scooping up tons of their product with a free permit, while they are stuck waiting for someone in a faraway place to tell them it is game time. They have car payments, rent and child support payments, too.

Weeks earlier, I had been contacted by the fishing guide industry here in the Mat-Su about the disastrous consequences of the low number of returning king salmon. They estimated that this poor season would have an impact of \$50 million on the local Mat-Su economy. Back at work on Monday and Tuesday, I was greeted with distress calls from the same group about local silver salmon counts in the Mat-Su drainage. The impact was reported to be caused by the commercial fishing fleet in Cook Inlet scooping up Mat-Su's returning salmon in violation of policy. The total damage to the Mat-Su economy was estimated at



Silver Salmon fill a cooler after a guided trip along the Little-Su River. Low returns have led to stiff sport fishing restrictions for the Valley.

\$75 million.

So, we went to work getting the facts about a thing called "The State of Alaska Sustainable Salmon Policy" and seeing if/how the policy was being violated. Mayor Larry DeVilbiss, two borough attorneys and I were hands-on. John Moosey, the borough manager, interrupted his vacation to weigh in by phone. The Mat-Su Business Alliance also made important political contacts and delivered important information. Discussions arming the borough with legal actions and political solutions were loaded, hammers cocked and the guns readied for action.

It was concluded that results for the 2012 fishing season are as yet inconclusive because the season is not over and the silver salmon typically do not show up until August. At this point, everyone agrees that the actions of Alaska Department of Fish and Game are within policy. In addition, the responsiveness, data sharing and cooperation of the Parnell administration has been praised by all of the

Mat-Su Borough's team members. At the end of the day, if any legal action was taken, by the time those options ran their course — the 2012 season will be closed and the fish consumed.

We also found a lawsuit filed against the state by the commercial fishing industry in 2011. They prevailed and state policy changed to move the management plan for the 2012 season in their favor. The lessons learned from this research are: First, the vigilance of the Mat-Su sport fishing industry and the residents who love fishing here must be heightened; second, we as a community need to act much earlier in the policy formation cycle; third, organization is the key. Organize now. If we wait until fail, it will be too late.

Whether you're a dipnetter, commercial fisherman, fishing guide, visitor or subsistence user, there is one thing that all Mat-Su fisherman who love salmon agree on: there are fewer of them and the trend is getting worse.

Fast forward to 2022, a quick 10 years (two salmon

generations) from now when the human population of the Mat-Su is projected to reach 180,000 to 200,000. What will Mat-Su fisheries look like then? Salmon have a five-year life cycle. The salmon eggs in the riverbed or hatchery now are the parents of the fish that will spawn the supply for the 2022 season. If our present egg supply is insufficient or if mortality of the 2017 fish is too high, the 2022 season will be in jeopardy. Will your children and grandchildren be able to enjoy your favorite fishing holes? Will the commercial salmon catch support fisherman families in 2022? Will Mat-Su still be a world destination for sport salmon fishing?

All of these industries are vital contributors to the economy and the personal prosperity of each resident. Most importantly, in 2022 will you be eating SPAM instead of sockeye?

Don't think that it can't happen. From my childhood, I remember the abundance of salmon in the Puget Sound in the 1960s and 1970s. My grandfather owned a fishing lodge on Hood Canal. What I saw then compared to what I see now is abundance vs. sterility. Who would pay to go salmon fishing there now? Would you invest in a business venture that proposed commercial salmon fishing in Oregon? If you're an Alaskan, "More money than sense" comes to mind in both cases. Could you make a reality show about fishing the Columbia? I'd rather watch paint dry.

Until all of the salmon stakeholders take the long view, bury their hatchets and put sustainable salmon reproduction ahead of their own interests, everyone who depends on salmon for a living or food better have a Plan B.

So what is the action plan? Start by organizing your assembly members, legislators, trade organizations and, most of all, the Fisheries Board to employ a balanced and sustainable approach to salmon management — an approach that balances eggs in the streams to fish in the freezer, not lawsuits and counter-suits. This is a supply chain. We can figure this out. There is not just one party to blame for low salmon returns. It has been caused collectively, and it must be solved collectively.

Sacrifices (I prefer to call them investments) will need to be made by all. The question is, how strong is our collective desire to fix it?

As your economic development director and fellow salmon consumer, the 2013 season is blinking brightly on my radar.

Don Dyer is economic development director for the Mat-Su Borough.

From: UCIDA ~ Audrey <info@ucida.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 09, 2014 9:10 AM
To: UCIDA ~ Audrey
Subject: Voices of the Peninsula: All fisheries are important to community

CLARION

Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2014

Voices of the Peninsula: All fisheries are important to community

By Amber Every, Fair Fishing 907

“Why do we have to fight so hard to be able to fish?” — a question we keep getting from our children, many of whom are 4th and 5th generation commercial fisherman and setnetters in Upper Cook Inlet. The Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance’s recent statewide initiative targeting Cook Inlet Setnetters is indeed a very difficult thing to try to understand, let alone explain to our children, friends, and neighbors.

Here is the question that we keep coming back to: Why is feeding the world an abundant, natural and healthy protein — Wild Salmon — any less important than the recreational fishing that takes place in our rivers? It’s not. Both fisheries have a social and economic value, and a unique place in this wonderful State of Alaska. Both are vitally important to the economy and the culture of the coastal communities that host and depend on them.

We refuse to stoop to the level of greed that Bob Penney and his myriad of “Sportfishing Organizations” and “Conservation Alliances” are exhibiting. Our children, our community, our neighbors, and our families deserve better than this. So how do we fix these “fish wars” that have been waged for years? We rise above it! We stand up and say ALL fisheries are an important part of this state, and will exist for many generations to come. We come TOGETHER for solutions to protect our diverse fishery and the resource it depends on.

The Kenai Peninsula holds the most accessible river systems in the State of Alaska. We have a large and growing number of people coming to play in our rivers, a very sensitive and limited resource. Each user group needs sensible limits — responsible management cannot allow unbridled growth on a limited resource. We must limit the number of boats we allow over the spawning grounds, we must put some limits on the ever growing dipnet fishery, and we must have limits and guidelines as to the amount of commercial activity we allow — in both the salt and fresh waters.

ADF&G has set escapement goals that are predicted to produce the highest sustained yields for each species, which benefits ALL Alaskans and fish user groups. In the past 27 years this goal has been met and more often than not exceeded for late run Kenai chinook, the strongest of the Kenai’s two chinook runs and the only Kenai chinook run harvested by Cook Inlet Setnets.

Achieving these escapement goals has not been without difficulty and sacrifice. The last several seasons have been full of restrictions for all user groups in order to achieve escapement. The escapement itself has come into question, with user groups enduring restrictions only to see escapement numbers adjusted upwards post-season

by ADF&G after all the data was analyzed. Interestingly, the most historic, dependable, and accurate chinook data we have is that of the Cook Inlet Setnet fishery. It shows a low (13 percent) escapement rate per run. This rate has remained relatively constant throughout the decades despite changes in run strength, political pressure, and market value of this great fish.



The difficulty of enumerating a minority species in a river full of other fish cannot be understated. Multiple postseason adjustments, recent escapement goal changes, and evidence of density dependent impacts due to past errors in counting have many of us thinking maybe it's time for ADF&G to spend some of the \$30 million Governor Parnell issued for chinook research to fund an independent outside review of the counting systems for the Kenai River.

Alaskan chinook are experiencing a period of low productivity — that's certainly true here on the Kenai. We don't know exactly why, but we do know (due to commercial catch records) that it has happened before, and could be largely a natural, cyclical phenomenon. But maybe we should look at the habitat of these chinook salmon. How are they reproducing, what is the number and condition of the juvenile salmon, or smolt, coming from the Kenai River? How is freshwater survivability? What effects have years of increasing pressure had on the riparian habitat of these fish? These are all areas that are not being funded or studied on the most popular river in Alaska despite the millions of dollars Alaska is spending on chinook salmon research.

To all the Alaska Legislators and Board of Fish members — we ask that you take the approach that all fisheries are important to the people, communities, culture, and economy of this State and that you will fight for them all in an honorable way. Politics and money are ruining this wonderful, diverse fishery and with it many fisherman's lives. We are fathers, we are grandmothers, we are children, sons and daughters, and we are families. We are a community filled with generations of fishing families that will continue to fight for this way of life because we believe that feeding the world a natural and healthy protein — Wild Salmon — is worth it.

Submitted by Amber Every on behalf of Fair Fishing 907.

--
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Kenai public responds to 2013 dipnet season

Despite improvements, public demands more focus on south beach

Posted: January 7, 2014 - 10:01pm | Updated: January 7, 2014 - 10:03pm

By DAN BALMER

Peninsula Clarion

For the past three years, Kenai resident Bruce Friend has had a front row seat to the frenzy of the Kenai River dipnet fishery and what he sees appalls him.

Friend lives off of Old Cannery Road at the mouth of the river and likened the crowds to a gold rush with a greedy mentality to catch all the fish they can and not bother cleaning up the waste. With thousands of people spread out miles on the beach, access to facilities proved inconvenient in the south beach area.

"My property was used as an outhouse for one month of the year," Friend said. "I am embarrassed for these people and ask for help. The fishery is out of control."

The City of Kenai presented its report on the 2013 dipnet fishery season to the public on Monday and while findings showed vast improvements were made in beach cleanup and fewer citations issued, the problem of catching violators who go over the harvest limit still remains.

A parade of concerned citizens spoke on what issues need to be addressed as the city begins planning for the 2014 dipnet fishery season, which runs from July 10-31. Complaints centered on the city's handling of parking, boating safety and an emphasis in increased enforcement in the south beach area.

"As a sportsman I am embarrassed by what people do," Friend said. "The limits are way too high, nobody needs 150 fish."

The harvest limit for the Kenai dipnet fishery is 25 salmon for a permit holder and an additional 10 salmon for each member of a household, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Garland Blanchard, a fishing guide from Homer, said he came across three cases of people from the Lower 48 that had at least four times the allotted limit of sockeye salmon. He met a guy from Las Vegas on a plane that showed him a picture of 500 pounds of sockeyes he caught from the Kenai River.

"These are non-residents taking fish out of our river," Blanchard said. "We have a serious issue with enforcement."

Kenai police chief Gus Sandahl said he staffed 18 officers, including six as temporary hires, to help with the flood of visitors in July, which was by far the busiest month of calls. Out of 8,313 calls throughout the year, 1,137 were in July with 137 being dipnet specific. Alaska State Troopers worked in coordination with Kenai in dipnet operations, he said. The police reported 12 citations for violating dipnet procedure compared to 106 in 2012. Sandahl credited the city's maintenance department for their efforts in putting out 60 signs on north beach to inform visitors of the city fish waste code.

Bob Frates, Kenai Maintenance Director, said the staff focused cleanup efforts in the evenings and did not see the high volume of fish carcasses left on the beaches as they had seen in previous years.

Kenai Finance Director Terry Eubank said the city generated \$440,185 in revenue as compared to \$438,911 in expenditures, or roughly \$40,000 less than what was budgeted. Still, the numbers showed 2013 was highest revenue season as a result of an increase in fees. The city charged \$20 for parking, \$25 camping fee and \$25 to launch a boat from the city dock.

The city implemented a new cash register computer system, which allowed people to pay fees with credit cards and provided real-time data collection. Eubank said by having customers enter a zip code with the system they were able to determine that just five percent of dipnetters who volunteered that information were from Kenai, 12 percent were from the Kenai Peninsula and 82 percent from other parts of Alaska.

To deal with the traffic congestion and parking problems for this season, the city is considering eliminating on-street parking in Old Town from July 10-31. Kenai city manager Rick Koch said situations in this area were unsafe last year. The city is also looking to eliminate on-street parking along South Forest Drive and eliminate in-park parking without a permit in Municipal Park during the three-week dipnet season.

In doing so the city may need to create more places for people to park. Koch said the city would look into management of parking at both Eric Hansen Scout Park, which he said became evident as the biggest problem area for parking last year, as well as increase access to south beach.

Kenai resident Tom Thompson said parking has to be found for the dipnet crowds.

"It's like putting a quart of water in a one-pint bowl," Thompson said. "It is going to spill over."



Thompson, who is on the Kenai Harbor Commission, said the wakes from all the boats in the Kenai River and Cook Inlet are

Koch said the boat traffic on the Kenai River taking part in the fishery has made for unsafe conditions. The city has proposed a drift-boat only day and is developing a plan to institute a no-wake zone as well as request aid in regulation from the Coast Guard, Koch said.

Despite the city's best efforts, resident Jim Butler said nothing would get better without more help. He said the council should look at how much law enforcement is used to patrol the Alaska State Fair.

"I've seen vehicles on the beaches which demonstrate the gluttony for fish," Butler said. "The agencies throw this mess in our laps. We are woefully under gunned."

Dwight Kramer, who is on the board of directors for the sport fishermen's group Kenai Peninsula Fisherman's Coalition, recommended the city council put together specific dipnet committee to further examine ways to improve the fishery experience.

"There is an obvious need now more than ever," Kramer said. "It behooves the city to get more involved."

Councilman Robert Molloy agreed with the idea to create a dipnet committee and said he would like to bring in more agencies to come together and develop some solutions to the problems.

Friend said it is disappointing how the actions of a minority of participants can show such disrespect in the utilization of a natural resource.

"We are fortunate to live by such a valuable resource," he said. "It would be a shame to let it go to waste."

Reach Dan Balmer at dan.balmer@peninsulaclarion.com.

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From: UCIDA ~ Audrey <info@ucida.org>
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Subject: Kenai Council talks personal use fishery



Kenai Council talks personal use fishery

83 percent of all dipnet fishers report living outside Kenai Peninsula Borough

Posted: November 21, 2013 - 8:25pm | **Updated:** November 22, 2013 - 8:31am



Greg Skinner

Dipnet fishermen leave the North Beach at the mouth of the Kenai River with coolers full of sockeye salmon in July.

By Rashah McChesney
Peninsula Clarion

With the end of the year looming, Kenai Council members set January dates to review its 2013 Dipnet Report and talked about their capital improvement project priorities.

Prior to those meetings, however, council members will hear from the finance department on its Comprehensive Annual Finance Review and were promised a draft version of the dipnet report by early next week.

From a finance perspective, city administration debuted some new accounting of dipnet revenue expenditures alongside information on who was using the busy personal use fishery at the Kenai River.



According to a draft version of the finance department's portion of the 2013 dipnet summary, the city asked participants to give a mailing zip code.

Nearly 93% of all fee paying participants volunteered the information and the resulting data shows Kenai residents to make up about 5% of the total usage of the fishery with 17% being from zip codes in the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

Also new this year, was a separate accounting of dipnet money raised through city fees and how each department spent money to handle the personal use fishery.

Finance director Terry Eubank said he was the primary driver behind the move to separate dipnet money from the city's general fund as accounting for expenditures had been difficult at the end of the year.

Having a new personal use fishery fund code meant department heads did not have to remember which equipment they bought to support the fishery after the season, Eubank said.

The city council adopted a budget projecting \$483,152 in revenue and expenditures for the FY2014 Personal Use Fishery Fund, however an additional \$233,000 was appropriated by the state for capital projects improvements.

Actual revenue was closer to \$440,000 — or about \$43,000 less than projected — and expenditures are projected to leave about \$1200 in the fund.

Several improvements to the fishery were made using capital projects funds including the purchase of a new tractor and rake, an ATV, and Meeks Trail Repair.

Another primarily state-funded expenditure was a \$46,000 installation of permanent power at the Dunes Road, Old Cannery Road and North Beach shacks to accompany a new point of sale system which — among other things — accepts credit cards and also emails Kenai Dispatch for a cash pick-up when the cash level in the fee shack reaches preset limits, according to the draft report.

The city also installed phones at each of the shacks and video cameras to provide the Kenai Police Department views of traffic at the City Dock and North Beach, according to the report.

The city council set a meeting on Jan. 6 at 6p.m. to go over the report.

During his city manager's report, Rick Koch said he had been meeting with people from the state government — including the governor's chief of staff— to discuss capital issues.

"It's an election year," Koch said. "They tend to fluff up capital budgets in election years."

But, while the city may see funding for the upcoming fiscal year, Koch said it did not look as though capital project money was going to be high on the legislature's priority list in the coming years.

"I think the following year it's going to be a bit of a free fall," he said.

One of the city's requests is for the legislature to re-appropriate funding for bluff erosion mitigation, Koch said.



"We have three years of state appropriations for bluff erosion, totalling \$4 million," he said.

However, this year is the first year that money appropriated toward erosion mitigation will hit its five-year limit. Koch said the city administration would stay on top of re-appropriation requests to make sure the city was still able to spend the money once a bluff erosion project was ready to move forward.

Reach Rashah McChesney at rashah.mcchesney@peninsulaclarion.com

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Alaska Dispatch

News and voices from the Last Frontier

Published on *Alaska Dispatch* (<http://www.alaskadispatch.com>)

[Home](#) > In dip net drama, there's more than one side to the story

[Craig Medred](#) ^[1]

January 12, 2014

Main Image:

[Kenai River Dipnetting 2013: kenai dipnetting 2013 -11](#) ^[2]

Too many Kenai River dip-netters are slobs, pigs, miscreants, call them what you want. There is no debating this. The evidence is obvious to anyone who visits the mouth of the river during the dip netting season in July.

And many in the community of Kenai are once more upset.

When the Kenai City Council held a hearing to discuss the dip net fishery at the start of the month, "a parade of concerned citizens spoke on what issues need to be addressed," reported the [Peninsula Clarion](#) ^[3], the local newspaper for the Kenai-Soldotna area.

The usual complaints were heard: Dip-netters litter, leave human waste on the beach, drive their boats like lunatics upriver from the mouth where dip netting is legal from boats, and seemingly worst of all, catch more fish than the limit allows.

Or, in the case of nonresidents, catch fish they are not allowed. By law, personal-use dip netting is limited to Alaska residents. It's the urban Alaska form of what is elsewhere in the state called "subsistence fishing."

The only difference here is that the drying-rack-loading and freezer-filling subsistence fisheries get a priority over commercial fishing while the personal-use fisheries don't.

What makes this especially worthy of note is that any discussion of the Kenai dip net fishery plays out against the backdrop of the Cook Inlet commercial fishery. Kenai-based commercial fishermen, a fair number of whom live in the area, don't like the dip-netters, a large number of whom descend on the river from Anchorage, catching what the members of the commercial fishery consider "their" fish.

As a result, there are always folks in the Kenai area trying to stir the political pot of anguish about the dip net fishery.

"Garland Blanchard, a fishing guide from Homer, said he came across three cases of people from the Lower 48 that had at least four times the allotted limit of sockeye salmon. He met a guy from Las Vegas on a plane that showed him a picture of 500 pounds of sockeyes he caught from the Kenai River," the Clarion reported.

"These are nonresidents taking fish out of our river,' Blanchard said. 'We have a serious issue with enforcement.'"



Blanchard might well be doing some guiding these days; many in the state do. But back in 2008, when the New York Times [4] was writing about Alaskans pocketing hefty checks from the Exxon Valdez oil spill settlement, he was a "third-generation (commercial) fisherman." And state records [5] show him and his boat registered among the state's "Fish Processors and Buyers" in recent years.

So when Blanchard starts talking about over-harvest, there is some reason to wonder whether it is real or propaganda. Much the same can be said of much of the catch information tossed about as gossip.

There are, no doubt, people fishing illegally. There are, without question, people catching more than the liberal limit of 25 fish per permit holder with an extra 10 for each member of the family. Arguably worse, though, are the many dip-netters who catch more salmon than they can eat over the course of the winter.

If, as an Alaskan, you know many dip-netters, you probably know someone who fits this category. They are overcome by the bloodlust along the Kenai in July, and they net and smack dead 25 or 35 or 55 fish when all their family is likely to eat is 20. Too many frozen Kenai River sockeye salmon go to the landfill in June as the July opening of the fishery nears.

This should not happen. Properly cared for, vacuum packed and frozen, these fish will keep at least a year. At worst, the state's food banks should be getting big contributions come summertime. Or maybe some Alaska dog mushers. Huskies don't care if salmon are a little freezer-burned. They're still happy to have a high-protein, high-fat meal.

But that said, let's get real here. Even if some non-resident dip netted 500 pounds of sockeye, it would take him days. A commercial drift gill netter could illegally harvest that and more in one set of a net outside fishing boundaries. So when it comes to enforcement, it's obvious where state efforts need to be directed.

The commercial fisheries have proven they can choke off the entire run of fish to the Kenai. The dip-netters have demonstrated that even when they're going at it full bore, they can't check the run of sockeye into the river. No matter what happened in the dip net fishery last summer, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported a sockeye escapement of nearly 1.4 million in the river last year.

Escapement is the number of fish getting past first the commercial fishery and then the dip net fishery to find their way toward the spawning grounds. The upper goal for the Kenai return is 1.2 million of these fish. Commercial fishermen regularly fret about overescapement -- escapement in excess of 1.2 million fish -- potentially lowering future returns.

If you buy that argument, an argument much debated in scientific circles, we shouldn't be worrying about nonresidents catching "our" fish, we should be encouraging them to catch fish to help get the escapement down to that 1.2 million cap.

Of course, we're never going to do that -- none of us -- because we're Alaskans and on one thing we can agree: You need to spend at least one winter here to officially qualify. That's why, unlike other states, there's a requirement you live in the state without leaving



for one full calendar year before you can legally obtain a resident sport fishing license or dip netting permit.

If you want to catch a whole lot of fish without doing this, you must become a commercial fisherman. There is no similar residency requirement on commercial fishing permits. You need not live here for a year ever. You can fly in from the Lower 48, catch your fish every summer, and retreat to America in the fall. Many, especially in the state's most valuable fisheries, do.

The good thing that can be said about them is that before leaving they do deliver their fish to local processors and in that way boost the Alaska economy. Whether they boost it more than that nonresident bandit from Las Vegas, real or imagined, flying north on a commercial airline, spending money to stay in Alaska until he catches his fish, and flying out, who knows?

Whichever the case, the latter guy is breaking the law, and he should be caught and punished. Dip-netters could help their cause greatly by paying attention when they're on the river, chatting up the people next to them, and reporting suspicious fishermen to the authorities.

Even more than that, though, dip-netters could help their case by cleaning up their act. Most of the complaints about litter, filth and shoddy seamanship have merit. Too many dip-netters fail to treat with proper respect not only the fish but their environment.

Some of these dip-netters are just ignorant. Some can't even seem to figure out you shouldn't pitch a tent in the middle of the main access route to the beach. But some are willful in their disregard for everything but getting the fish they want.

Bruce Friend, who owns property near the mouth of the river, "likened the crowds to a gold rush with a greedy mentality to catch all the fish they can and not bother cleaning up the waste," the Clarion reported. That description is in many ways too close to the truth.

Dip-netters might take note, because if they don't start cleaning up their act, someone will clean it up for them. And fixing the problems here shouldn't be that hard. The number of responsible, well-behaved dip-netters vastly outnumbers the minority of miscreants. Improvement is largely just a matter of the former stepping up and saying to the latter: "Knock it off! What you're doing could screw this up for everyone."

The views expressed here are the writer's own and are not necessarily endorsed by Alaska Dispatch. Contact Craig Medred at craig@alaskadispatch.com [6].

Source URL: <http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/20140112/dip-net-drama-theres-more-one-side-story>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.alaskadispatch.com/authors/677842>
- [2] <http://www.alaskadispatch.com/image/kenai-river-dipnetting-2013-kenai-dipnetting-2013-11>
- [3] <http://peninsulaclarion.com/news/2014-01-07/kenai-public-responds-to-2013-dip-net-season>
- [4] http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/26/world/americas/26iht-alaska.4.14027236.html?_r=0
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OPINION

COMPASS: *Points of view from the community*

Salmon policies needed that all can share

By PAUL DALE

Alaska's wild salmon runs are part of what makes our state and community distinctive. They differentiate us from almost all other coastal regions in the world. Fishing — whether sport, commercial, subsistence or personal use — is part of our heritage.

The key to sustaining a natural resource like salmon is regulatory stability in terms of business planning and long-term investment. The absence of that is a significant problem in Cook Inlet, particularly in the Kenai River, because of salmon allocation issues that have been loudly debated for the past several years. With the past few seasons of poor king salmon returns, the intensity of the debate has grown. Last year, Kenai River sport fishermen, along with east-side setnet fishermen, were closed down to preserve king salmon for spawning.

Without doubt, we are in a period of low abundance of king salmon in several Alaska rivers. However, the Kenai River king fishery is not at the risk or in the crisis that high-profile sport fishers would like us to believe. Though king numbers are low, late-run, post-season analysis by the Department of Fish and Game showed that the 2012 closures on the Kenai River were unnecessary and were the result of previously misunderstood salmon counting and run-timing issues. In fact, late-run Kenai River king salmon escapement goals have been met in each of the last 25 years, and exceeded in nine of the last 10 years.

Are the king salmon smaller? Yes, but for a variety of reasons, including an overcapitalized, in-river, guided, professional sport fish industry that systematically targets large king salmon. The absence of trophy kings may not correlate directly with a smaller run.



However, the Kenai River king fishery is not at the risk or in the crisis that high-profile sport fishers would like us to believe.



Daily News archive 2009

To create long-term solutions to the allocation dispute, the Alaska Salmon Alliance is talking with the Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Kenai River Sportfishing Association. We are reaching out to personal-use fishing organizations. The salmon alliance was created in 2011 and is committed to pushing for scientifically based fishery management, geared toward preserving — for all users — Alaska's unique salmon culture.

We are not a part of the lawsuit filed by the Cook Inlet Fisherman's Fund. We want compromise not contention. The salmon alliance is hoping for meaningful dialogue throughout the fall and winter. We'd like to build a consensus on some of the king management issues and then share that with Alaska's Fish Board and state resource development managers, as well as the Alaska Legislature. All user groups benefit from a consistent, coherent policy that protects salmon stocks for today and tomorrow.

In hopes of providing more information on the value of the commercial fishing industry, the alliance funded a northern economics study to identify the

financial effect of the commercial Cook Inlet salmon fishery. We weren't sure what we would find, but the report tells a positive economic story.

The accumulated harvest value between 1980 and 2011 was \$2.15 billion (in 2012 dollars). In 2011, the Cook Inlet salmon fishery was larger than all salmon fisheries

in the Lower 48 combined, created more than 5,000 Alaska jobs and added \$102 million in direct value to the Alaska economy. The full report is available on our Web site at www.alaskasalmonalliance.org/article.

The value of this regional industry goes well beyond dollars and cents. It grows our communities. The Cook Inlet salmon fishery creates an opportunity for Alaskans to learn a trade that is handed down from generation to generation, family to family.

Salmon and Alaska are inextricably linked. Whether you wet a line with a fly, bait or spinner, put a net in the river, or set or drift a net in saltwater, we need policies that allow this unique resource to be shared by all and sustained for coming centuries. That's the goal we're working toward.

Paul Dale has been a commercial fisherman all his adult life. He is president of the Alaska Salmon Alliance. He and his wife Brenda own Snug Harbor Seafoods. He has served on the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly and is a former Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute expert board member.

Fish Facts.



PC 199
22 of 60

SHARED HARVEST GROWS MULTI-USE COOK INLET SALMON FISHERY

7/26/13
Effective mixed stock management of king and sockeye salmon in Cook Inlet requires simultaneous harvests. This provides positive economic and social benefits for thousands of Alaska commercial and personal use fishing families.

We are in a period of low abundance of king salmon. Though the numbers are down, late run Kenai River king salmon escapement goals have been met in each of the last twenty-five years, and exceeded escapement goals in 17 of those years.*

Last year, sport and commercial fishers were devastated when king salmon conservation concerns forced the closure of the Kenai River. Post-season analysis showed that those closures were unnecessary, and by a wide margin. They were the result of previously misunderstood counting and run timing issues.

Mixed stock management, if done properly, can improve the shared harvest of salmon in Cook Inlet, particularly if the concept of "fishing on abundance" is employed on a routine basis.

"Fishing on abundance" works like this: as massive schools of sockeye move toward the rivers, kings are pushed away from the beaches. Therefore, large harvests of sockeye can occur with minimal impact on kings.

If commercial and sport users cooperate and let the principle of "fishing on abundance" do its work, harvests can be more abundant for all users.

Monday, July 15 was an example of the success of "fishing on abundance." Commercial drift and set-netters in Cook Inlet harvested 775,000 sockeye and 377 kings. Of those 377 kings, not all were bound for the Kenai river, and only 132 would likely have been 29 inches or larger, as counted by DIDSON sonar, and valued by Kenai River sportfishers.*



We want to thank the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for executing a good example of mixed stock management and "fishing on abundance" on July 15th, and we are looking forward to more of it. It helps create jobs and a better economy for our state.

This ad is paid for by the Alaska Salmon Alliance.



Alaska Salmon Alliance

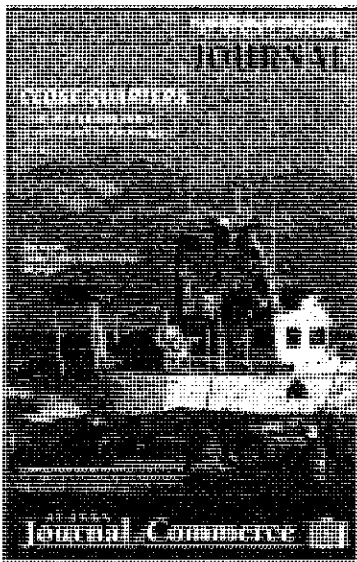
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Events Calendar

"Make it Monday" forum - Solutions for Cook Inlet Salmon Management

Date: October 28, 2013 Time: 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM



Courtesy of Alaska Journal of Commerce



Event Description

Hannah Harrison, environmental and development consultant, will moderate a panel discussion focusing on solutions for future Cook Inlet salmon returns and fisheries management.

*Panel: **Ricky Gease**, Kenai Sports Fishing Association; **Rod Arno**, executive director of the Alaska Outdoor Council; **Paul Dale** with the Alaska Salmon Alliance; and **Dwight Kramer**, Cook Inlet Task Force public stakeholder representative*

Deadline to RSVP is 5 p.m. Friday.

Members: \$23 (\$26 at door)
Member Table: \$184 (table for 8, in advance only)
Non-Members: \$31
Students: \$25

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You are invited to attend

Alaska Salmon Alliance Open House Forum

Monday, October 28th from 6-8:30pm

at the BP Energy Center

900 E. Benson Blvd, Anchorage

Driving directions: from New Seward Hwy, turn right in BP's SW entrance. Turn right at first stop sign into parking lot. Follow footpath to entrance.

Eastbound on Benson Blvd: Turn right into BP's main entrance. Turn right and follow access road to 4-way stop. Continue through intersection into parking lot. Follow footpath to entrance.

Tuesday, October 29th from 6-8:30pm

at the Palmer Train Depot

610 S. Valley Way, Palmer

Join us for a facilitated discussion about Cook Inlet salmon fisheries.

We will be looking to hear from all user groups and gear types and identify ways we can collectively make our fisheries more sustainable for future generations.

These events are free and open to the public.

Light refreshments will be served.



AMA Congress will get right to those critically important issues — after they return on a monthlong August vacation, which ir elected representatives need simply to vitalize themselves after being in session for a brutal 18 days after their July 4th vacation.

The Senate especially will need the battery recharging time so that it can roll up its sleeves for toil before taking the rest of the year off starting Nov. 8. How these people bear up under the unremitting burden of showing up for work every now and then is anybody's guess.

It seems that even when the Senate and House do punch their time clocks, less gets accomplished than Little Ball confronted by a chocolate candy assembly line.

As the Washington monthly pointed out a few months ago, if the preceding 112th Congress was regarded as the least productive legislative session in the history of the republic, with only 13 laws passed over a two-year period, the 113th Congress is on pace to offer a thinner resume than that of Otis, Mayberry's town drunk.

As of the end of July, Congress had passed 15 bills that actually made it into law, including approving a chief financial officer for the District of Columbia, an anti-generic drug act, the Hurricane Sandy relief bill after great Category 5 puffery, and a measure allowing boating access around Kansas in Kentucky. The Continental Congress this was not.

There was one other bill that made its way through Congress to President Obama's desk for signing — a measure setting an interest cap on federally subsidized student loans. The initiative could have been addressed in early July instead of causing untraced anxiety for millions of students

COMPASS: Other points of view Kenai fishing groups must work together

AAV 8/6/13

By KARL KIRCHER

Dan Coffey's recent compass piece, "Act now or we will lose the Kenai River kings (July 24)" once again illustrates this former Alaska Board of Fisheries chairman's bias toward the commercialized sport fisheries on the Kenai River, as well as his willingness to twist/omit facts in pursuit of marginalizing the historic setnet fishery on the Kenai Peninsula to maximize in-river participation. Coffey lists ocean survival, high-seas trawlers, setnetters, marginal productivity, and "there may be others" as reasons for the decline of Kenai River kings.

To not even include the in-river, commercialized king salmon sport fishery in a conversation regarding the protection of Kenai River king salmon stocks is disingenuous. This fishery takes place in the main stem of the Kenai River (mentioned as a spawning area by Mr. Coffey) and for decades has practiced hook-and-release fishing, taking the biggest kings out of the spawning population.

This fishery, along with setnetters, has borne the brunt of Alaska Department of Fish and Game conservation measures over the last two seasons designed to ensure adequate king salmon escapement. It's unlikely that either of these fisheries, setnetters or in-river users, is responsible for the dramatic decline in king salmon stocks as this is a phenomenon happening in river systems all across the state. This certainly seems to point to a problem in the ocean environment.

While these groups may not have caused the problem, the fact that they are significant harvesters of the resource means they both should be included in the dialogue regarding conservation efforts. Mr. Coffey's effort to advance his agenda by pitting one side against the other when we all should be working together is not productive.



Photo courtesy KARL KIRCHER

Karl Kircher, right, and his son Thomas work a Cook Inlet setnet site.

Mr. Coffey did write about conservative management of the in-river sport fishery but alluded that this is not the case with setnet fishermen because they received 12 additional hours of fishing time a week, "roughly, through emergency orders by Fish and Game."

In fact, at the time of his writing the east side of Cook Inlet setnet beaches had averaged only 6.2 hours a week of extra time (24 extra hours are allowed by regulation) in the five weeks the season had been opened. All told, setnetters had only fished 30.2 hours a week. All other emergency orders limited set-

Setnetters, guides, business owners and sport fishermen will have to genuinely contribute to the upcoming dialogue if we are to be successful in preserving this resource and our livelihoods.

net fishing to a 600-foot-wide swath of beach in the mouth of the Kaslof River.

In addition, setnetters had also already been denied extra fishing time when surplus sockeye salmon were plentiful on the beaches in order to conserve Kenai king salmon. They have now lost even regularly scheduled openings for king salmon conservation. There is no doubt setnetters have suffered significantly alongside in-river users.

Management of Kenai River king salmon will be up for review at this winter's Alaska Board of Fisheries meetings. All user groups are currently suffering from the decline of king salmon stocks. Those of us who live here and utilize this resource, including setnetters, guides, business owners and sport fishermen, will have to genuinely contribute to the upcoming dialogue if we are to be successful in preserving this resource and our livelihoods. We should also demand that we do not return to the tainted Board of Fisheries process that allowed a person with Mr. Coffey's obvious bias to become the chairman.

Karl Kircher has been a setnetter on the Kenai Peninsula for 33 years, is a former executive director of the Kenai Board of Fisheries Association and currently operates in operation with his wife and three grown children.

KIRK

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8/6/2013



Letters to the Editor

Facts and Cooperation Equal Cook Inlet Salmon for all User Groups

We all value the resource. Salmon fishing, one way or another, is how many of us have grown up in Alaska. It is a part of our history and our tie to our home.

As the debate over king salmon escapement, and how best to protect the fishery escalates, it is imperative to keep the focus on facts and strong future runs – in a cooperative fashion. The desire to allow the dialogue to devolve into emotion and anecdote is powerful. However, to assure that all users in the Cook Inlet salmon fishery continue to have access to these amazing resources, it is imperative we work to find common ground.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has said that while king salmon returns are low this year, they are not in jeopardy. In fact the most recent counts indicate that we are on track to making escapement. This historic, valuable, unique run is not going away. I want to underscore that late run Kenai River king salmon escapement goals have been met in each of the last twenty-five years and were over escaped in nine of the last ten years. The recent closures were to assure the escapement goal would be met once again, nothing more.

It is hurtful and unfair when people accuse Cook Inlet commercial setnet and driftnet fishers of purposefully taking king salmon, or wanting to do away with the fishery. In fact, the opposite is true. The Cook Inlet commercial salmon fishers have every reason to want to see the king salmon sport fishery thrive.

The economic impact of both sport and commercial fishing in Cook Inlet is tremendously valuable. There should be no debate about choosing one over the other.

The commercial industry creates 5000 jobs and more than \$200 million in economic value to Cook Inlet communities. These are mostly Alaska jobs created by mostly Alaska owned permits that are handed down from generation to generation.

There is significant economic impact from king fishing guides and a rich history of Alaska sport fishing guides catching the mighty king salmon.

The Alaska Salmon Alliance is not supportive of the lawsuit filed by some Cook Inlet Commercial Fishers and is focused on finding common ground through science-based resource management. With cooperation, we know the king and red salmon, commercial and sport fisheries can provide a continuing bounty for all users.

**Arni Thomson, Executive Director
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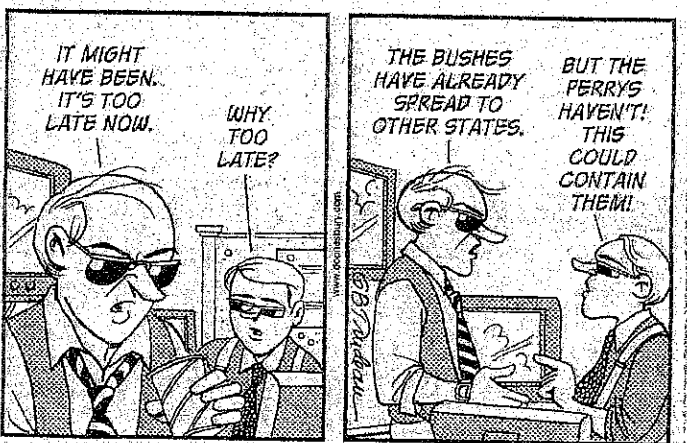
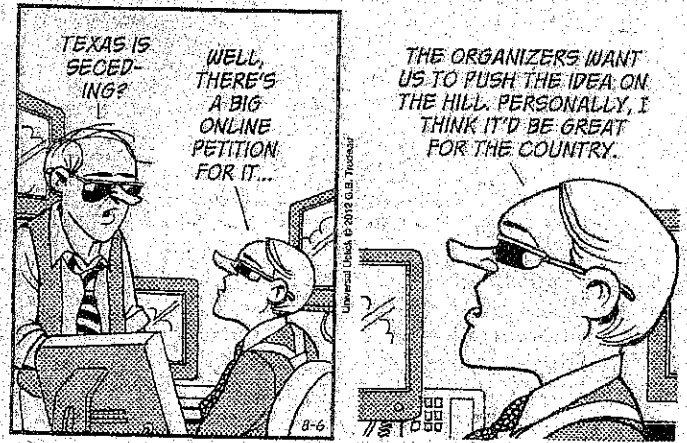
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Doonesbury Flashback

By GARRY TRUDEAU





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GUEST COMMENTARY: Solution needed for Cook Inlet salmon dilemma

ARNI THOMSON, ALASKA SALMON ALLIANCE

The Anchorage/MatSu region is the major population center in Alaska and the fastest growing area in Alaska. Cook Inlet, an integral part of the region, separates two of Alaska's major river systems, the Kenai River watershed, on the Kenai Peninsula and the Susitna River watershed, adjacent to Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley.

This area is also unique in that it is centrally located on the only major paved highway system in Alaska, and Alaskans treasure their right to get out and fish for "their salmon" in the summer months.

Presently, 54 percent of the State's total population of 722,000 people is located in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough. The Mat-Su Borough has been experiencing phenomenal growth, with the population having increased 50 percent in the past 10 years, from 60,000 to 91,000 people, and it is projected to double again in the next decade. A major portion of all statewide sport anglers and personal-use fishermen reportedly fish for salmon in upper Cook Inlet.

The salmon of Cook Inlet also support a traditional commercial fishery that has been sustainably operating for over 130 years. A stable number of commercial fishing permit holders (most of whom are year-round residents), the companies that process the fish, and all of the supporting businesses combine to contribute a critical portion of the economy of the Kenai Peninsula and Southcentral Alaska.

Some representatives of the sport angling community have spent years framing a "war" between the commercial fishery and the guide/charter businesses and recreational users. It is in everyone's best interest to resolve the conflict with long-term solutions.

Last year, Kenai River Late Run King salmon returns were late and some Kenai in-river sport and charter fishermen were closed down to preserve king salmon for spawning escapement, along with the Eastside Set Net fishermen, or ESSN, who fish along the beaches on the Eastside of the Inlet.

Post-season analysis showed that the 2012 closures on the Kenai were unnecessary and were the result of previously misunderstood counting and run timing issues. In addition, Mat-Su drainage sport and charter fishermen also suffered from closures.

As a result, the Alaska Board of Fisheries sanctioned a King salmon task force this winter involving major stakeholders, although a meaningful dialogue is in progress, few consensus recommendations have surfaced.

In search of solutions the following concepts need to be considered:

- There is a wealth of new information in the form of genetic studies analyzing the makeup of the ESSN king salmon catch. Genetic stock analysis indicates the commercial fishermen are not the problem they were long thought to be, and that they harvest only 13 percent of the catch, a significant new development in the time-worn debate. Additional genetic studies focused on Cook Inlet silvers need to be initiated.
- A new Kenai River Late Run King salmon study report documents that these stocks do not show a long-term pattern of decline. This new data shows no sign that Kenai Kings are overexploited, with an exploitation rate for all user groups of just under 40 percent. The conclusion from last year's fisheries, is that there was not a problem in terms of king salmon abundance, and uniform agreement that ADFG needs to develop a state of the art integrated sonar and weir system for



counting fish and to devise a daily reporting system for Kings coming into the Kenai River. Kenai River Late Run Chinook have met their escapement goal for the past 26 years.

- There are serious management conflicts between Sockeye and Chinook salmon management. Both plans direct ADFG to meet escapement goals for sustained yield management. These conflicts should be reviewed.
- Sockeye salmon provide for the needs of a much larger number of users than Chinook salmon. Cook Inlet Sockeye is the fish that drives the Kenai Peninsula economy and benefits most Alaskans. For the benefit of all user groups, ADFG needs to manage the sockeye runs for the maximum sustained yield. The commercial sector needs regulatory stability to conduct and plan business for the future. Regulatory changes and management decisions have far-reaching impacts and must be designed using the best available science. This is essential for the long-term health of the resource and the economies that are built around harvesting that resource.
- In addition, there are valid concerns about the sustainability of certain salmon stocks in northern Cook Inlet. A growing number of scientists agree the spread of Northern Pike and their predation on juvenile salmon is a huge threat to most salmon stocks in the Mat-Su drainage. ADFG needs to get more proactive in dealing with that problem and needs to help with funds for seasonal "notching" of beaver dams that are impeding salmon passage.

These are the facts that all the residents in the Cook Inlet basin will have to deal with if we want to preserve our "salmon culture." Working together will greatly increase our ability to succeed.

Ami Thomson is the Executive Director of the Alaska Salmon Alliance.



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EDITORIAL: Scapegoating Webster is a setback for Cook Inlet

ANDREW JENSEN MANAGING EDITOR

On April 8, a joint session of the Alaska Legislature confirmed 87 of 88 appointments put forth by Gov. Sean Parnell and rejected a third term for Board of Fisheries member Vince Webster by a single vote.

Not that relations between commercial and sport stakeholders in Cook Inlet weren't frosty prior to the vote, but the campaign waged against Bristol Bay setnetter Webster by the Kenai River Sportfishing Association is yet another chill to any hope of thawing the perpetual conflict now exacerbated by low returns of Kenai River kings.

Never mind that the Board of Fisheries vote was 7-0 to adopt a new escapement goal range put forth by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for Kenai kings based on new sonar counters, or that the same full board unanimously refused to adopt any new management measures at its statewide meeting in late March.

In the days leading up to the vote on Parnell's nominations, KRSA put out action alerts urging its supporters to call legislators to oppose Webster, blaming him for the failure of the Upper Cook Inlet Task Force to reach consensus on new management measures and for the adoption of the escapement goal KRSA did not support.

Again, never mind that board member Tom Kluberton of Talkeetna co-chaired the task force along with Webster, or that Fairbanks sport guide Reed Morisky, who KRSA backed for the board earlier this year when Bill Brown of Juneau resigned before his term was up, also voted for the ADFG recommendation.

It really makes no sense to allege Webster — who as a commercial fisherman is in the minority on the board — is some kind of diabolical mastermind able to lead the other six members around by the nose all the while acting in bad faith and conspiring with some 16 or so ADFG scientists to come up with a questionable escapement goal.

KRSA directed no blame at any other members — Kluberton and Morisky were confirmed easily April 8 — or at board chairman Karl Johnstone, who is also strongly backed by the powerful sportfishing lobby group.

The thought here is that Parnell said it best in a statement: "It is disappointing, discouraging and disheartening when bad information or politics prevent a qualified Alaskan from serving our state."

It most certainly is, and the 30 legislators gullible or susceptible enough to fall for KRSA's talking points about Webster should take a hard look at the composition of the Board of Fisheries they just created with just one member from Southeast — commercial fisherman John Jensen from Petersburg (no relation to this writer) — and nobody from Alaska's best-known fishery in Bristol Bay.

The current composition of the board is now tremendously out of whack with four members bearing the KRSA stamp of approval and just two — Jensen and Sue Jeffery of Kodiak — with commercial fishing experience.

Despite all the clamor from legislators alleging an ADFG bias in favor of commercial fishing, Cook Inlet setnetters — who lost out on more than 90 percent of their typical harvest due to king salmon conservation closures in 2012 — have continually seen their fishing time and opportunity eroded by management decisions by the board to put additional kings as well as sockeyes into the rivers.



After the 2011 regular Cook Inlet board meeting, Johnstone said the allocative decisions pushed by KRSA made at that meeting, including the shift in harvest away from setnetters to the drift fleet and to in-river users, were worth, "millions of dollars" in some cases.

With that kind of money at stake, it is ridiculous to hold Webster accountable for the failure of a task force with no regulatory authority to broker a compromise between users with hardened positions, especially when the KRSA proposal was to restrict setnetters to just two, 12-hour fishing periods per week from July 1 to Aug. 10 when king salmon escapement is projected to be as high as 22,000 fish.

KRSA might as well hold Moses responsible for not working things out between the Egyptians and the Jews.

The East Side setnetters have fished the Inlet for a century, legally harvesting and selling king salmon all the while. That's what made an amendment offered up by Rep. Bill Stoltze, R-Chugiak, to a House resolution such a poison pill and illustrative of the sort of misinformation that makes difficult fisheries decisions nearly impossible.

In his amendment to a resolution intended for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council requesting reductions in Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska king salmon bycatch, Stoltze singled out the Cook Inlet setnetters as having king salmon "bycatch" in their fishery.

To be clear: When a Cook Inlet setnetter catches a king, that is a legal harvest. When a pollock trawler catches a king, that is a prohibited species catch, a.k.a. bycatch.

Calling king salmon harvest by setnetters bycatch is not only technically wrong, it is, frankly, offensive to fishermen who've been setting their nets at the same sites for generations without a negative impact on Cook Inlet kings.

Parnell will have to make another appointment to the board to fill Webster's seat, and based on standard practice he will have to nominate someone from the commercial sector.

At this point, finding a good candidate to fill the seat may be difficult when they could be subjected to the same sort of unfair and personal attacks leveled against Webster for the privilege of sitting on a board where they are in a minority to KRSA-backed members who are held to a different level of accountability.

Maybe that's what the Kenai River Sportfishing Association is really after.

Andrew Jensen can be reached at andrew.jensen@alaskajournal.com.



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Sport group sinks Gov's Board of Fisheries nomination

BOB TKACZ FOR THE JOURNAL

JUNEAU — Following an intense lobbying campaign by the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, Anchorage and upper Railbelt Republicans led the legislature's rejection of the reappointment of two-term Board of Fisheries member Claude "Vince" Webster on April 8.

KRSA announced its opposition to Webster at his April 1 Senate Resources Committee meeting. KRSA Executive Director Ricky Gease and constant companion Reuben Hanke, a Kenai River fishing guide, were seen through the rest of the week visiting lawmakers' offices.

Neither is a registered lobbyist and Rep. Peggy Wilson, a Wrangell Republican and Webster supporter, said after the joint confirmation session she was considering filing a complaint against them for lobbying beyond the 10-hour limit on unregistered lobbyists.

[Clarification: Reuben Hanke is not listed in the 2013 registered lobbyist directory. Hanke is classified as a "representational lobbyist" by Kenai River Sportfishing Association and is not required to file as a "registered lobbyist." The difference between a representational lobbyist and a registered lobbyist is that representational lobbyists may only be compensated for travel expenses. Representational lobbyists are also not subject to the 10-hour limit on lobbying for unregistered lobbyists. KRSA Executive Director Ricky Gease may not exceed the 10-hour limit. In a statement to the Journal after publication, Gease said he had not exceeded the 10-hour limit. Gease and KRSA Board Chairman Eldon Mulder declined to be interviewed by Tkacz in the preparation of this article.]

Several lawmakers said before the 29-30 vote, that they were sending a message to ADFG Commissioner Cora Campbell and her biologists.

"In many cases it was a vote against the Department of Fish and Game and some of the governor's appointees. Not just Board of Fish appointees but department staff and Commissioner Campbell," said Chugiak Republican Rep. Bill Stoltze, who led the attack against Webster during the annual joint House floor session.

In a hearing last week Stoltze said it was a "no-brainer" that ADFG is biased in favor of the seafood industry.

"The constituency I represent are highly frustrated by the lack of fish and the quality of fishing. They're essentially saying, 'lets deliver a message to people that are involved in the whole fishery process, to include nomination, that we want the fish to come first,'" said Senate President Charlie Huggins of Wasilla.

Webster was the only one of 88 board and commission appointees who was not confirmed. He is also the only one of three board appointees who is a commercial fisherman. Reappointees Tom Kluberton, a Talkeetna lodge owner, and Reed Morisky, a new appointee and Fairbanks fishing guide, were confirmed without objection.

Webster, a Bristol Bay set and gillnet fisherman, completes his term on the board June 30.

Objections were voiced during the session to the confirmations of Game Board reappointees Peter Probasco and Nathan Turner, former Anchorage police chief Mark Mew to the Alaska Police Standards Council and Gloria O'Neill to the University of Alaska Anchorage board of regents. After lawmakers discussed their concerns they withdrew their objections and none cast opposition votes.



In Webster's case, 19 of the 21 opposing House votes and six of nine in the Senate came from Anchorage, Mat-Su and Fairbanks area Republicans.

"It is disappointing, discouraging and disheartening when bad information or politics prevent a qualified Alaskan from serving our state," Parnell said in a prepared statement.

Neither the governor's office nor commercial fishing organizations backing Webster appeared to realize the extent of the opposition, and effort, against Webster. Heather Brakes, the governor's legislative liaison and Jason Hooley, director of boards and commissions, began talking to lawmakers on April 4, the date KRSA sent the first of two "IMMEDIATE CALL TO ACTION" emails were sent to supporters urging them to contact their representatives and senators.

Mike Nizich, the governor's chief of staff, sent every legislator an email and some said he contacted them personally.

Nizich's letter listed three allegations against Webster, calling them "misleading, incomplete and in some cases inaccurate statements about Webster's work on the board.

"His confirmation should not be blocked due to misinformation," Nizich's letter concluded.

The three complaints, as described by Nizich, were that Webster "is supposedly singlehandedly responsible for the new late-run Kenai River chinook escapement goal (and) allegedly reframed" the debate on the Kenai chinook management plan "to benefit setnetters at the expense of all other user groups and escapement" and that he "allegedly drives a personal agenda through unseemly means."

"The Governor never would have re-appointed him had if he believed such allegations were true," Nizich wrote.

Nonetheless, Stoltze, among others, leveled those same points in their floor comments. Webster's supporters noted that state law assigns the task of identifying the appropriate escapement range to ADFG and that the board is required to adopt the department's recommendation.

Chickaloon Rep. Eric Feige, the only Interior Republican in the House who voted to confirm Webster, noted that the board adopted the new escapement range on a 7-0 vote, obviously including Reed Morisky and Tom Kluberton, the other board appointees who were being confirmed.

Feige also said of his visit from KRSA, "I kind of felt like I was being intimidated to change my vote."

"I don't think anybody agrees to any of the character assassination that has been made of Mr. Webster," said Anchorage Rep. Les Gara, one of six Democrats, three from each body, voting against Webster.

Gara also noted his displeasure with ADFG calling it, "a department, in many circumstances, that has erred on the side of low escapement."

The term "escapement" refers to the number of salmon needed to reach their spawning beds to assure sustainability of the stock. Lowering escapement, which is expressed as a range, generally means harvest levels are higher.

Tkacz is a correspondent for the Journal based in Juneau. He can be reached at fishlawsbob@gmail.com.

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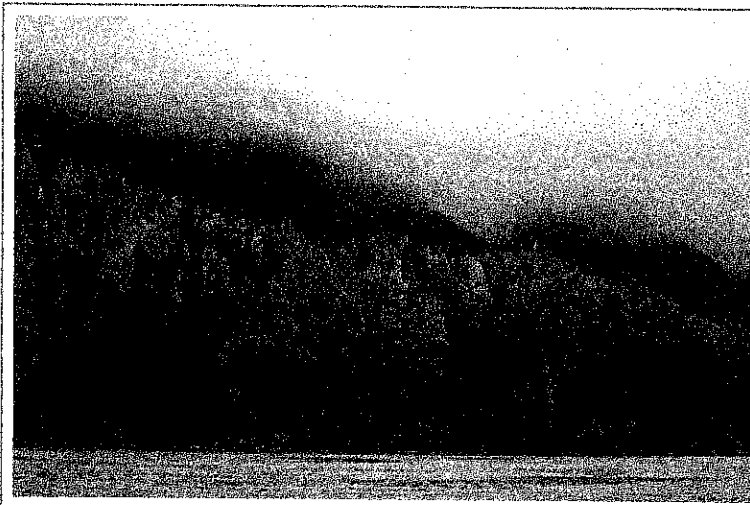
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Kenai River group should focus on river, not Cook Inlet setnetters

Todd Smith | April 29, 2013

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OPINION: A healthy Kenai River needs healthy limits, along with creative solutions. But the influential Kenai River Sportfishing Association is too busy trying to destroy Cook Inlet setnetters and dominate statewide fisheries policy to address these issues.

Stephen Nowers photo

The executive director of Kenai River Sportfishing Association (KRSA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit “dedicated to ensuring the sustainability of the world's premier sportsfishing river,” recently wrote an editorial in which he appropriately gave his organization credit for leading the successful charge to block the legislative confirmation of Vince Webster to the Alaska Board of Fisheries. In a swift and organized character assassination, KRSA spread false and misleading information vilifying Mr. Webster. In their attack, they blamed Mr. Webster for (among other things) the Board of Fish's unanimous 7-0 decision to codify the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADFG) new scientifically established and defensible escapement goal for Kenai River Late Run Kings, something that Board of Fish Chair Karl Johnston stated was a “necessity.”

While KRSA claims that their “educational” activities against Mr. Webster were “fact-based and truthful,” many disagree. In fact, even Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell stated that, “It is disappointing, discouraging, and disheartening when bad information or politics prevent a qualified Alaskan from serving our state.”

As a third-generation Alaskan and fishermen, I am proud of Alaska's fisheries and feel the success of our fisheries benefits everyone. Recent poor returns of king salmon have been a statewide issue, affecting many of us greatly. As a Cook Inlet setnetter and member of a community that depends on a diverse and healthy fishery, I can honestly say that many of my friends, family and neighbors were among some of the



hardest hit. After a devastating season, it was very encouraging to get a chance to participate in the public process of the Upper Cook Inlet King Salmon Task Force, led by Board of Fish members Mr. Webster and Mr. Kluberton. It was through this task force that new and enlightening data was published by ADFG that shaped the discussion of Kenai River late-run kings.

While KRSA did manage to suggest a conspiracy between ADFG and the relatively small and politically disorganized group of Cook Inlet eastside setnetters, they left out some very important facts released in these new department reports. First, a historic run reconstruction of Kenai River late-run kings using independent and historically accurate data showed that we have exceeded current escapement goals for these fish 15 of the last 26 years. ADFG indicated in a recent report to the Board of Fish that current below-average Kenai late-run king returns are likely a product of low ocean productivity combined with past years of chronic and substantial overescapement.

ADFG data also indicates this stock shows no signs of overharvest. According to biologists, the relatively low total combined exploitation rate of Kenai River late-run kings (39 percent) means it would be quite difficult to endanger this stock by overharvest, even on a year of low return. New genetic testing shows Cook Inlet eastside setnets only harvest 13 percent of the total Kenai River late-run king return. Additionally, most biologists agree the only risk this new goal carries is a certain amount of risk to future yield if ADFG is wrong.



Fortunately, all of the data we do have both from this river and other rivers support ADFG's conclusions, showing that in most Alaskan rivers king salmon are quite productive at low escapement levels and substantially less productive at high escapement levels. If this new Kenai late-run king escapement goal provides more fishing opportunity, it will provide more opportunity for ALL user groups. If it results in less king salmon abundance, we will all suffer.

As Alaskans, it doesn't matter whether we fish for sport, personal use, commercially, or not at all -- we're all in this together.

All available data shows that despite current below-average returns, the Kenai River late-run king stock is still quite healthy and productive. In fact, they are much healthier than the Kenai River in which they spend the most sensitive and important years of their life.

KRSA has been busy. They have created a ruckus over ADFG's scientifically defensible escapement goal. They continue pursuing their founding member's lifelong goal of promoting an ever-increasing sport fishery and eliminating Cook Inlet setnets. During the last Cook Inlet Board of Fish meeting, the board considered 14 proposals submitted by KRSA: eight proposals to increase bag limits on either cohos or kings, three proposals to increase escapement goals in our already overcrowded rivers, and three proposals to increase sportfishing opportunity and further limit commercial fishing opportunity. It's



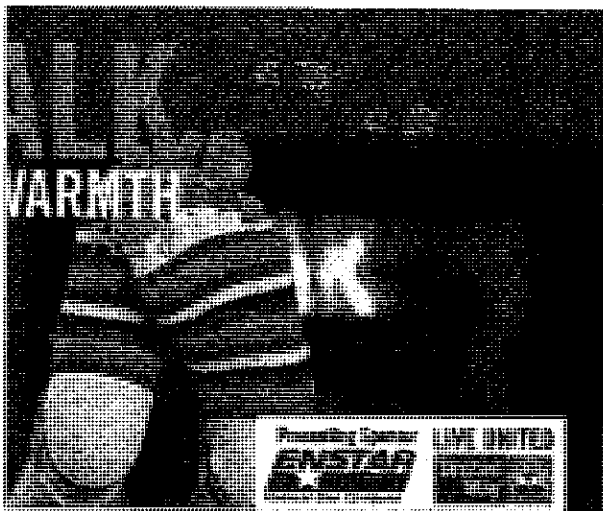
interesting that an organization that prides itself for promoting sustainability spent none of its considerable resources drafting proposals to address any of the numerous, glaring habitat issues on the river it considers home.

While the Cook Inlet "fish wars" wage on, sportfishing participation, commercial guided activity, and powerboat traffic have all been allowed to grow completely unabated on our river. The Kenai exceeds EPA pollution standards for turbidity caused by powerboats in much of our vital king habitat area. Millions of pounds of unprocessed fish waste and dangerous levels of fecal coliform choke our river mouth. Belugas and harbor seals that once occupied the intertidal area to feed on sockeye have all but vanished, likely due to traffic and pollution from the inriver fisheries. Low king returns have spurred an increase in sport and guided sockeye shore-fishing, which has had significant impacts on our riverbanks -- the most vital king salmon habitat in our river.

Despite the fact that Kenai salmon management plans require it, we have no current data to assess the extent of the negative impacts this fishing pressure has had on riparian habitat. Commercial development along vital stretches of riverbank continues, despite the known negative effects. Last year, in-river fisheries were opened 24 hours a day, despite residents' complaints of noise, pollution and bank erosion due to boat wakes. Fishermen and residents of our community are left wondering when enough is enough.

Surely a healthy river needs some healthy limits, and creative solutions are badly needed. Unfortunately, the organization "dedicated to ensuring the sustainability of the world's premier sportfishing river" is too busy trying to destroy the setnetters and dominate statewide fisheries policy to address these issues.

Third-generation Alaskan Todd Smith is a sport, personal-use and commercial fisherman. He's a lifelong resident of the city of Kenai.



The preceding commentary was first published by The Cordova Times and is republished here with the author's permission. The views expressed here are the writer's own and are not necessarily endorsed by Alaska Dispatch, which welcomes a broad range of viewpoints. To submit a piece for consideration, email [commentary\(at\)alaskadispatch.com](mailto:commentary(at)alaskadispatch.com).

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Membership

KRSA cause conflict in our community

Posted: April 29, 2013 - 12:20pm

By Dwight Kramer

A recent opinion piece in the Clarion by Ricky Gease, Executive Director for Kenai River Sportfishing Association (KRSA), claimed to enlighten us on two different issues in a "fact based and truthful" manner when in fact they were neither. Instead, he chose the route of misinformation intended to mislead our community into believing their recent lobbying efforts to oust Board of Fisheries (BOF) member, Vince Webster of Naknek, were justified. KRSA's actions in this regard were sleazy at best and further illustrate how far this organization will go to maintain control over all aspects of fisheries management on the Kenai River and Upper Cook Inlet.

In retrospect, I suspect Mr. Webster was probably too honest and knowledgeable for KRSA's liking. They claimed that the main reason for wanting him gone was that he voted to support the new Kenai River Late-Run Chinook escapement goals and advocated for a lower OEG in times of low abundance presented by the BOF Task Force he co-chaired. When in actuality, all seven members of the BOF voted unanimously to accept the department's escapement goal recommendations and while co-chairing the Task Force, Mr. Webster stated several times that a lower OEG would probably not be acceptable. The Task Force acted on its own and as Co-Chair he was not part of the vote. The simple truth is that they wanted him off the BOF because he was one of the members they couldn't find a way to control.

This op-ed also claimed that the new lower end adjustment of the Late-Run escapement goal from 17,800 down to 15,000 was bad for the resource and an attempt by the department to provide more fishing opportunity for commercial fishermen. This is simply not true, but it makes for a good sound bite to further vilify the commercial fishing industry. The facts are that Department scientists recognized the necessity to convert these numbers to be more reflective of the actual counting differences in transitioning to a technically improved sonar system. The old split-beam sonar counts were biased high because they counted too many Sockeye as Kings and the new Didson sonar is supposed to eliminate much of this duplicity and give a more accurate count of actual Kings passing by, thus producing a lower count but relative to the old sonar numbers historically calculated. It had nothing to do with allocations to any particular user group.

KRSA is an advocate for the guided sport fish industry with an agenda to eliminate commercial fisheries from Cook Inlet to perpetuate and advance their cause. Their bullying tactics, in this regard, are cause for a lot of conflict and economic uncertainty within our community and completely uncalled for.

KRSA has also been instrumental in keeping the BOF meetings in Anchorage because they know private anglers and other users, without a financial iron in the fire, cannot afford to attend, thus they can control the outcomes of regulatory changes with the barrage of individuals and consultants they can afford to send. This political maneuvering has also cost our local businesses hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years in lost revenue they could have derived if some of the meetings were hosted in our area.

Guiding/tourism and commercial fishing are both valuable assets to our economic structure and an important part of our community lifeblood. It is important that they work together on harvest allocations and resource protection. It will probably not happen though as long as we have one aggressive entity, such as KRSA, that strives to control all outcomes for the benefit of one segment of our community based on the destruction of another.

Their current business model is causing too much friction in our community and pits guides against private anglers and sport fishermen against commercial fishermen. It doesn't have to be this way and is unacceptable. We should all be able to work together to resolve our fishery issues.

Local mayors, politicians, administrators, chamber of commerce's and businesses leaders should weigh their relationships with KRSA until they change various aspects of their business model to project a more respectful nature. Right now they are not very well liked in their own community. Money and power aren't as important as how you treat your neighbors and fellow citizens.

Dwight Kramer is a "Joe Fisherman" private angler and concerned resource user who has fished the Kenai River since 1983. He was a sportfishing representative on the Upper Cook Inlet Task Force.

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GUEST COMMENTARY: Fish management principles ignored, setback for kings

RICKY GEASE, KENAI RIVER SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION

The basic principles of fisheries management are simple. The fish come first. Use science to ensure adequate escapement and then allow harvest by users. When uncertain about the science, act conservatively to prevent overfishing. When precautionary measures must be taken, share the burden of conservation fairly between all users.

When these principles are not followed, troubles arise, usually at the expense of the fish. Human history shows our nature wanting to test the line between fishing and overfishing – and far too often we roll the dice in favor of short-term profits only to see another fish stock run aground.

Kenai River king salmon are the largest salmon in the world – Les Anderson's iconic 97.3 pound world record fish was recently inducted into the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame. Boasting eight of the top ten world records, Kenai kings draw global interest. Last year's closure for king fishing on the Kenai made front page news in the Wall Street Journal.

Unfortunately, like most every other major king stock in Alaska, Kenai kings are facing hard times with historic low returns, poor ocean survival, and uncertain future productivity. The science behind why kings statewide are in such low abundance is unknown. Already preseason restrictions and closures due to low king abundance are being announced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, or ADFG, which likely will effect almost every king fishery in the state.

The noticeable exception – Kenai kings.

Why?

Because history is repeating itself, and immediate gains in a commercial fishery are being put ahead of the fish. Despite conservation bells ringing out across Alaska for kings, some want you to believe everything is fine on the Kenai and there is no cause for concern for these majestic fish. But when basic principles of fishery management are ignored and violated, it is a significant setback for king conservation and a true cause for alarm. It cries out that people take notice, demand accountability and call for action.

Kenai River Sportfishing Association, or KRSA, is doing just that. Our recent activities to educate the public and legislators about former Alaska Board of Fisheries member Vince Webster were fact-based and truthful, centered and focused on the conservation of Kenai kings. Within days, a KRSA call to action garnered more than 10,000 Facebook views.

The public listened and many contacted their legislators asking that Webster not be confirmed. KRSA's well-reasoned and researched stance resonated across the sport and personal use anglers who utilize Upper Cook Inlet, or UCI, and they let their voices be heard unlike any time before. Many of these legislators took notice and listened to their constituents. On a close vote, Webster was not confirmed.

Our concerns regarding Webster's confirmation spotlighted the fact that basic principles of fishery management were not being followed. These included his failed leadership to provide adequate board oversight regarding an alarmingly low new interim escapement goal for Kenai kings, which drops by one third the minimum number of king spawners from



18,000 to 12,000 (Didson sonar counts); his advocacy to set an optimum escapement goal even lower than the new minimum so that commercial setnetters could keep on fishing; and, his failed attempt to shift the burden of king conservation solely onto one user group, the personal use fishery, when no other group faced restrictions. These and other similar past actions added to the foundation and argument that he should no longer serve on the board.

Unfortunately, ADFG is not without its share of responsibility on this issue. It rushed a new interim escapement goal for Kenai kings at a strikingly low escapement level without adequate peer review. Contrary to professional and standard department protocols, ADFG lowered the new range so much so that two-thirds of the new goal has no escapement data to support it. What was the motivation to set the lower end of the escapement goal less than 50 percent below the lowest known escapement ever seen? It seems simply to reduce the likelihood that fisheries, primarily the commercial set net fishery, would face restriction this year. The lone independent peer reviewer stated that the same result would occur if ADFG had set the lower end of the escapement goal at zero.

Alaskans who directly benefit from UCI non-commercial salmon fisheries want salmon escapement goals set based on the best available science. When the best science is uncertain, as it is with the new Kenai king goal, the resource must be adequately protected. If there is a harvestable surplus, allow reasonable opportunity for all user groups, not just commercial set netters.

As a result of Webster's blockage while on the board of a reasonable management plan to pair all users in precautionary step-down measures for Kenai king conservation, ADFG seems content to roll the dice this year.

Are you?

Ricky Gease is the executive director of Kenai River Sportfishing Association. To follow this story online, more information is available at www.krsa.com.



Alaska Dispatch

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Dwight Kramer

December 15, 2013

In recent years we have seen a troubling pattern of near-record-low returns of both early- and late-run Kenai River chinook salmon. The declines in statewide chinook fisheries are largely due to marine survival issues, however, we also feel that part of our Kenai River decline can be linked to in-river harvest patterns, fishing on middle river mainstem spawning fish throughout July, insufficient spawning area protections, selective harvest of our larger age-class fish, and multiple years of over-harvest due to biased high sonar counts.

History seems pretty clear that factors such as population growth, increased use, commercialization and development make it difficult for us to sustain indigenous wild chinook salmon populations. Unless we alter our behavior we will join the long list of streams dependent on hatchery-produced fish. We will not be able to sustain the high-density fishery that has developed on the Kenai unless we consider a more conservationist approach of protecting production to secure future run strength sustainability.

In order to provide for recovery and certainty in future Kenai River king salmon production, Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition, a private angler "Joe Fisherman" group, has forwarded Proposal 219 to the Board of Fisheries (BOF) for consideration during their February Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) Board of Fish meeting.

This proposal would allow the season to start normally so that everyone along the river has an opportunity to fish for kings, but as the season progresses, two permanent spawning conservation areas would occur, in a timely fashion, as fish move upriver to the middle section. The lower river would remain open throughout the entire season.

The first, Spawning Conservation Area 1, would commence starting July 1 and would close the waters from Moose River to Skilak Lake to fishing for king salmon. This closure is designed to protect early-run chinook stocks that have seen a much steeper decline than the late run. Funny River weir data indicates about a 70 percent decline since 2006 and Slikok Creek weir data shows an 80 percent decline since 2004 with very few females returning. We believe the mainstem component of the early run may be in even more peril because they enter the fishery in May and June and are vulnerable to harvest longer than any other segment of the Kenai River king salmon population. They are also the largest fish of the early run and long have been targeted.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game research indicates that the median spawning date for early run mainstem fish is around July 20. This means that they are the only segment



of our chinook return that isn't afforded protection during spawning. All of our tributary fish are protected once they reach the sanctuary areas of the tributary mouths and the late run chinook don't spawn until around the middle of August; the season closes July 31 so they are protected. We even have a spawning closure period for rainbow trout.

The Spawning Conservation Area 2 would commence July 10, from the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna upstream to Moose River. This closure would protect both early run and late run fish that spawn in that area. Almost all late run kings are mainstem spawners and there is currently no spawning sanctuary area afforded to them. This closure would provide an area of certainty for late run spawning production.

We believe these types of proactive conservation measures are both prudent and necessary as we face the future of a growing population with increased demands on our king salmon resources. This more conservative management approach reduces several current aspects of our fishery that continue to jeopardize our ability to protect the quality and sustainability of our king salmon stocks: selective harvest of big fish, catch-and-release mortality and sonar count irregularities.

Selective harvest of our largest fish would be greatly reduced because of these protective spawning areas. Recent data suggests there may be a link between multiple generations of selective harvest practices causing a shift in the genetic character of the stocks, resulting in a general reduction in the size of fish because of a shift in the age and sex composition of returning adults. Additionally, smaller returning fish producing fewer eggs reduce the aggregate spawning contributions and future recruitment. Researchers also suggest that improvements would be slow to materialize and require multiple generations within a new selection regime.

Catch-and-release mortality would also be reduced by establishment of these spawning conservation areas because fishing for kings would no longer occur in these important spawning areas. Catch-and-release mortality occurs often in our fisheries because we sort through a lot of fish looking for the big "bragging rights" and trophy fish. It also occurs more often lately by regulation when our fisheries are limited to catch-and-release restrictions. Research also indicates that there are several negative factors that can occur when fish are disturbed on their spawning beds and some released fish are stressed to the point that they may not spawning at all.

Sonar counting irregularities would not matter as much if we had established spawning protected areas. Sonar counting issues bring into question what our actual mainstem spawning component really is on an annual basis. Until we can have more confidence in sonar reliability it is paramount that we operate on a more conservative path. Our inability to accurately count our kings by the use of sonar and test netting are well documented and bring into question our production models. We have changed our Kenai king escapement goals four times in the last decade alone.

Our organization believes this will be the most important Kenai River proposal before the BOF at their upcoming UCI meeting. It presents us with a real opportunity to change our management philosophy on the Kenai to a strategy that offers the best chance at recovering our king populations, bringing back the larger age class fish and providing long-term sustainability for future generations to enjoy.



We don't know what the future holds for our king salmon populations in the marine environment so it becomes our responsibility to provide this resource with the best options we can for in-river survival and future propagation.

You can view all of the Kenai River and UCI proposals on the BOF website and if you would like to comment on this proposal or any others you can do so in a "comment box" they provide.

Dwight Kramer is an avid Kenai River sport fisherman Chairman of Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition.

The views expressed here are the writer's own and are not necessarily endorsed by Alaska Dispatch, which welcomes a broad range of viewpoints. To submit a piece for consideration, e-mail [commentary\(at\)alaskadispatch.com](mailto:commentary(at)alaskadispatch.com) [1].

Source URL: <http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/20131215/kenai-river-king-salmon-need-more-river-protection>

Links:

[1] <mailto:commentary@alaskadispatch.com>

Arni Thomson

From: Tom Gemmell <tom.gemmell@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 09, 2014 2:53 PM
To: Arni Thomson; Jim Butler; Paul Shadura; Rob Williams; Roland Maw
Subject: State guts initiative to ban Inlet setnets - Alaska Journal of Commerce - January Issue 2 2014 - Anchorage, AK

<http://www.alaskajournal.com/Alaska-Journal-of-Commerce/January-Issue-2-2014/State-guts-initiative-to-ban-Inlet-setnets/>

State guts initiative to ban Inlet setnets

By MOLLY DISCHNER, ALASKA JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

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Published: 2014.01.09 10:02 AM



Setnetters in the Kasilof Section of the East Side Setnet Fishery push a boat into shore June 27, 2013. On Jan. 6, Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell announced he would not certify a proposed ballot initiative to ban setnets from Cook Inlet, citing a Department of Law opinion that the measure is a prohibited allocation under the state Constitution.

Photo/Rashah McChesney/Peninsula Clarion

The proposed ballot initiative to ban setnets in nonsubsistence areas of the state was rejected as a “prohibited appropriation” under the advice of the Alaska Department of Law.

Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell announced Jan. 6 that the proposed ban on setnetting did not meet the legal standards to appear on a ballot. The Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance, or AFCA, sponsored the initiative and was targeting the August 2016 primary for presenting the issue to voters if it could gather enough signatures from around the state.

The Department of Law issued a 12-page opinion along with Treadwell’s announcement that determined having voters consider the ban would be an appropriation of state assets, which cannot be addressed in a ballot initiative.

That was based largely on a 1996 Alaska Supreme Court decision in Pullen v. Ulmer that maintained that salmon are assets that cannot be appropriated by initiative, and that preferential treatment of certain fisheries may constitute a prohibited appropriation.

In the Pullen case, a ballot initiative would have allocated a preferential portion of salmon to subsistence, personal use and sport fisheries, and limited them to about 5 percent of the projected statewide harvest. After it was initially certified, the state Supreme Court ruled that was an unconstitutional appropriation, and the initiative was not allowed on the ballot.

A ban would largely have affected Cook Inlet setnetters, although the text of the ordinance setnetting across the state in areas that do not have rural designations.

In addition to Upper Cook Inlet, that would include Valdez and Juneau, where no setnetting occurs. Setnetting would have remained in other communities, including Kodiak, unless the rural designation was removed.

The Cook Inlet-specific nature of the case helped make it an allocative issue, according to the legal opinion.

“Prohibiting shore gill nets and set nets in nonsubsistence areas effectuates an actual, measureable allocation of Chinook salmon from the East Side Set Net commercial salmon fishery in Cook Inlet to the Kenai River in-river sport fishery and to the Kenai and Kasilof personal use fisheries,” wrote Assistant Attorney General Elizabeth Bakalar on behalf of Attorney General Michael Geraghty.

The legal opinion noted that the Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance includes members with financial and recreational interests in sportfishing. Those members include Bob Penney, who has previously stated his desire to reverse the current allocations between commercial and sport fishing in Cook Inlet and is the founder of the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, or KRSA.

Several KRSA members, including Executive Director Ricky Gease, signed the initial petition that was sent to Treadwell in November.

Penney’s grandson, Clark Penney, serves as AFCA’s executive director.

“This decision is puzzling,” wrote AFCA Executive Director Clark Penney in the group’s response. “I want to thank the Lt. Governor, the Alaska Division of Elections and the Alaska Department of Law for doing their due diligence, however I struggle to see the logic or the legality of this decision.”

The organization has 30 days to ask for judicial review. In a Jan. 6 statement, AFCA indicated that it would was reviewing the state’s legal opinion, and would consider a legal challenge to the state’s decision.

“One of the ideas being discussed is a legal challenge, another is a modified initiative,” wrote AFCA founder Joe Connors in an emailed response to questions. “Be sure of one thing this is not over, that is for sure.”

The Alaska Salmon Alliance, or ASA, a coalition of fishermen and processors, quickly praised the decision.

“We are elated by Lieutenant Governor Treadwell’s decision to not certify this job-killing measure,” said Arni Thomson, executive director of the Alaska Salmon Alliance. “Though it was highly unlikely to ever pass, the Set Netter Ban would have instantly destroyed the jobs of more than 500 Alaska families who set net to make a living. We are happy to see it dead on arrival.”

The ASA, Kenai Area Fisherman’s Coalition, the United Cook Inlet Drift Association, the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association, the United Fishermen of Alaska, the City of Kenai and the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly all officially opposed the initiative.

The fishing groups had characterized it as allocative, and the Department of Law agreed.

The legal opinion states: “Were this type of initiative permissible, voters could continue to reallocate stocks to any fishery simply by eliminating specific gear or particular means and methods of catching fish — for example, the next initiative might propose to eliminate purse seining, trawling, dipnetting, or catch-and-release sport fishing in particular areas to increase harvest opportunity for other types of users. This would ‘prevent ...

real regulation and careful administration' of Alaska's salmon stocks, contrary to the purpose of the initiative by appropriation."



In a statement responding to the decision, AFCA's Board Chair Bill McKay disagreed with the legal interpretation of the initiative.

"I am extremely disappointed in this decision," McKay said. "This initiative is clearly statewide and seeks no authority to regulate or allocate fisheries management in our state. We should be out gathering signatures today, not looking at lawsuits."

The end of the initiative, however, doesn't mean the issue is resolved. In addition to a legal challenge or altered initiative, AFCA could take the matter to the Legislature or Board of Fisheries.

"Going forward, we will evaluate all options for halting the indiscriminate bycatch of Alaska king salmon," Connors wrote in response to a question about whether or not the organization will lobby the legislature for consideration of similar legislation.

The group will also discuss taking the matter to the board, Connors wrote. The board meets to discuss Upper Cook Inlet for two weeks in Anchorage beginning Jan. 31 at the Egan Center, however, the deadline for submitting proposals for the meeting has passed.

That's the route Treadwell suggested in the state's release announcing the decision.

"On this initiative we received input from the sponsor, supporters, and opponents, all of which we shared with the attorney general's office," Treadwell said in the state press release. "We have urged the parties to work together with the Board of Fish to address concerns about setnets and fisheries allocations."

Introduced by: Bagley, Johnson, Smalley, Mayor
Date: 12/03/13
Action: Adopted as Amended
Vote: 7 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION 2013-081**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CONTINUATION OF
SETNETTING IN COOK INLET**

WHEREAS, the Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance has started an initiative to ban commercial fishery setnets from Alaska's urban areas, including Cook Inlet; and

WHEREAS, the initiative to ban setnets has been filed with Alaska Lieutenant Governor, Mead Treadwell; and

WHEREAS, if the initiative passes legal requirements, and the sponsors gather signatures of qualified voters equal in number to 10 percent of those who voted in the preceding General Election, the initiative will appear on the primary election ballot in August of 2016; and

WHEREAS, the focus of the initiative is the low abundance of king salmon; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has the authority to close fisheries for conservation purposes and has often exercised that authority; and

WHEREAS, on their public information database the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission lists about 736 Cook Inlet salmon setnet permits, of which 444 are owned by people with a Kenai Peninsula Borough address and 615 are owned by people with an Alaskan address; and

WHEREAS, banning setnets to conserve king salmon is both capricious and unwarranted;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. That the KPB Assembly officially opposes the proposed ban on setnetting.

SECTION 2. That a copy of this resolution be provided to all municipal members of Alaska Municipal League.

SECTION 3. That this resolution takes effect immediately upon its adoption.



ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 3RD DAY DECEMBER, 2013.

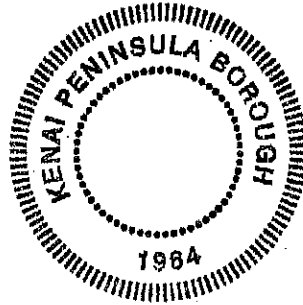
Hal Smalley

Hal Smalley, Assembly President

ATTEST:

Johni Blankenship

Johni Blankenship, MMC, Borough Clerk



Yes: Bagley, Haggerty, Johnson, McClure, Ogle, Smalley, Smith

No: None

Absent: Pierce, Wolf



Suggested by: Council Members Gabriel and Molloy

CITY OF KENAI

RESOLUTION NO. 2013-75

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENAI, ALASKA, OPPOSING THE INITIATIVE TO PROHIBIT SET NETS IN URBAN AREAS AND CONTINUING TO SUPPORT SOUND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND DIVERSIFIED HARVEST OPPORTUNITIES IN COOK INLET.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance has filed a State initiative application to prohibit shore gill nets and set nets in urban areas; and,

WHEREAS, the intent of the initiative is ban all shore gill nets and set nets in certain areas of the State including Cook Inlet; and,

WHEREAS, there is a long history of set netting in Cook Inlet that dates back before Statehood; and,

WHEREAS, according to current Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission data one hundred and twenty one (121) set gillnet permits in Cook Inlet are owned by City of Kenai residents; and,

WHEREAS, many more residents and small businesses participate in or otherwise benefit from set netting; and,

WHEREAS, for fiscal year 2014, the City of Kenai will receive a total of over \$200,000 from the Shared Fishery Business Tax and Shared Fishery Resource Landing Tax a portion of which is directly related to set gill netting; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kenai has previously passed Resolution 2011-14 a Resolution Supporting Sound Fisheries-Management Practices and Diversified Harvest Opportunities in Cook Inlet; and,

WHEREAS, the elimination of set netting in Cook Inlet would greatly impact the economic and traditional social structure of many residents, families and businesses within the City of Kenai; and,

WHEREAS, other means are already in place, and other alternatives exist, to support healthy returns of salmon to the Kenai River including king salmon during times of low abundance; and,

WHEREAS, set gill netting has traditionally been used as one of the management tools to ensure optimum returns of salmon to the Kenai River; and,



WHEREAS, the proposed initiative promotes division and conflict between user groups; and,

WHEREAS, fisheries that benefit and provide opportunity for diverse user groups while maintaining healthy salmon runs are in the best interest of the City of Kenai, and;

WHEREAS, the City of Kenai benefits from healthy well-managed salmon runs as a central part of its economy and core quality of life for its residents and visitors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENAI, ALASKA:

Section 1. That the City of Kenai opposes the initiative filed with the State to ban shore gill nets and set nets in certain areas including Cook Inlet.

Section 2. That the City of Kenai continues to support sound fisheries management and diversified harvest opportunities in Cook Inlet.

Section 3. That copies of this Resolution be provided to Governor Sean Parnell, Senate President Charlie Huggins, Senator Peter Micciche, Senator Cathy Giessel, Speaker Mike Chenault, Representative Kurt Olson, Representative Paul Seaton, Commissioner Cora Campbell, members of the State Board of Fish, and Members of the Alaska Municipal League.

Section 4. That this Resolution takes effect immediately upon passage.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENAI, ALASKA, this 18th day of December, 2013.

ATTEST:

PAT PORTER, MAYOR

Sandra Modigh, City Clerk

Questions remain about king counts after Fish and Game shifts to high-tech sonar

Posted: December 7, 2013 - 8:07pm | Updated: December 9, 2013 - 1:52pm

By Rashah McChesney

Peninsula Clarion

Editor's note: *This is the sixth story in the Morris Communications series "The case for conserving the Kenai king salmon."*

In the continuing saga of Kenai River king salmon management during the current period of low abundance, counting the number of fish coming into the river with enough accuracy to satisfy competing users has been a difficult task for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Researchers are dealing with new, high-tech sonar counters they hope will meet the inherent challenge of finding and counting a few king salmon swimming along with thousands of sockeye salmon.

They are also faced with the task of communicating the subtleties of an increasingly complex system to a public upset by departmental missteps such as the 2012 closure of king salmon anglers and Cook Inlet setnetters due to what managers believed were dangerously low numbers of fish.

In the postseason analysis, ADFG revised its estimates upward to show more than 25,000 king salmon having made it into the river. That was greater than the minimum escapement goal of 17,800, and shouldn't have led to the complete closures ordered by the department that led to an economic disaster being declared by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

The ADFG Division of Sport Fish sonar program has been slow to spread across the state, but there are few places where using sonar to count fish has been explored as thoroughly as it has been on the Kenai River.

Developing the sonar program

The Kenai River was the first place where managers used sonar in a river to count fish, said Debby Burwen, a fisheries biologist who has been with the Kenai River chinook salmon sonar project since 1986.

The first project was the sockeye sonar counter at river mile 19.

The project began with dual beam sonar, which could estimate the size of a target but could not tell which direction the object was travelling.

From there it evolved to using split beam sonar, which could track a target as it traveled through the beam, using the three-dimensional position of the target to theoretically distinguish a king salmon from a smaller sockeye, and help managers keep from counting the same fish multiple times.

Split beam sonar has since given way to the dual frequency identification sonar, or DIDSON, which gives managers an actual image — much like an ultrasound — and allows for a better estimation of fish size to differentiate between species. The newest sonar iteration, the ARIS, or Adaptive Resolution Imaging Sonar, imaging technology, provides higher resolution and more easily trackable images of each fish.

The DIDSON counter was tested for three years from 2009-11 alongside the split-beam sonar to compare results before fully converting to it for the 2012 season.

"It has been so interesting," Burwen wrote in an email. "This is because we were always able to test and then use the newest acoustic technologies as they were made commercially available."

At the beginning, the technology was as experimental as the ways the managers used to make it work.

The first year Burwen was with the program, managers were attempting to cope with the water level variation brought on by the tides at the lower river sonar site by putting the sonar on a railroad track.

"As the tide came up and went down we would roll the sonar out on this railroad track, it was mounted on a cart. We tried to make the car go up and down with the tide, that was just an incredible ordeal because debris was always getting on the track," Burwen said. "Finally, we realized that you just couldn't do that."

That was the year, Burwen said, managers discovered why they weren't seeing any fish.

"The fish are bottom oriented at least much of the time and even one degree off, you'd lose all of your fish," she said.

The newer sonar technology is not as difficult to aim as its predecessors, Burwen said.



Still, the technology has its drawbacks.

One of the primary barriers to a wider use of sonar to assess salmon runs —just 16 rivers in Alaska were using the program by 2013— is the difficulty in discriminating between fish species, according to a 2007 ADFG study evaluating the use of sonar.

Of those 16, the Kenai, Nushagak and Yukon rivers were the only ones where managers were using the technology to count king salmon.

Burwen said most managers in Alaska were using the DIDSON for inriver counting, but in large rivers like the Yukon where the range of river that must be viewed exceeds the DIDSON's range, split-sonar is still used.

The lower river

Currently, ADFG uses a king salmon sonar site located at river mile 8.6 of the Kenai River to estimate abundance and manage the early and late runs of king salmon.

There, managers sit in a tent on the north bank of the river, where the riverbed was even enough that managers could ensonify — or see — the middle portion of the river.

Being able to see that portion of the river was crucial because according to ADFG data king salmon — though they can be found in all portions of the water column — tend to swim upstream in the deeper portions of the river.

For 10 minutes of each hour, the sonar measures a portion of the river. Researchers then view the sample and count the number and length of king salmon swimming through at the time of the sampling.

Watching all of the footage can be overwhelming, said Brandon Key, ADFG fisheries biologist and sonar analyst.

"Every hour there's 80 minutes of data that we have to go through," he said.

The data is complex.

"It's hard to get through if you don't have experienced people on it," Key said. "As long as somebody is looking over their shoulders you can have untrained people doing it, but it takes some time."

Even trained king salmon counters can make mistakes, and there are several counting rules in place to ensure fish do not get counted twice.

"Everyone's double-checking their kings," Key said.

Despite the length of time ADFG researchers have spent using the lower river site for management, it has several disadvantages including being subject to tidal influence, interference from silt and floating debris and milling fish behavior according to ADFG data.

Another disadvantage is that the sonar sits in the river in such a way that it is missing king salmon that swim behind the counter.

During the 2013 season, staff netted near the shore behind the lower sonar and found kings.

"The ones that we caught in our netting were generally quite a bit smaller and younger than the ones we caught offshore," said Tim McKinley, biologist and research supervisor for the Division of Sport Fish Soldotna area office.

A new site, one at river mile 13.7 has been in development since managers went looking for a new site in 2011.

Upper river research

Managers seeking to differentiate between it and the lower river site currently used for in-season management have dubbed the ADFG upriver sonar site at mile 13.7 as a "research project".

The new site has several features favored by managers, including bank-to-bank coverage of the river, McKinley said.

Researchers use five ARIS, essentially the next generation of DIDSON, to collect data on at the upriver site, compared to the two used to collect data at the lower river site.

During the 2013 season — the first during which the upriver sonar array system was run for the entirety of the season — analysts waited until August to process data.

Researchers must watch two hours of footage for every hour that passes at the upriver site.

During an August tour of the two sites, researcher Jim Miller told the group that because the lower river was used for management while the units upriver were still experimental, the department did not prioritize interpreting data generated from the new site.

Still, the sonar staff has finished processing data from the lower river and upper river sites since the last week of October, Burwen said in an interview during that week.

Burwen clarified that processing meant the sonar analysis crew had done the minimal amount of work reviewing data and measuring fish.

"It can be very time consuming, but is necessary to do, especially with a brand new technology like the ARIS," she wrote in an email.



At the time, Burwen said managers were planning to give a preliminary report well in advance of the Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fisheries meeting scheduled to begin in late January.

She was hesitant to release data at the time, she said, as analysts were not yet sure how to compare data between the two sonar sites and did not want to merge the two incorrectly.

ADFG sonar analyst Key said comparing numbers from the two sites was like comparing oranges and bananas.

"They're just numbers," he said. "Just because you get a larger number here doesn't mean it's not the same number, they're just different systems."

Despite repeated requests — both by the media and members of the public — for 2013 data from the upper river research site, a final estimate of king salmon passage has not been released.

Key, Steve Fleischman and others within the department say the data has been processed, however Southcentral Region supervisor Jim Hasbrouck said the 2013 season analysis is not yet ready for the public.

Fleischman, a fisheries scientist in the ADFG statewide research and technical services office, said he and others were tasked with the postseason analysis.

"I think we've pretty much done as much postseason scrutiny of the numbers as we're going to and there were some surprises in there, but for the most part it kind of makes sense," he said.

Fleischman declined to comment further on surprises with the data from the new sonar site as, he said, it was not his decision to release the information.

"The thing is, that whenever you do something new — and especially when you have a tool that you have a lot of confidence in — sometimes you learn things that you didn't expect and so it's been very interesting," he said. "It's one thing to plan a new project at a different place on the river and work out all the logistical details of being able to count all the fish or virtually all the fish, but it's another thing entirely to get the data back and then really try to understand all the processes. You always get something unexpected."

Fleischman deferred further questions to Hasbrouck, who said the department was not yet ready to discuss its postseason analysis of 2013 data.

"We need more thorough vetting of the data and the trends and what they may mean," Hasbrouck said.

Several meetings are scheduled for the first week of December, Hasbrouck said.

Those meetings are with "higher ups," he said, not the biologists and fisheries scientists who had already interpreted the data — he added that needing to run the data through higher-level ADFG management did not mean there were politics factoring into the bow the department interpreted the new data.

Rather, the meetings were to determine a uniform ADFG interpretation of the new sonar data, he said.

"It's not like this means that the interpretation is going to change," Hasbrouck said. "There are just other people that are part of the discussion."

The drawbacks

One of several logistical issues in managing the sonar sites is the amount of data generated by the DIDSON and ARIS sonar arrays.

Between the two DIDSONs and the five ARIS units at the upriver site on the Kenai River, about 250 gigabytes of data were generated each day. That adds up to about 24, 576 gigabytes — or nearly 25 terabytes — of data collected in 2013.

"Data and file management is a big part of our project development," Burwen wrote in an email. "I'm happy to say we have the data flow worked out at both sites and both projects operate very smoothly with respect to data management."

Also at issue is the continuation of some of the research projects ADFG uses to check the accuracy of its sonar data.

One of the projects is a netting program that apportioned the ages of fish in the king salmon run counted by the sonar. King salmon return to spawning grounds between ages 4 and 7, and the project applies the age proportion of fish caught in the nets to the numbers of fish counted by the sonar. That netting project would be difficult to continue at the upriver sonar site, according to Burwen.

Burwen said running a netting project at River Mile 19 during the 1990s on the Kenai River had proven difficult for researchers.

"We had an expert crew and it was very dicey, they had to be ready. When a net hangs up on a boulder it's a lot different than when it hangs up downstream, you can't be hung up in a fast current on something that's stationary that's attached to your stern," Burwen said. "Evaluating safety is one thing that goes into it."

Beyond safety, running a netting program near the upriver sonar would require managers to drift a net on a portion of the river that has is typically crowded with sport anglers during the king fishing season.

McKinley, the Soldotna area research supervisor, said the net apportioned estimate was an important tool for managers for the information it generated about the return per spawner for a specific year — or how many fish made it back into the river from a parent generation.

"That is, by and large, how we set our escapement goals," McKinley said. "This number of fish (spawners) produced this many (returners)."



Continuing the netting program lower in the river and applying the proportion to the upriver site would not work, McKinley, ~~said~~, because the current netting program covers just a portion of the river while the upriver research site covers the entire river.

"We really feel this upper site is going to work," he said.

In an earlier interview, McKinley said the net-apportionment would probably be phased out, however in a later interview he said ADFG would "probably continue our netting at about the same location, but be doing it differently."

Former area research biologist Ken Tarbox said king salmon managers could be focusing too much attention on the minutiae of counting the king salmon.

Tarbox — who worked closely with the sonar on the Kenai River used to count sockeye salmon — said there was a nearly 20-year lag between when ADFG started using sonar technology in the Cook Inlet and when it became a management tool for king salmon.

"So, from 1985 to the present the focus has been on developing a technique to count chinook," Tarbox said. "The managers (are) still looking for those magic numbers that they have confidence in and are reliable ... the drive to get reliable counts has been driving the research dollars."

The desire to count the number of king salmon coming into the river, however, could be replacing other types of research that can also be used to manage the king salmon run.

"If you don't focus also on habitat issues and life history information, when you get a downturn in production, you're sitting there not knowing what's happening," Tarbox said.

Confidence in the data

While McKinley and others in the department expressed confidence in the upriver site and both the DIDSON and ARIS as accurate counting tools, longtime fishermen and former ADFG biologists have called into question the accuracy of the data coming out of the new sonar.

Several commercial and sport fishers questioned the accuracy of sonar data showing 2,038 early run Kenai River king salmon swimming past the counter in 2013.

Early run king salmon are known to spawn primarily in tributaries of the Kenai River including the Killey and Funny rivers where U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service currently operate weirs to estimate the number of fish in the river.

Typically, between 48 percent to 58 percent of the early run spawns in the Killey river, 24 percent to 37 percent spawns in the main stem of the Kenai and 11 percent to 12 percent spawns in the Funny River according to Fish and Wildlife Service data.

Ken Gates, a USFWS biologist in Kenai, wrote that draft data from the 2013 season showed 1,881 kings swimming up the Killey and 1,027 swimming up Funny River.

If the typical proportions of the early run of king salmon were to be applied, indications are that the Kenai River early run of king salmon could have been larger than what was counted by the DIDSON.

Some anglers are also concerned about the amount of sport fishing effort that happens below the ADFG upriver sonar site and how that could affect estimates of the run.

Dwight Kramer, private angler and head of the Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition, wrote in an email that he was also concerned that the department would rely on the sonar for in-season management without determining what effect downstream harvest could have on the run.

"It would seem to me that they would have to be very conservative until they have the numbers to liberalize the fishery otherwise they will risk over-exploiting the run and not enumerating enough spawners," he wrote. "I am anxious to hear their plan for this dilemma."

Looking ahead

While questions about how long funding will remain in place to allow ADFG managers to continue comparing and utilizing lower river and upper river sonar counts, managers are still excited to continue using the sonar in the coming years.

McKinley said having bank-to-bank coverage of the river was a boon, as well as the new upriver site being easily accessible from the road system.

"We'll be directly estimating what's there instead of using inferences to estimate what is behind the sonar," he said. "I'm absolutely looking forward to it."

Key said one new area of research planned by the sonar crew for the 2014 season was figuring out where king salmon swim in the water column.

"The idea is that since the water is moving so fast the fish stay closer to the bottom," he said. "We've got a few days scheduled for next year to see if there are more higher in the water column."

ADFG has not yet announced when it will fully transition to the upriver site for inseason management, but McKinley said the best-case scenario would be that managers are given at least three years to compare data between the two sites.

"If they compared well, it just wouldn't be cost effective to keep running both," he said.

During the 2013 season, ADFG staff also gave tours to several groups interested in finding out about the sonar program.

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State hesitant to discuss 2013 Kenai River king sonar data

Posted: December 5, 2013 - 8:51pm | Updated: December 6, 2013 - 9:37am

By Rashah McChesney

Peninsula Clarion

Alaska Department of Fish and Game sonar technicians have been done processing data from the two king salmon sonar sites on the Kenai River since late October, however, staff have been largely unwilling to discuss 2013 results, saying interpretations are still in draft form.

Managers deferred questions to regional supervisor Jim Hasbrouck who said Fish and Game staff planned to have a Frequently Asked Questions document for the public sometime in the next week. He said he was not prepared to discuss specific results of the 2013 sonar data.

Hasbrouck, the southcentral regional supervisor, said Fish and Game staff had not been specifically told they could not discuss the results of the sonar program.

"To my knowledge there hasn't been any message delivered to squelch people from talking; we've not had a meeting and said 'OK, you guys can't talk to the media about anything,'" he said. "People are uncomfortable, I'm even uncomfortable talking about it because it is so new."

The two sonar sites, one at river mile 8.6 and one at river mile 13.7, are used by the sportfish division of Fish and Game to count king salmon in the river. The former is used for inseason fisheries management while the latter is an experimental site Fish and Game staff are considering for management use in the future.

Steve Fleischman, a fisheries scientist in the Fish and Game statewide research and technical services office, said Monday he and others tasked with the postseason analysis were primarily done.

"I think we've pretty much done as much postseason scrutiny of the numbers as we're going to and there were some surprises in there, but for the most part it kind of makes sense," he said.

Still, he deferred specific questions to Hasbrouck and said it was not his decision to release new data to the public.

Hasbrouck said Fish and Game "higher-ups" needed to meet during the first week of December to discuss how Fish and Game would present the information.

"It's not like this means that the interpretation is going to change," Hasbrouck said. "There are just other people that are part of the discussion."

From those discussions, Hasbrouck said Thursday he was concerned that if he spoke about 2013 season sonar data, he could say something in error.

"We're working on this (question and answer) or FAQ ... there are a lot of people on the peninsula that have questions and you know they've got those questions and they don't feel the department is providing them with an answer. Well, in large part it's because we're trying to figure it out," Hasbrouck said.

Preseason, during public meetings Fish and Game managers and staff consistently said data from the experimental sonar site would not be used for inseason management and 2013 was the first time the new king sonar program was run for an entire season.

Trying to figure out the ins and outs of the new sonar site and how its data relates to data generated from the lower site is an ongoing process, Hasbrouck said.

"We were just trying to determine this year if we could actually operate a sonar program there and be able to get estimates of passage in some kind of production way inseason," he said. "Can we even get sound in the water? What kind of problems may we run into at this particular site that affects the sound that's in the water or will we see some really strange behavior such that it's really not any better there than it is (at the original site)?"

While unwilling to discuss specifics, Hasbrouck did say staff considered the 2013 season's "test run" of the experimental site a success.

Management for the 2014 fishing season will continue to be based on data that comes from the original king salmon sonar site at river mile 8.6 but staff will run the two sonar projects in tandem for the entirety of the next season, he said.

"There were so many questions that arose after the work that we did this year that we need to work on those and try to get those figured out," Hasbrouck said. One of those questions will depend on the 2014 season and specifically how pink salmon interact with the new sonar site.

Pink salmon typically run up the Kenai river in even-numbered years so staff have yet to see how those salmon would interfere — or if they would interfere — with sonar ability to count king salmon.



Debby Burwen, a sportfish division biologist who has been with the Kenai king salmon sonar project for several years, wrote department was not unnecessarily holding back information.

"Just because the data has been mostly processed, that doesn't mean we have finished subjecting it to the scrutiny and quality control review that we typically perform post-season on all of our sonar data," Burwen wrote.

Most of the post-season analysis she was referring to, she wrote, came from the department's experimental sonar site at river mile 13.7, where managers ran a large bank-to-bank sonar array for the entire king salmon season to determine if the site could be used for fisheries management in the future.

"We really aren't trying to be coy, we simply want to be very thorough before we release the 'final' estimates," Burwen wrote. "People can get quite upset if you change your estimates even a small amount once these final estimates are released."

Clarion file material was used in this article.

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Fishermen focus on how ADFG sets, achieves escapement goals

MOLLY DISCHNER, ALASKA JOURNAL OF COMMERCE



PHOTO/SCOTT DICKERSON/ALASKASTOCK.COM

Editor's note: This is the eighth in the Morris Communications series, "The case for conserving the Kenai king salmon."

Each spring, as the early-run king salmon start returning to the Kenai River, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game begins a four-month effort to manage fishing in a way that ensures enough salmon swim past fishermen of all types to meet escapement goals.

"'Escapement' is actually what escapes fisheries and lives to spawn," said ADFG biologist Tim McKinley, who helped draft the current king salmon escapement goals during the fall and winter of 2012 and 2013.

ADFG sets the escapement goals, which are the number of fish that need to return to produce healthy returns in the future.

On the Kenai, managers try to meet escapement goals for several runs: late- and early-run kings, and sockeyes.

For each run, ADFG wants a target range of fish to return and spawn — too few fish and too many fish are both problematic for future returns.

At high spawning levels, density dependent factors can reduce survivability and therefore the number of salmon that return in the future from that spawning year, according to McKinley.

That means that too many fish on the spawning grounds can produce smaller future runs, although it can be very hard to determine how many fish are "too many." That leaves ADFG to try to manage precisely within a set range of fish.



In 2012 and 2013, ADFG had to find ways to get enough kings in the Kenai River unharmed without exceeding the top end of the sustainable escapement goal range for sockeyes, which is 1.2 million.

The late-run king salmon sustainable escapement goal, or SEG, is 15,000 to 30,000 fish.

According to ADFG's final estimate, 15,395 late run kings escaped in 2013. That number is based on what were counted by the sonar, and subtracting the in-river harvest and additional fish to account for catch and release mortality.

It's also a number for much debate, and managing multiple goals at one time in one river — especially when sockeye are abundant and kings are not — is not the most difficult part of the equation.

In recent years, the goals themselves have become the focus of dispute for fishermen, biologists and stakeholder advocates concerned about catches and the health of the river.

The arguments stem, in part, from disagreements about counting methods.

ADFG has used different tools over the past decade to estimate how many fish are swimming into the river, and how many of those are not caught by sport anglers, and instead allowed to spawn.

Different tools have different "currencies," or ways to count the fish also known as "enumeration." ADFG must update escapement goals periodically to reflect new enumeration methods, the most recent returns and new knowledge about what number of spawners result in the best returns.

In March 2013, the Board of Fisheries voted to approve the new late-run Kenai king salmon goal produced by ADFG. The board vote was a formality, as under the law the board must accept sustainable escapement goals without alteration.

The board does have the ability to choose optimum escapement goals, or OEG, which can be higher than the SEG for allocative purposes.

In 2011, the board raised the late-run sockeye salmon optimal escapement goal to enhance the in-river sport fishery. The change raised the upper end of the goal from 800,000 to 1.4 million, allocating 200,000 for the in-river sport fishery. That was proposed by the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, or KRSA.

The sustainable escapement goal for that run is 700,000 to 1.2 million salmon, also set in 2011.

The goals for Kenai River kings are based on a run reconstruction that McKinley and other ADFG scientists modeled using 30 years worth of data from both sonars, and other enumeration methods and relative abundance metrics such as mark-recapture, netting projects and catch per unit effort.

The late-run reconstruction "It's trying to take that all of that into account," McKinley said.

The reconstruction produced official estimates of total run, in-river run, escapement and recruitment for late-run kings, he said.

Based on that, the department determined the ideal escapement, that would produce the best runs in the future, using the counts from the new DIDSON sonar. DIDSON stands for dual-frequency identification sonar, and it produces more distinct results between kings and sockeyes. The lack of distinguishing between species was the main drawback to the previous "split-beam" counters used for in-season management up until 2011.

The new late-run Kenai River goal of 15,000 to 30,000 is lower numerically than the previous goal of 17,800 to 35,500 used with the less precise split-beam counter. But that doesn't mean that the department thinks fewer fish need to spawn, McKinley said, it just means the fish are measured in a different currency.

Questions linger



Fishermen, however, have questions about the methodology — from concerns about how the enumeration methods are incorporated into the goals, to issues with the Bayesian statistical method that underlies the models.

Bayesian statistical methods use the language of probability to quantify uncertainty in the model parameters, including the data that drives the model.

According to ADFG's late-run escapement goal report, the use of Bayesian methods incorporates a more realistic assessment of uncertainty than classical statistical methods, and allows the effects of measurement error and missing data to be incorporated into the analysis.

A peer review of the escapement goal reports released Dec. 16 on the ADFG website was largely favorable. ADFG asked three fisheries professionals to review the reports.

University of Washington fisheries professor Ray Hilborn, University of Rhode Island professor Jeremy Collie and National Marine Fisheries Service research biologist Robert Kope each reviewed, and commented, on the reports.

Each reviewer's comments were published anonymously by ADFG.

One wrote: "The analyses are very thorough, and carefully explore and characterize the uncertainty in both the data and the resulting estimates of parameters and reference points. The use of a state-space model in a Bayesian framework allows for incorporation of nearly all available data as well as evaluation of the uncertainty in those data. In my view, this a far superior approach to conventional spawner-recruit analyses where all these data are condensed into time series of spawner and recruit abundance, and most of the uncertainty is ignored."

The others largely agreed with that assessment, although they offered certain critiques of other components.

Prior to the peer review release, fishermen have voiced their concerns about ADFG's escapement goals. That might be one of the only points that the Upper Cook Inlet sport and commercial fishermen agree on right now, although they've taken opposing positions on the goals in the past.

Given the questions surrounding counting methods, and the ways in which those have changed, both organizations and fishermen have asked if it's fair to develop a model and goal based upon them.

One of the reviewers said the methodology accounted for that properly, although he noted that he didn't "know enough about the individual data sources to critically review all of the assumptions."

The United Cook Inlet Drift Association, or UCIDA, has questioned other aspects of the methodology. After ADFG did its run reconstruction and determined the range of returns that would produce the most fish in the future, a "safety factor" was added.

According to the late-run escapement goal report, produced this past January, a range of 13,000 to 28,000 kings would be expected to provide yields of at least 90 percent of maximum sustained yield even at the minimum end of the range.

That was adjusted upward by 2,000 fish at each end of the goal in part because of reduced productivity in recent years, according to the report, which means that the historical productivity may not be as reliable at precisely predicting future performance.

Jeff Fox, a former ADFG Kenai Peninsula area management biologist who now works as a consultant for UCIDA, said the upward adjustment for the "safety factor" can also be seen as an allocation for in-river users.

More fish in the river makes it easier to catch one, added UCIDA Executive Director Roland Maw. According to Fox, UCIDA wouldn't have questioned adding fish at the lower bound of the goal. But at the upper end of the goal, extra spawning fish could equate to smaller returns in the future.

When the escapement changes from 12,000 to 13,000 fish, the return increases by about 1,800 fish, Fox said. But at the upper end of the goal you start losing fish in subsequent years when you add more spawners, he said.



That's goes back to the density dependent issues, which appear in the numbers generated by the run reconstruction.

Smaller escapements in the late 1990s produced large returns in the early to mid-2000s. Then, exceptionally high escapements in 2003, 2004 and 2005 far greater than the top end of the goal of 35,500 produced the smallest number of recruits into the fishery seen in the reconstruction, according to the escapement goal report.

In 2004, 63,770 kings escaped out of a total run of 99,690, according to the run reconstruction. Those spawners contributed just 21,280 fish to future runs, according to the model.

According to the report: "The relative role of density-dependent and density-independent factors for late-run Kenai River Chinook salmon also remains uncertain. Most of the cohorts represented in recent small runs, have originated from large escapements, which is consistent with density dependence playing a large role. But these runs also coincide with a statewide decline in Chinook salmon productivity thought to be due to factors, like marine survival, not related to stock-specific Chinook salmon density."

KRSA Executive Director Ricky Gease questioned the data in that relationship, however.

Gease pointed to the different counts going into the model in that time frame as a possible source of some issues in the resulting numbers.

According to Gease, ADFG's numbers indicate less than a 1:1 to return from the 2003 to 2006 escapements. But Gease and other fishermen don't recall seeing an unusually large number of fish on the river those summers, he said.

A total run of 99,690 fish, as the reconstruction said was seen in 2004, would have meant daily runs of 2,500 to 3,000 kings at the peak of the run. Anecdotally, Gease said sport fishermen didn't see harvests that would have resulted from those runs.

"The numbers don't make sense. And yet, those are the numbers used to reduce the escapement goal," he said.

KRSA fishery management consultant Kevin Delaney, a former director of ADFG's Division of Sport Fish, said there was a significant amount of uncertainty associated with those numbers. Although he said the Bayesian state-space model used for the run reconstruction represented ADFG's best effort to make sense of several data sources, it still came with uncertainty.

KRSA has used the some of the same numbers, however, in its own work. The nonprofit has a "Save Our Kenai Kings" campaign with daily social media updates, and has referred to a decline from 100,000 fish to 20,000 fish.

From 1986 to present, the only time nearly 100,000 fish show up in the run reconstruction was 2003, 2004 and 2005.

Gease said that while the organization has questions about the numbers, those are the official data, and KRSA is using the best available information. He added that the organization is referring to runs of those sizes in the mid-1980s when the salmon management plans were created.

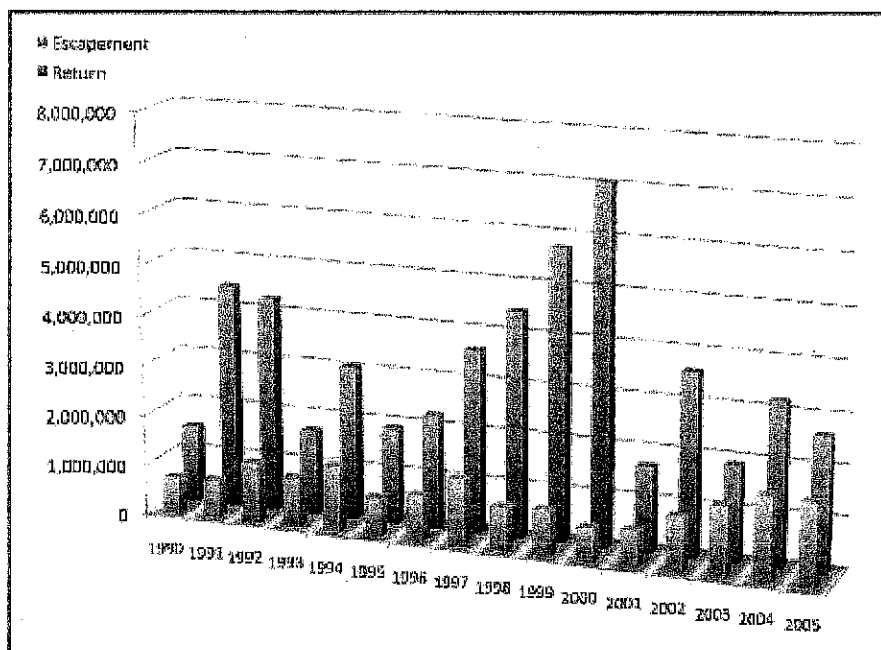
The largest run in the reconstruction in the 1980s was 82,190 kings in 1987.

Delaney was working for ADFG at the time. He said that he remembers a sonar estimate of that same run putting the number of kings in the river at 90,000, closer to the number KRSA is using in its campaign.

Delaney said that the more technical information provided to the public is, the harder it is to understand. KRSA tries to provide information "in a way that attracts attention and is not erroneous, not false," he said.

He also noted that certain estimates of the large runs from the 2000s provided numbers above 100,000 kings.

Kenai River sockeye escapements and returns, 1990-2005



Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game Cook Inlet escapement goal summary, 2010

Changing the threshold, again

The 2013 change was just the most recent in ADFG's ongoing effort to review goals and ensure they reflect the most current information.

When the department switches to a sonar counter five miles upriver from the current DIDSON being used at mile 8.6, it's possible that they will have to revise the goal once again, although that's not yet known, McKinley said. The upriver sonar is counting more kings than the lower river sonar because it covers the river from bank-to-bank while the lower river sonar is missing some fish that swim behind it.

Even without the sonar plans, ADFG generally reviews goals every three years, on the same cycle as the Board of Fisheries discusses the rivers.

When the goal came up last March, sportfishermen and setnetters both commented on the best range for late-run Kenai kings.

Sportfishermen, including KRSA, generally wanted a higher goal. Setnetters asked for a lower goal. Both groups said biology was behind their concern; but both also stood to benefit from their preferred escapement range.

If ADFG was tasked with meeting a higher minimum goal for late-run kings, more would have to make it into the river, and sportfishermen might get additional harvest opportunity.

At times of low abundance, that could come at the expense of commercial fishermen, particularly setnetters, targeting sockeyes in Cook Inlet if ADFG restricts fishing time to allow more kings to make it to the Kenai.

On the other hand, if the minimum goal is lower, the department might be able to offer commercial fishermen in the ocean and along Cook Inlet beaches a little extra fishing time, without worrying about conserving as many kings.

This time around at the Upper Cook Inlet meeting set to begin Jan. 31, 2014, members of the public have again asked for changes.



The Kenai River Sportfishing Association is asking the board to revise the goal upward to an optimal escapement goal of 20,000 to 40,000 late-run kings.

In March 2013, Gease said the range that was adopted by the BOF seemed to reflect the department's desire to allow harvest, and didn't best reflect the range of escapements the fishery has seen in the past. A higher goal would have reflected the peak levels of production that could be possible, Gease said.

Now, his organization is asking the board for that change.

Gease said escapement goals can be based around maximum sustained yield or maximum sustained returns. KRSA's proposed goal is based on maximum sustained returns, Gease said.

Basing the goal on that metric can help ensure that in-river users have ample fish to harvest, he said. That will preserve a sport fish priority on Kenai kings, Gease said.

The new goal also reflects another KRSA concern.

"We don't have return data from escapements below 23,000 fish," Gease said, referring to the recent escapements in 2012 and 2013 that have been at or less than that level. "It's all based on the modeling."

When the board adjusted the Kuskokwim River goal in 2013, Gease said that members noted that in the absence of data about what happens at a lower run, you don't use a lower escapement goal, Gease said.

ADFG has not yet provided comment on the proposed change to the Kenai River goal, but will do so before the meeting begins in January.

Gease said there's another concern that KRSA's new goal would address: declining salmon sizes.

Fishermen are seeing changes in the fish returning to the Kenai each summer. It appears, based on weir data and anecdotal evidence, that fish are smaller and a larger proportion of them are male, Fox said.

Trophy-sized kings are no longer a common catch on the Kenai. The last was reported in 2009. Setnetters, likewise, have reported that the kings they do catch are generally small ones.

But it's the large fish that spawn best, Gease, Maw and Fox all agreed.

Larger females, greater than 30 inches, have more eggs than their smaller counterparts, making them more likely to spawn, Fox said.

There's also a larger portion of males in the fish seen in the river. A skewed sex ration doesn't help with spawning either, Fox said.

Gease said KRSA's goal would help account for those issues. More total fish swimming upriver could mean that more of those fish are healthy spawners.

But Fox and Maw don't think a larger goal like KRSA is proposing is the best solution. Another option would be to look at how many fish the river can support, and set a goal based on habitat and other factors they said.

They're not the only one with ideas for how to change the escapement goals.

Mark Ducker, a setnetter, has asked the BOF for a biological escapement goal of 12,000 to 28,000 late run kings, which is the number of fish referenced in the 2013 escapement goal report.

Trustworthy Hardware's Scott Miller cited the need to protect fish for sportfishermen in the future, and proposed a biological escapement goal of 17,800 to 35,700 fish.

Next week: A look at the forces and factors impacting king salmon in their ocean habitat.



Karl Johnstone
Chairman, Alaska Board of Fisheries
Board Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on 2014 Upper Cook Inlet Proposals. We hope to have constructive discussions about issues we face in Upper Cook Inlet's complex mixed stock fisheries and hope to see all users with reasonable opportunity to harvest Cook Inlet's most valuable renewable resource – its salmon.

We have chosen to organize our comments by group, following the committee roadmap.

Group 1: Upper Cook Inlet Management Plan

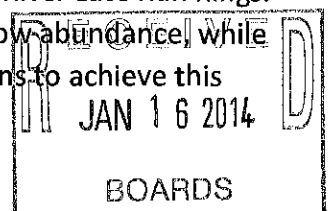
We strongly opposed proposal 103. This proposal would seek to drop "in-river goal" from the list of escapement goals. The in-river goal is an important management target which gives in-river fisheries a healthy allocation of sockeye with respect to abundance, habitat, and a fully allocated mixed-stock fishery. Removing the in-river goal from the management plan would allocate an unlimited number of sockeye to the in-river fishery, to the detriment of other user groups and our river habitat.

Proposal 103's second objective is to prioritize achieving the lower end of **every** escapement goal over exceeding the upper end of **any** escapement goal. This would effectively close **any** fishery downstream of **any** tributary forecast or predicted not to achieve its lower goal. In Upper Cook Inlet, this could close the majority of our fisheries most of the time – there are always goals missed. Fortunately, our escapement goals are constructed around yield, therefore they all have a built-in safety margin before damage to any stock could occur.

ADF&G is charged with ensuring we achieve all escapement goals, and we feel that they should have the tools to do their job. One of those tools is Emergency Order Authority, which allows the commissioner to supersede the management plan if needed to adapt to challenges in managing conservation and yield tradeoffs in our mixed-stock fisheries. This destructive proposal also seeks to eliminate or at best severely limit that authority. Subsequent proposals attempt to further limit the department's flexibility by using very binding language in the management plan.

Group 2: Late-Run Kenai River King Salmon

We oppose proposal 207, which seeks to establish an OEG of 20,000-40,000 Kenai River Late Run Kings. This proposal seeks to allocate more fish to the in-river fishery during a period of low abundance, while other related proposals seek to pair commercial restrictions with in-river restrictions to achieve this



goal. An increased OEG would result in the unnecessary closure of multiple fisheries in an already difficult and challenging time for fishermen and managers alike.

We oppose proposal 208, which seeks to establish a BEG of 17,800-35,700 fish. While the current Kenai LR King goal is an SEG, this BEG would need to be based off of dependable data suggesting this is the MSY point for these fish. The best ADFG data suggests that the actual MSY range is lower than the current goal of 15,000-30,000, however a safety factor was built into the 15,000-30,000 goal to account for uncertainties in the data.

We oppose proposal 209 and others which seek to limit ADF&G's flexibility through binding and prescriptive wording, or that endorse gear alterations/restrictions or management strategies that have no proven or quantifiable conservation value. Paired restrictions fail to consider the very different natures and objectives of the in-river targeted king fishery and the Cook Inlet setnet fishery. Instead, these proposed paired restrictions seek to manage both fisheries relative to the abundance of a single stock of king salmon regardless of sockeye abundance, goals, or yield trade-offs which are essential to a healthy commercial salmon fishery.

We look forward to developing a King Salmon management plan which gives all users opportunity, distributes conservation burdens amongst user groups with respect to historical harvests, and prioritizes high sustained yields and healthy habitat over prescriptive parity. We hope to see a plan that, like many others, takes yield tradeoffs between stocks into account. All users and stocks in Upper Cook Inlet are incredibly important and valuable. We believe our management plans should set wise guidelines and action points while leaving ADFG managers the flexibility to manage to the best interests of our resource and its users.

Group 3: Early Run Kenai River King Salmon

While Early Run Kenai King Salmon have not been a part of the ESSN harvest for decades, they were once a valued treasure in our fishery. Many are genetically the same as Late Run Kenai Kings – the date they enter the river being the only difference. So while we may not harvest “Early Run” Kenai Kings, the health of this run affects our user group the same as the rest. We support ADF&G's proposal 186 and KAFC's proposal 187, which seek to eliminate “shall” from the plan and substitute “may”, giving managers flexibility when managing complex mixed-stock fisheries.

We oppose proposal 190 and others like it, which acknowledge issues with the ER Kings, but aim to add the same binding language to liberalize fisheries that Proposal 186 seeks to eliminate. Proposal 190 and others would increase harvest pressure through eliminating the slot limit, which has proven effective at reducing harvest of larger, older kings that the in-river guided and sport fishery has selectively harvested for years. ER Kenai Kings require additional in-river protection and we fully support the proposals that seek to do that. We support increasing the slot limit to include 42” - 46” kings in an effort to conserve more large females. Large females are underrepresented in recent escapements and we believe increasing the slot limit will help protect future returns. This, combined with additional spawning bed protections will hopefully allow more fecund kings to successfully spawn, helping return this run to its historic abundance and age/sex composition.

Group 4: Early and Late- Run Kenai River King Salmon

We fully support proposal 219, which would offer more protection to spawning Kenai Kings. All Kenai River Kings need additional in-river protection from selective harvest on their spawning beds. This is an effective means of protecting a spawning population of kings from an in-river sport and commercial fishery with no limits on participation. It is a true conservation effort to ensure that Kenai King Salmon are around for future generations

Group 5: Kenai River Late- Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan, Kasilof River Sockeye Management Plan and Commercial fishing seasons, periods, and permit stacking

We support the current Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye management plan, which has provided ample opportunity and robust harvest/returns of Sockeye for all user groups. We see no need to further complicate the management plan with additional regulations. Over the last 10 years, the Kenai River Sockeye in-river run has averaged 1.9 million fish per year. We feel this has given ample harvest opportunity to all in river fisheries. Increasing goals and allocating more fish in-river is not prudent. Both the Kasilof and Kenai River have been pushing the upper limits of spawning escapement goals for the past 10 years – a trend which carries known negative effects on future yields. Countless unanswered questions and unaddressed habitat issues in our rivers undoubtedly affect the productivity of our stocks as well, and we urge the Board to take these issues into consideration when addressing the proposals which aim to place even more in-river use and increased harvest pressure on our fish.

The State of Alaska prides itself on adaptive, abundance-based management. It should be no different in Upper Cook Inlet. We are in full support of flexible management plans that give the department the appropriate tools to manage a complex mixed stock fishery. We support the proposals (165, 166, 167) that seek to modify or eliminate the mandatory commercial closures because they inhibit adaptive, abundance-based management and have no quantifiable conservation value.

We disagree with proposal 168 which uses binding language to liberalize in-river fisheries. We feel that in the face of uncertainty as to the negative effects that this unlimited powerboat fishery has had on our riparian habitat, prudent limits should be adopted for the in-river fisheries.

We support the idea of a flexible Kasilof Sockeye management plan – one that takes yield tradeoffs of other stocks into account and has both a BEG for normal times, and an OEG for times of low Kenai abundance.

We support proposal 148 which seeks to clarify in the Kasilof Sockeye management plan the board's original intent, and includes the BEG in that plan. We oppose any attempts to again raise the Kasilof escapement goal. Given the level of escapement the last several years, we strongly oppose any attempts to allocate more fish to the in-river fishery by increasing the trigger point that allows ADFG to open harvest of Kasilof Sockeye with southern setnets. We oppose additional closure windows as they limit ADFG's flexibility, and have no quantifiable conservation effect.

With regard to Proposal 126, permit stacking, we feel that the practice of dual permits simplifies the arduous task many families face of finding permit holders. Many family members must go to college, the military, or choose to leave to seek employment. Utilizing dual permits allows families to maintain



ownership of permits and leases and not risk losing them by forced transfers to non-family members. When dual permits were legalized in Cook Inlet, there was no sunset clause, and many families made business decisions based on this law. Current dual permit holders should not be penalized because there was no sunset clause and should be granted full ownership of current permits. We know of no complaints from within the Setnet fishery, and typically if there are negative impacts from permit stacking they are felt first by others within a limited fishery.

Group 6: Central District Drift and Pink Salmon Management Plans, fishing seasons, permit stacking and coho salmon

We look forward to working with the BOF and the public on any changes needed to the drift management plan in order to assure adequate harvest opportunity to all user groups and the sustainable management of our fisheries.

We support the existence of a UCI Pink Salmon management plan because UCI Pink Salmon are a tremendously underutilized resource. Unfortunately, the current plan is not practical or effective. We look forward to discussing changes to this plan that increase its effectiveness while maintaining flexibility for the department's management objectives.

In keeping with adaptive fishery management plans, we fully support proposal 116. Even when escapement goals have been met or exceeded, the "1%" rule closes the ESSN fishery arbitrarily if sockeye harvest numbers dip. This provision has prohibited available surplus salmon stocks from being harvested, resulting in significant economic loss. This "1% rule" inhibits biologically based escapement goal management and results in foregone harvest at a time (late season) with less overall participation and fishing pressure and more accurate run predictions.

Committee A: Personal Use

We feel that the Kenai and Kasilof personal use fisheries are a very valuable fishery for Alaskans. With free licenses, generous bag limits, effective harvest methods, and unlimited participation, it's no surprise that the P.U. fishery is the fastest growing fishery in Alaska's road-accessible salmon streams. The growth has been explosive, and has outpaced solutions to the challenges of data collection, enforcement, habitat protection, and reasonable harvest allocation in a fishery that has been fully allocated for decades. Alaska's Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy (5 AAC 39.222) directs this board to manage our fully allocated Sockeye fishery consistent with some sort of management plan, limit, or "sideboard". Therefore, we support the proposals which encourage accurate, timely, and accountable record keeping in this and all fisheries, and those which seek to place reasonable harvest guidelines on this fishery relative to current abundance and historical harvest. We also support proposals that seek solutions to some of the environmental concerns this fishery poses, such as water and noise pollution, crowding, garbage, and bank erosion.

Committee B: Cook Inlet Commercial Fishing

We support the concept behind proposal 133, which is to differentiate "small" kings from "large" kings, as the department does with their sonar project. Recent conversations with ADFG have indicated that 750mm may be a more appropriate length. Whatever the number, we feel that sport and commercial harvest alike should be recorded similarly. Fish above and below this threshold should be enumerated



separately, in keeping with the department's enumeration techniques and known differences in spawning fecundity.

Committee C: Kenai Resident Species, Guides, Boundaries and Habitat

For reasons explained below, we oppose proposals which seek any expansion of the unlimited in-river guide industry. Alternatively, we look forward to discussing solutions to issues caused by an unlimited guided sport fishery, and the growth of that fishery in some areas of our rivers. We look forward to working with board members and others to ensure that all our current fishing industries are healthy and balanced while Alaskan families and private anglers still have ample opportunity on healthy, reasonably populated waters.

We hope to have a lengthy, substantive discussion about habitat issues on our rivers. Several decades of expansion of the unlimited in-river fisheries has raised significant questions regarding these fisheries' impacts on our fish and our rivers. Current management plans require reports from ADFG demonstrating no net loss to riparian habitat from in-river fishing pressure. These studies have not been published, and in fact have not even been performed in over a decade despite evidence that the unlimited in-river sport and commercial powerboat and bank fishery has known negative effects on our river habitat.

5 AAC 39.222 clearly outlines a management directive prioritizing pristine salmon spawning, rearing, and migratory habitat. It states that:

"degraded salmon productivity resulting from habitat loss should be assessed, considered, and controlled by affected user groups, regulatory agencies, and boards when making conservation and allocation decisions."

5 AAC 39.222 also states that:

"a precautionary approach should be applied to the regulation of activities that affect essential salmon habitat."

We seek to ensure that these scientific assessments of the ecological effects of inriver fishing activity exist for all our rivers in the future, as it is the only way all users can be reasonably assured that this use is sustainable. Until scientific data is available, we feel that the above mentioned precautionary approach should be applied when considering proposals that would affect inriver habitat or use.

Committee D: Northern Cook Inlet

We hope to have discussions regarding Northern Cook Inlet which prioritize Alaska's policies of biological escapement goal management, in season flexibility, habitat preservation and reasonable user opportunity as dictated by salmon returns

Committee E: Upper Cook Inlet/Kenai/Kasilof Sport

We support the proposals which seek to protect current "rest" days for our rivers, and support those proposals which seek to establish additional "rest" days for the Kenai. Any reduction in powerboat fishing traffic on the Kenai River is perhaps the most effective and positive habitat protection measure we could adopt at a time when use on our river grows without limits.



Additionally, we look forward to finding creative solutions to the data-collection issues ADFG faces in our fisheries. We hope to see changes made that will allow ADFG to compile harvest estimates as quickly and accurately as possible, and believe that a cost-efficient, user-friendly solution exists. Timely and accurate data is an important cornerstone for insuring healthy diverse fisheries.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to discuss management solutions to the complex mixed stock fishery in Upper Cook Inlet. We seek flexible management plans that enable managers to adapt to in-season data and utilize the best science and most effective methods available. Reasonable harvest opportunity and limits must be in place for all users to ensure healthy and diverse fisheries. In addition, we must take into account the impacts of urbanization and in-river use over our spawning and rearing habitats. In times of low abundance, a fair allocation of the burden of conservation must be shared respective to historical harvest. We feel that fair and biologically based compromises can be reached between users with the help of the Alaska Board of Fish Members.

We appreciate the dedication and service of yourself and the other members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries to preserve healthy sustainable fisheries in Alaska, and look forward to working with you soon to make that a reality for all Upper Cook Inlet Salmon fisheries.

Sincerely,

The Fair Fishing 907 team.

Amber Every

Travis Every

Megan Smith

Todd Smith

Lisa Gabriel

Brian Gabriel

Sarah Hudkins



Our Mission: To support our membership through cooperative economic development and community service.

Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Monday, January 13, 2014

Sirs,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Homer Chamber of Commerce and its 500+ members, we oppose the adoption of Alaska Board of Fisheries Proposals 138, 139, 140, 142, and 143 that would restrict or close commercial drift fishing in Area 1.

The waters of Area 1 have been part of the traditional fishing grounds of the Cook Inlet Commercial Drift Fishery since statehood, and to say that Area 1 is integral to the Homer fishing economy would be an understatement.

Here is the damage that will result if this traditional and economically important fishery is taken away:

- All businesses (not only Chamber members) would lose the economic activity associated with providing for the fleet in Homer including food, fuel, supplies, gear, and professional marine trades services;
- Economic hardship would result from the reduced flow of currency through the local economy that would normally be coming from the fleet.
- Local jobs in seafood processing, marine trades and trucking will be negatively affected if fish are delivered to another port;
- The tripling of travel time for Homer-based vessels to reach the fishing grounds will result if Area 1 is closed to commercial drift fishing;
- With that, increased travel costs will force the more than 100 vessels in the Homer-based fleet to relocate to communities closer to open fishing grounds, thereby causing economic hardship on Homer families engaged in this fishery;
- The Homer Port and Harbor would lose some of the economic benefit and support that comes with normal commercial drift fish operations that include fish processing tax, warfage, ice sales, crane usage, moorage and uplands leases and storage;

Because implementation of Proposals 138, 139, 140, 142, and 143 would disproportionately affect the economic health of *one* community, we ask you to toss them out.

Sincerely,

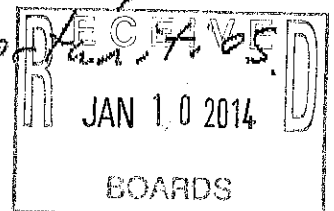
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Javarakas". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jim Javarakas
Executive Director

To whom it may concern,

I am extremely concerned with our dwindling Salmon runs in the Northern District. I have Fished Many Rivers on the Susitna Drainage and Beluga River Drainages and have noticed a rapid decrease in catch rates in the Deshta, and Olson and Coal Creeks. The Theodore river used to be my favorite river, but now is closed to fishing. Those rivers except the Deshta have very limited sport anglers and more limited catches from them in recent years. I urge the board of fisheries to limit west side and Mid Channel Cook Inlet Commercial fisheries until an adequate escapement has reached the Susitna, Theodore and Beluga Rivers for the future of these runs, not limit my already greatly reduced sport fishing opportunities.

Sincerely,
Mark Amburger
1423 N. Shoreline Dr



Hello,

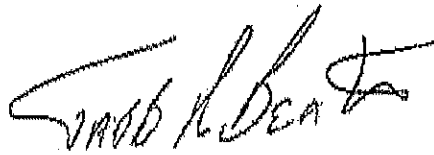
I HAVE A CABIN IN the Big Su and Deska
River Area. The Stocks of Salmon in the

Northern District have been dwindling and

I am Very concerned about this, PLEASE

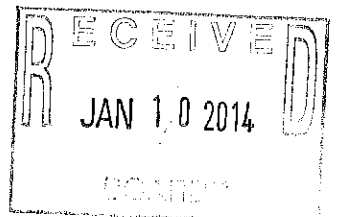
do what you can to protect my sport

fishing and personal use fishing to get
more Salmon back to these rivers.



TODD R BENTON
4150 Galactica Dr

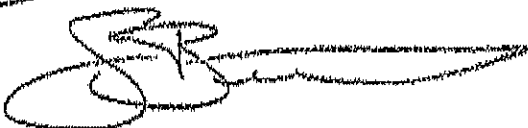
Anchorage AK, 99517



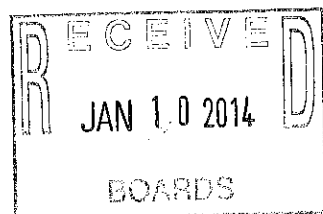
BOARD OF FISH,

PLEASE DEVELOPE AND MAINTAIN
A "CONSERVATION CORRIDOR" IN COOK

INLET TO ALLOW NORTHERN BOUND SALMON
STOCKS TO RETURN TO THE NORTHERN
DISTRICT RIVERS TO SPAWN. COMMERCIAL
FISHING IS POSTING FANTASTIC PROFITS
WHILE WE HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED A
PERSONAL USE FISHERY IN FISH CREEK.

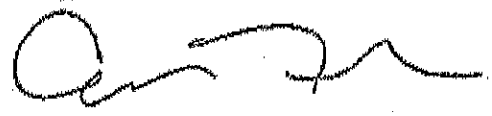
STEPHEN BARTELLI


370 W GERONIMO CIR
WASILLA AK 99654
907-376-8188



To Who it may concern:

I was camped on Kenai river during the 'red' run and was disappointed with lack of fish this past summer of 2013. Everyone I talked to expressed concern with fish management and lack of fish up river, I would have liked to participated in fish creek dipnetting this year.

Conrad Froh


8200 Sve
ANCHORAGE, AK 99502

RECEIVED
JAN 10 2014
BOARDS

From

To Whom it may Concern



I am very concerned about
fishing on the Kenai River.

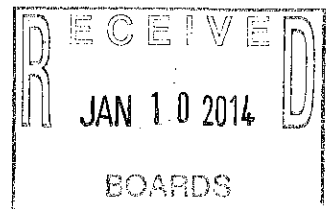
Last year was the worst I have
seen. To watch the fishing reports
and plan to go fishing only to
show up and no fish due to
commercial fishing. Please take
a look and protect my fishing
rights for sport and personal
use.

Robert M. Hall

Robert M. Hundhausen
7854 Mesquite Circle
Anchorage AK

99507

907-619-5390





TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FISH & GAME,

THE NORTHERN DISTRICT FISH IN
RIVER IS DWINDLING.

PLEASE PROTECT MY SPORT & PERSONAL USE
FISHING RIGHTS.

PLEASE ALLOW MORE FISH TO RETURN
TO OUR RIVERS.

THANK YOU

~~_____

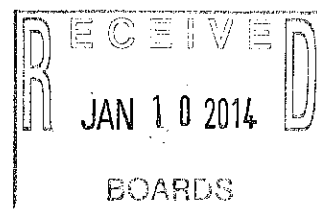
_____~~

BRIAN HEMINGWAY

P.O. Box 4698
PALMER, AK.

99645

354-3203





TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

I AM VERY CONCERNED ABOUT

THE DWINDLING SALMON STOCKS IN

THE NORTHERN DISTRICT. PLEASE

PROTECT MY FISHING RIGHTS FOR

SPORT AND PERSONAL USE BY

ALLOWING FISH TO RETURN TO

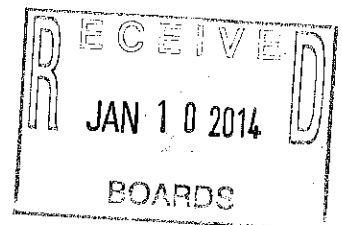
OUR RIVERS.

Ed Steil

Ed STEIL 250-2345

419 Junction RA

Junction, AK 99540






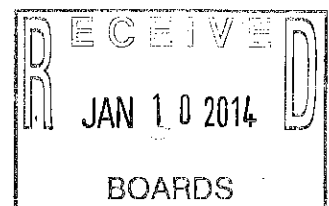
To whom it may concern;

I have been sport fishing the west side of Northern Cook Inlet for the last 20 years seeing firsthand all the rivers be systematically closed or severely restricted in that timeframe.

- The Deska has become so crowded from other valley streams being closed, I don't even try to go there anymore. The restrictions come & go so fast it's hard to tell when it is even legal to fish.
- My 5 year old son caught his first & last King Salmon from the Alexander before it closed. Now the silvers are off limits.
- The Lewis & Theodore have been restricted to catch & release ever since I had the means for access.
- I used to see a small presence of sports fishermen around the Chult but they have moved elsewhere, presumably due to lack of fish.
- I have found more pressure on the McArthur & Kustatan as more people are looking for fewer fish.
- The Little Su gets shutdown very often for kings & silvers.
- Fish creek rarely opens for sport or personal use.

The few places available to catch a King Salmon continue to be closed or restricted forcing more pressure on current "healthy" returns from operators & outfitters looking for places where they can take tourists to catch a fish. Going to a few of the remaining open crowded rivers & streams does not make for a very "Alaskan" wilderness fishing experience! These same tourists are spreading their vacation dollars over a wide range of our economy keeping many Alaskans employed. More fish in the rivers to spawn means more fish for everyone. The current trend which seems to be the opposite cannot continue for everyone's fishing future.

Andy Koelsch

7813 Wisteria St
Anchorage, AK 99502
907-243-0470

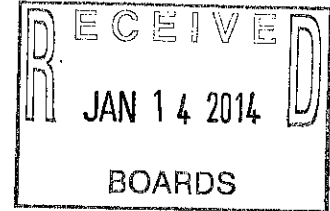


Ron Zajac
11535 quarterline rd
Manistee, MI 49660

December 28, 2013

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

Many people share my unease about the steep decline of king salmon on the Kenai River and elsewhere in Cook Inlet. It is a very important situation that demands careful consideration and action at your next fisheries meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. You must make this a priority - we need to act now before it is too late. From the many proposals for you to look at, I think these are areas to pay close attention to. I fish Alaska about on average every other year.

As ocean productivity seems to be in a general statewide decline for king salmon, I think it is a mistake to lower escapement goals as a management response. Fewer spawners seem to bear fewer fish and it can be a reinforcing downward cycle. We must have adequate numbers of spawning king salmon in our rivers. This will maximize the overall size of the returns. Larger returns greatly reduce our risks for overfishing this invaluable resource.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

All fishermen can be passionate to a fault, as our needs are always great with families to feed. However, during times of crisis everyone is responsible for the health of our fisheries. Success requires the best efforts from everyone to sustain future returns. No one should be exempt in the conservation of Kenai River king salmon.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 209 that seeks to pair restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and commercial set net fisheries and proposal 211 that seeks to allow for incremental gear restrictions in the commercial set net fisheries.

I support putting Alaskan residents first in the management of Cook Inlet salmon fisheries. Many people harvest fish to feed our families and share with friends. Access to fish is one of the primary reasons Alaskans value living in Alaska. When fishery managers put the needs of Alaskan residents behind the needs of national and global fish markets, people are justifiably resentful. Cook Inlet supports Alaska's largest sport and personal use (dipnetting) fisheries. The needs of Alaskan residents must be a top priority in Cook Inlet.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye. Sport fishermen spend about 500 dollars per fish.



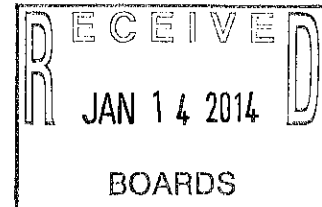
Your work on the Alaska Board of Fisheries is important. Alaska is known for its sustainable fisheries management. The crisis in low numbers of Kenai kings is a significant challenge. No other sport fishery in Alaska is as well-known as the Kenai. Your actions will shape the health of the fish and the viability of this fishery for years to come.

Sincerely,

Ron Zajac

Ron Zajac
11535 quarterline rd
Manistee, MI 49660

Email address: rzajac58@hotmail.com
Phone number: 231-723-6162
Additional information about me:
I am a Non-Resident Sport Angler

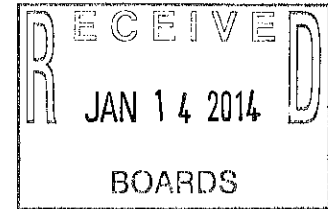


Thomas Davis
10889 S Kings Ranch RD
Hereford, AZ 85615

January 2, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

Many people share my unease about the steep decline of king salmon on the Kenai River and elsewhere in Cook Inlet. It is a very important situation that demands careful consideration and action at your next fisheries meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. You must make this a priority - we need to act now before it is too late. From the many proposals for you to look at, I think these are areas to pay close attention to. I spend much of my adult life in Alaska working, sport fishing and charter fishing and now that I am retired I come back each summer to visit and fish. With the reduction in fishing on the Kenai and the proposals of reduction of the Halibut in Homer, these trips are becoming less likely. Many folks join me in my love for Alaska and fishing the Kenai. Those tourist dollars must mean a great deal to Alaska, addressing these issues as priorities will go far in protecting those dollars from disappearing from the states economy.

As ocean productivity seems to be in a general statewide decline for king salmon, I think it is a mistake to lower escapement goals as a management response. Fewer spawners seem to bear fewer fish and it can be a reinforcing downward cycle. We must have adequate numbers of spawning king salmon in our rivers. This will maximize the overall size of the returns. Larger returns greatly reduce our risks for overfishing this invaluable resource.

I support proposals:

#188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000

#207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

Thank you for your service to responsible fisheries management in Alaska. I can think of no higher priority than to deal successfully and in a forthright manner with the crisis we are now facing with the Kenai River king salmon. Their future is in your hands.

Sincerely,

Tom Davis

Thomas Davis
10889 S Kings Ranch RD
Hereford, AZ 85615

Email address: tdavis193@yahoo.com

Phone number: 520 366 5265

Additional information about me:

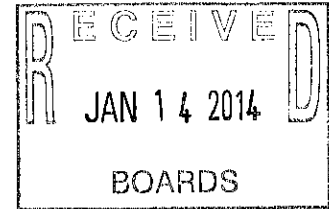
I am a Non-Resident Sport Angler, Concerned Citizen

Michael Dunn
42123 Cherry Spring Lane
Leesburg, VA 20176

January 2, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

In areas like the Kenai River, many people feel like I do that king salmon are more important as a sport fishery than as a commercial fishery. In my mind, the obvious decline in the number of king salmon returning to the Kenai demands your attention. When returns, catch rates, and angler hours all drop by three quarters in less than a decade, something is wrong and business as usual is no longer acceptable. At the fast approaching Board of Fisheries meetings for Cook Inlet, please make king salmon management a priority consideration.

Although I am not an Alaska resident, I have spent many pleasurable hours fishing for kings on the Kenai River. This is a precious resource that draws thousands of people like me to Alaska whenever possible. To do nothing, and allow this source of Alaskan pride to disappear would be irresponsible, and tragic. All I and others are asking is that the Board of Fisheries do the job it has been entrusted to do. This includes a responsible management plan for king salmon.

It is an injustice to manage important Cook Inlet king salmon fisheries for the yield interests of commercial fisheries instead of maximum sustained returns that would benefit all user groups. Such management shortchanges everyone by reducing future returns and invites overfishing. It is vital to have adequate numbers of spawning king salmon.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

The fix to the management failure of not providing Alaskan residents a reasonable opportunity to harvest meaningful numbers of fish for food is not directing them to purchase those same fish from commercial fishermen. That tactic is just insulting to Alaskans who want to harvest their own fish for personal consumption and to share with family and friends. In the Cook Inlet region, the harvest needs of 200,000 resident and non-resident anglers and the more than 30,000 personal use (dipnetting) households must be a top management priority, not an afterthought based on incidental escapement in the prosecution of commercial fisheries.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter. The conservation and sustainability of Kenai River king salmon rests in your able hands. The fish come first!



Sincerely,

Michael E. Dunn

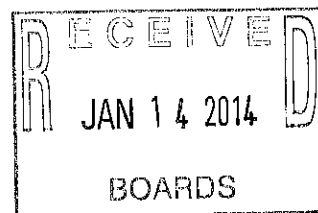
Michael Dunn
42123 Cherry Spring Lane
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Email address: mdunn@dunnassoc.com

Phone number: 703-527-6644

Additional information about me:

I am a Non-Resident Sport Angler





David Ross
1120 Huffman Road
Anchorage, AK 99515

January 4, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

The upcoming Board of Fisheries meeting for Upper Cook Inlet will be critical for the sustainability of Kenai River king salmon and all other kings in Cook Inlet, many of which are stocks of concern. The abrupt fall in numbers of kings in the Inlet should be a red flag to all concerned parties. I urge you to action to deal with the conservation of kings at your upcoming meeting. My views on certain proposals are as follows.

Adequate numbers of king salmon must be allowed to spawn. We must manage the Kenai River king run for maximum sustained return, not for minimum escapement goals. Managing for lower numbers of spawning king salmon is a bad idea and leaves no room for margin of error. Recent returns show a change from the historical norms: there are now a larger proportion of younger fish; all fish are smaller at age; there are a larger proportion of immature males; and there are a smaller number of the larger, more fecund females. All of these issues with the quality of the more recent king salmon escapements points to taking a precautionary, conservative management approach.

I support proposals:

#188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000

#207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

All fishermen can be passionate to a fault, as our needs are always great with families to feed. However, during times of crisis everyone is responsible for the health of our fisheries. Success requires the best efforts from everyone to sustain future returns. No one should be exempt in the conservation of Kenai River king salmon.

I support proposals:

#209: Paired restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and set net fisheries

#211: Allows for incremental gear restrictions for set net fisheries

Alaska residents should not have to buy our fish back from commercial fishermen. There should be increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal-use fishing for sockeye on the Kenai River. I support the expanded use of the commercial drift-gillnet fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye in Upper Cook Inlet.

I support proposals:

#169: Kenai sockeye bag limit starts at 6, not 3

#161: Allow more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River

#112: Raise trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing

#156: Mandate Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing

#248: Coho bag limit of 3 when set net fishery closes

#126: Prohibit commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits



#139: Expand time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues. I appreciate your consideration of my thoughts and concerns. As you consider the many proposals, remember - Long Live the Kings!
Sincerely,

David Ross

David Ross
1120 Huffman Road
Anchorage, AK 99515

Email address: davidross@acsalaska.net

Phone number: 907-903-9555

Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Concerned Citizen

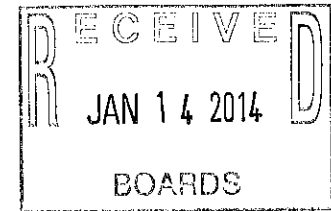


Ron McAlpin
PO Box 809
Soldotna, AK 99669

January 5, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

Kenai kings are world famous for their quality as a sport fish. However, the sharp drop in numbers and increase in restrictions / closures for king fishing on the Kenai now make headlines. Just meeting minimum escapements is not enough. Barely scraping by does not do this once premier sport fishery justice. You must take up proper consideration of king salmon management and conservation at the next Upper Cook Inlet meeting of the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

I'm a 46 year Alaska resident. I've fished the Kenai river for 43 of those years, I've owned property on the river for 23 of them and while I have fished for kings many times, I've released more than I've taken from the river. I always thought king salmon to be the most exciting of all Alaskan species and their conservation in the Kenai river to be of paramount importance. I believe their decline to current levels is a direct result of abismal and one-sided fisheries management. Current ADF&G practices must change, perhaps forever. The Kings must be saved for everyone and for generations as yet unborn.

It is an injustice to manage important Cook Inlet king salmon fisheries for the yield interests of commercial fisheries instead of maximum sustained returns that would benefit all user groups. Such management shortchanges everyone by reducing future returns and invites overfishing. It is vital to have adequate numbers of spawning king salmon.

I support proposals:

#188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000

#207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

During times of scarcity for any fishery resource, the right thing to do is to make all user groups share equitably in the burden of conservation. All major indicators show a steep decline in Kenai River king salmon. All user groups must share equitably in the burden of Kenai River king salmon conservation. It is a shared responsibility to maintain the future and health of this resource.

I support proposals:

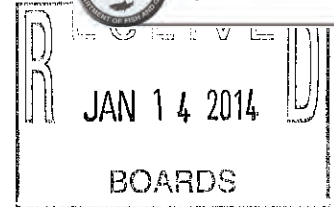
#209: Paired restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and set net fisheries

#211: Allows for incremental gear restrictions for set net fisheries

Commercial fisheries in Alaska do a great job in providing food resources to national and global markets. However, the majority of Alaskans do not want to be dependent upon that supply chain for an essential food source for their families. Many Alaskans put fish in their freezers from a rod and reel and / or dipnet. Nowhere do more Alaskan families depend upon access and opportunity to harvest fish than in Cook Inlet, home to the state's largest sport and personal use (dipnet) fisheries. I favor reasonable opportunities for Alaskans to harvest meaningful numbers of fish for consumption.

I support proposals:

#169: Kenai sockeye bag limit starts at 6, not 3



- #161: Allow more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River
- #112: Raise trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing
- #156: Mandate Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing
- #248: Coho bag limit of 3 when set net fishery closes
- #126: Prohibit commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits
- #139: Expand time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye

The Kenai river is a world class water body. The richness of its beauty and the creatures it can support is phenominal. However, I've witnessed a protacted decline of one of the most important of its species over the past 20 plus years and yet there has been nothing done to effectively improve the management of Chinook salmon. Certainly increasingly more stringent regulations have been promulgated to limit sport fishery take, obiously with little impact or success. The species is now in crisis. It is time to finally make the hard decisions to change, limit or control the major contributor to the problem, COMMERCIAL FISHING! I urge the Board to stand up for the resource rather than to cave to the com-fish lobby. Thank you for your service to responsible fisheries management in Alaska. I can think of no higher priority than to deal successfully and in a forthright manner with the crisis we are now facing with the Kenai River king salmon. Their future is in your hands.

Sincerely,

Ron McAlpin

Ron McAlpin
PO Box 809
Soldotna, AK 99669

Email address: rmcalpin@akrange.com

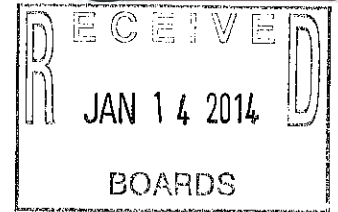
Phone number: 907-227-2750

Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Conservationist, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen



Lori Ross
2108 Woodlawn Drive
Medford, OR 97504



January 5, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

The upcoming Board of Fisheries meeting for Upper Cook Inlet will be critical for the sustainability of Kenai River king salmon and all other kings in Cook Inlet, many of which are stocks of concern. The abrupt fall in numbers of kings in the Inlet should be a red flag to all concerned parties. I urge you to action to deal with the conservation of kings at your upcoming meeting. My views on certain proposals are as follows.

I visited Alaska/Kenai area in July of 2013. While there I and the other members of our group were unable to fish for kings due to low numbers and overfishing by commercial fisherman. I would be disinclined to spend my travel dollars again in Alaska if this is to be the pattern. If sports fisherman have limits then so should commercial fisherman. This is needed to protect the kings and protect ways of life of both fisherman and those who earn a living from sports fishermen/tourists. With PROPER management all sides of this issue can be satisfied.

King salmon are a sport fish priority in Cook Inlet salmon fisheries. Sport fisheries benefit more from greater abundances of fish, not less. We benefit from managing Kenai River king salmon fisheries for maximum sustained return, not minimum escapement goals. Making sure we have healthy escapements to deliver larger returns of kings is critical.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

All fishermen can be passionate to a fault, as our needs are always great with families to feed. However, during times of crisis everyone is responsible for the health of our fisheries. Success requires the best efforts from everyone to sustain future returns. No one should be exempt in the conservation of Kenai River king salmon.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 209 that seeks to pair restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and commercial set net fisheries and proposal 211 that seeks to allow for incremental gear restrictions in the commercial set net fisheries.

I support putting Alaskan residents first in the management of Cook Inlet salmon fisheries. Many people harvest fish to feed our families and share with friends. Access to fish is one of the primary reasons Alaskans value living in Alaska. When fishery managers puts the needs of Alaskan residents behind the needs of national and global fish markets, people are justifiably resentful. Cook Inlet supports Alaska's largest sport and personal use (dipnetting) fisheries. The needs of Alaskan residents must be a top priority in Cook Inlet.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to



open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye. These issues are important as they are the processes I see that can support all visions. Kenai River king salmon have a special place in my heart - I care deeply about them. All the best as you work towards effective solutions in ensuring their sustainability as one of the world's greatest sport fisheries. Fish On!

Sincerely,

Lori Ross

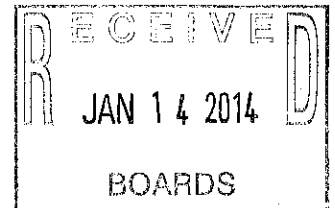
Lori Ross
2108 Woodlawn Drive
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Email address: laros800@aol.com

Phone number: 541 941 9235

Additional information about me:

I am a Non-Resident Sport Angler, Concerned Citizen

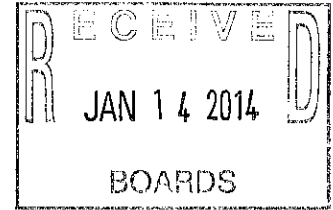




Maria Robinson
12901 Ridgeview Dr
Anchorage, AK 99516

January 5, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery



Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

I am very concerned about the decline of king salmon in Cook Inlet, especially on the Kenai River. Kenai kings are important and must not be ignored. The health of king salmon is now threatened. When you consider actions at your next meeting, please keep these ideas in mind.

King salmon are a sport fish priority in Cook Inlet salmon fisheries. Sport fisheries benefit more from greater abundances of fish, not less. We benefit from managing Kenai River king salmon fisheries for maximum sustained return, not minimum escapement goals. Making sure we have healthy escapements to deliver larger returns of kings is critical.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

The Alaska Sustainable Salmon Policy directs that the burden of conservation will be applied to users in close proportion to the users' respective harvest of the salmon stock. Where the impact of resource use is uncertain, but likely presents a measureable risk to sustained yield, priority should be given to conserving the productive capacity of the resource. All user groups need to bear in the burden of conservation of Kenai River king salmon in an equitable manner.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 209 that seeks to pair restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and commercial set net fisheries and proposal 211 that seeks to allow for incremental gear restrictions in the commercial set net fisheries.

Alaska residents should not have to buy our fish back from commercial fishermen. There should be increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal-use fishing for sockeye on the Kenai River. I support the expanded use of the commercial drift-gillnet fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye in Upper Cook Inlet.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye.

Fighting a king salmon is definitely the biggest thrill ever! Catching a kenai king has been on my bucket list for years! A few years ago I finally booked w a guide only to have the fishery closed due to poor return! We must do everything possible to save this precious species from disappearing all together!



Thank you for your service to responsible fisheries management in Alaska. I can think of no higher priority than to deal successfully and in a forthright manner with the crisis we are now facing with the Kenai River king salmon. Their future is in your hands.

Sincerely,

Maria Robinson

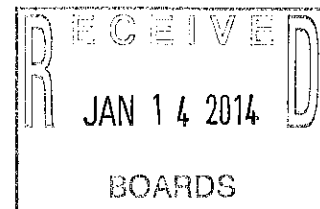
Maria Robinson
12901 Ridgeview Dr
Anchorage, AK 99516

Email address: lmrobin6389@gmail.com

Phone number: 907 753-1110

Additional information about me:

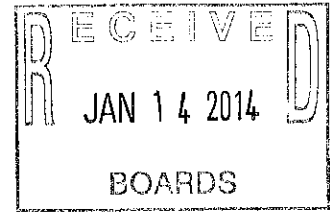
I am a Resident Sport Angler, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen





Adam Bowens
3450 nova cir
Anchorage , AK 99517

January 6, 2014



RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

Many people share my unease about the steep decline of king salmon on the Kenai River and elsewhere in Cook Inlet. It is a very important situation that demands careful consideration and action at your next fisheries meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. You must make this a priority - we need to act now before it is too late. From the many proposals for you to look at, I think these are areas to pay close attention to. It is short-sighted to manage a fully allocated resource with multiple groups wanting fish on the basis of yield instead of maximizing the overall returns. A larger pie allows more fish to be utilized by more users. Put more king salmon into the Kenai River to spawn, not less. Lowering the escapement goals for kings is not a viable or responsible long-term policy.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

When one group is restricted, all should be restricted. We should place paired restrictions upon sport, personal-use and commercial set net fisheries so that all participants share in the burden of conservation equitably in times of scarcity. Commercial set net fishermen must share in the conservation of Kenai kings; once bait and or harvest restrictions occur in the sport fishery, commercial fishermen must be restricted to regular periods only.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 209 that seeks to pair restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and commercial set net fisheries and proposal 211 that seeks to allow for incremental gear restrictions in the commercial set net fisheries.

I support increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal use (dipnetting) fishing in Cook Inlet. Alaskans greatly depend upon the fish harvested in these fisheries. The social, recreational, cultural and economic values generated in these fisheries are much greater in value than those generated in the area's commercial salmon fisheries. As a public resource, it makes most sense to manage Cook Inlet salmon resources for the greatest number of Alaskans - those that fish and harvest in the sport and personal use (dipnetting) fisheries.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye. The Alaska Board of Fisheries faces an urgent responsibility to give clear direction on how best to mitigate the king salmon disaster occurring in Cook Inlet and on the Kenai River. Simply lowering



escapement numbers and then maintaining status quo management is not a recipe for long-term success. I urge you to take the necessary time to fully work through the king salmon conservation and management issues at your next meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. There is no higher priority than this.

Sincerely,

Adam Bowens

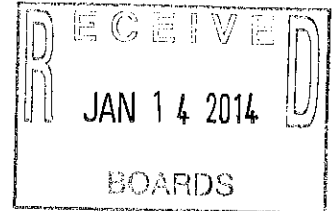
Adam Bowens
3450 nova cir
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Email address: aidenmchail@gmail.com

Phone number: 9077645609

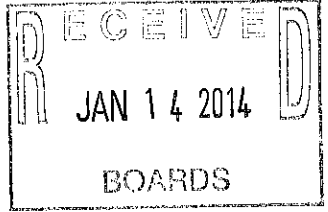
Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Conservationist, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen





James Grotha
1360 West 70th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99518



January 6, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

I am writing this letter to express my concerns about fish issues in Cook Inlet. I am very worried about the lack of king salmon. The Board of Fisheries must deal with the scarcity of kings in Cook Inlet at the next board meeting in Anchorage. There are many proposals to consider, but I want to talk about a few that are important to me.

56 year resident in Alaska and Alaska Native -

It is an injustice to manage important Cook Inlet king salmon fisheries for the yield interests of commercial fisheries instead of maximum sustained returns that would benefit all user groups. Such management shortchanges everyone by reducing future returns and invites overfishing. It is vital to have adequate numbers of spawning king salmon.

I support proposals:

- #188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000
- #207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

In these times of historic low returns of king salmon to Cook Inlet and especially to the Kenai River, all user groups must share equitably in the burden of conservation. Sport anglers have seen harvest rates on the Kenai River for king salmon decline by 95 percent, while personal use (dipnetters) have foregone any harvest opportunity for Kenai kings the last two years. Meanwhile, in 2013, despite record-low numbers of king salmon, a severely restricted sport fishery and escapement goals barely being met, commercial set net sockeye fishermen were granted significant net-in-the-water time until near the end of the season.

I support proposals:

- #209: Paired restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and set net fisheries
- #211: Allows for incremental gear restrictions for set net fisheries

I support putting Alaskan residents first in the management of Cook Inlet salmon fisheries. Many people harvest fish to feed our families and share with friends. Access to fish is one of the primary reasons Alaskans value living in Alaska. When fishery managers puts the needs of Alaskan residents behind the needs of national and global fish markets, people are justifiably resentful. Cook Inlet supports Alaska's largest sport and personal use (dipnetting) fisheries. The needs of Alaskan residents must be a top priority in Cook Inlet.

I support proposals:

- #169: Kenai sockeye bag limit starts at 6, not 3
- #161: Allow more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River
- #112: Raise trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing
- #156: Mandate Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing



#248: Coho bag limit of 3 when set net fishery closes

#126: Prohibit commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits

#139: Expand time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye

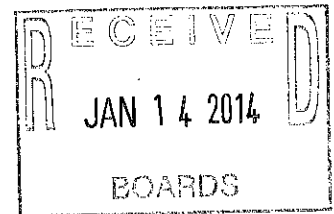
Pass State legislation which reinstates Title 8 of ANICLA section 804- for Kasilof river, Kenai river & Fish Creek i.e. in time of shortage subsistence users have a priority - not the commercial fisheries. This is a matter of cultural survival of Alaska's people (users) not commercial businesses (taxable monies). Title VIII states in part...: Sec. 803: Subsistence users are "...customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents of wild renewable resources..." Residence zones were established for subsistence eligibility inside National Park areas. Sec. 804: When resources are low, subsistence people get the priority. When not all subsistence uses can be accommodated, further restrictions based on: a. customary and direct dependence; b. local residency; c. availability of alternative resources.

Kenai River king salmon have a special place in my heart - I care deeply about them. All the best as you work towards effective solutions in ensuring their sustainability as one of the world's greatest sport fisheries. Fish On!

Sincerely,

James Grotha

James Grotha
1360 West 70th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99518

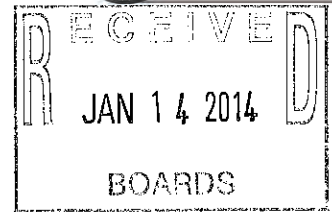


Email address: cirinative@gci.net

Phone number: 907-349-0139

Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen



Becky Hutchinson
PO Box 2585
Soldotna, AK 99669

January 6, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

Many people share my unease about the steep decline of king salmon on the Kenai River and elsewhere in Cook Inlet. It is a very important situation that demands careful consideration and action at your next fisheries meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. You must make this a priority - we need to act now before it is too late. From the many proposals for you to look at, I think these are areas to pay close attention to. I've been a resident of Soldotna for 29 years and intend to spend the rest of my life here. I have enjoyed sport fishing and dip-netting on the Kenai River since I was child.

Adequate numbers of king salmon must be allowed to spawn. We must manage the Kenai River king run for maximum sustained return, not for minimum escapement goals. Managing for lower numbers of spawning king salmon is a bad idea and leaves no room for margin of error. Recent returns show a change from the historical norms: there are now a larger proportion of younger fish; all fish are smaller at age; there are a larger proportion of immature males; and there are a smaller number of the larger, more fecund females. All of these issues with the quality of the more recent king salmon escapements points to taking a precautionary, conservative management approach.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

When one group is restricted, all should be restricted. We should place paired restrictions upon sport, personal-use and commercial set net fisheries so that all participants share in the burden of conservation equitably in times of scarcity. Commercial set net fishermen must share in the conservation of Kenai kings; once bait and or harvest restrictions occur in the sport fishery, commercial fishermen must be restricted to regular periods only.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 209 that seeks to pair restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and commercial set net fisheries and proposal 211 that seeks to allow for incremental gear restrictions in the commercial set net fisheries.

The fix to the management failure of not providing Alaskan residents a reasonable opportunity to harvest meaningful numbers of fish for food is not directing them to purchase those same fish from commercial fishermen. That tactic is just insulting to Alaskans who want to harvest their own fish for personal consumption and to share with family and friends. In the Cook Inlet region, the harvest needs of 200,000 resident and non-resident anglers and the more than 30,000 personal use (dipnetting) households must be a top management priority, not an afterthought based on incidental escapement in the prosecution of commercial fisheries.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to



open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye.

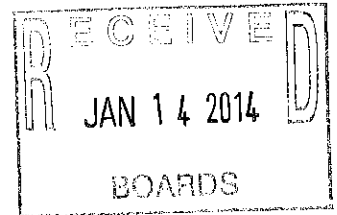
Taking these measures now to save our King Salmon and ensure that tourism continues strong in our area is critical to our economic diversity, and is important for our quality of life here.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries faces an urgent responsibility to give clear direction on how best to mitigate the king salmon disaster occurring in Cook Inlet and on the Kenai River. Simply lowering escapement numbers and then maintaining status quo management is not a recipe for long-term success. I urge you to take the necessary time to fully work through the king salmon conservation and management issues at your next meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. There is no higher priority than this.

Sincerely,

Becky Hutchinson

Becky Hutchinson
PO Box 2585
Soldotna, AK 99669



Email address: becky2@eaglestation.com

Phone number: 907-262-5256

Additional information about me:

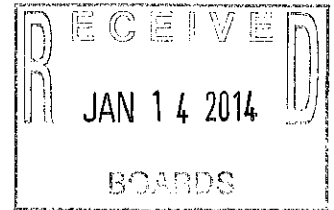
I am a Resident Sport Angler, Conservationist, Concerned Citizen

Kerri Rehak
PO BOX 874466
Wasilla, AK 99687

January 6, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

I am writing this letter to express my concerns about fish issues in Cook Inlet. I am very worried about the lack of king salmon. The Board of Fisheries must deal with the scarcity of kings in Cook Inlet at the next board meeting in Anchorage. There are many proposals to consider, but I want to talk about a few that are important to me.

My name is Kerri Rehak and I am a life-long resident of Alaska (32 years). Our family takes pride in the abundant resources that our state is able to boast about and often take relatives out for the Great Alaskan Adventure. Fishing is our family's #1 past time. We enjoy fishing our numerous rivers and even occasionally get the opportunity to venture out into Prince William Sound. The combat fishing tactics of the commercial boats is a sight that rivals combat fishing on the banks of the Russian River. It weighs in our minds as a family the amount of by-catch that is allowed to take place, which essentially wastes the resource in my opinion. There needs to be new more equitable measures put in place to allow both commercial and sport anglers to coexist. Sport Anglers should not bear the weight of the restrictions. A lot of people that I know have been on the banks and watched the Sockeye runs explode after the commercial fishery is closed to me this speaks a thousand words.

Managing for the low end of the escapement goal for Kenai River king salmon is not good public policy. We need more kings in the river to spawn, not less. More fish in future years means everyone benefits. Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

Sport, personal use and commercial set net fisheries can all fish but must share equitably in the burden of king salmon conservation. To assure future sustainable and healthy king salmon returns to the Kenai River, everyone must be held accountable for their harvest and mortality of kings. Without accountability for all user groups, there will be no conservation success stories for king salmon.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 209 that seeks to pair restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and commercial set net fisheries and proposal 211 that seeks to allow for incremental gear restrictions in the commercial set net fisheries.

Alaska residents should not have to buy our fish back from commercial fishermen. There should be increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal-use fishing for sockeye on the Kenai River. I support the expanded use of the commercial drift-gillnet fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye in Upper Cook Inlet.

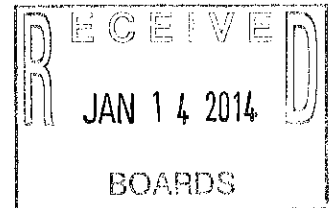
Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for



Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye. I wish that my children are able to grow-up and enjoy the resources and experiences of my childhood. The Alaska Board of Fisheries faces an urgent responsibility to give clear direction on how best to mitigate the king salmon disaster occurring in Cook Inlet and on the Kenai River. Simply lowering escapement numbers and then maintaining status quo management is not a recipe for long-term success. I urge you to take the necessary time to fully work through the king salmon conservation and management issues at your next meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. There is no higher priority than this. Sincerely,

Kerri Rehak

Kerri Rehak
PO BOX 874466
Wasilla, AK 99687



Email address: kerristol@yahoo.com

Phone number: 907-301-4603

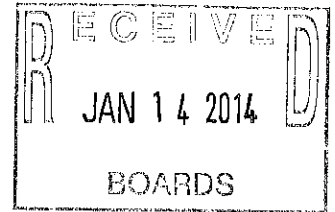
Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Conservationist, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen

Timothy Hilliard
2559 West Stable Circle
Wasilla, AK 99623

January 6, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery



Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

I am writing this letter to express my concerns about fish issues in Cook Inlet. I am very worried about the lack of king salmon. The Board of Fisheries must deal with the scarcity of kings in Cook Inlet at the next board meeting in Anchorage. There are many proposals to consider, but I want to talk about a few that are important to me.

Managing for the low end of the escapement goal for Kenai River king salmon is not good public policy. We need more kings in the river to spawn, not less. More fish in future years means everyone benefits.

I support proposals:

#188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000

#207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

In these times of historic low returns of king salmon to Cook Inlet and especially to the Kenai River, all user groups must share equitably in the burden of conservation. Sport anglers have seen harvest rates on the Kenai River for king salmon decline by 95 percent, while personal use (dipnetters) have foregone any harvest opportunity for Kenai kings the last two years. Meanwhile, in 2013, despite record-low numbers of king salmon, a severely restricted sport fishery and escapement goals barely being met, commercial set net sockeye fishermen were granted significant net-in-the-water time until near the end of the season.

I support proposals:

#209: Paired restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and set net fisheries

#211: Allows for incremental gear restrictions for set net fisheries

I support increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal use (dipnetting) fishing in Cook Inlet. Alaskans greatly depend upon the fish harvested in these fisheries. The social, recreational, cultural and economic values generated in these fisheries are much greater in value than those generated in the area's commercial salmon fisheries. As a public resource, it makes most sense to manage Cook Inlet salmon resources for the greatest number of Alaskans - those that fish and harvest in the sport and personal use (dipnetting) fisheries.

I support proposals:

#169: Kenai sockeye bag limit starts at 6, not 3

#161: Allow more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River

#112: Raise trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing

#156: Mandate Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing

#248: Coho bag limit of 3 when set net fishery closes

#126: Prohibit commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits

#139: Expand time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye

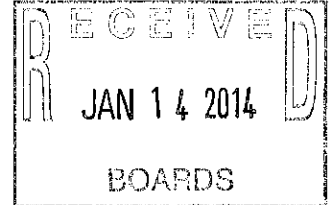


Service on the Alaska Board of Fisheries is time-consuming and important work. Thank you for the chance to share my ideas. I trust that you recognize the critical state facing king salmon on the Kenai River and in Cook Inlet. I wish you and your colleagues on the board good fortune as you tackle these matters.

Sincerely,

Timothy A Hilliard

Timothy Hilliard
2559 West Stable Circle
Wasilla, AK 99623



Email address: timh2661@yahoo.com

Phone number: 9073768288

Additional information about me:

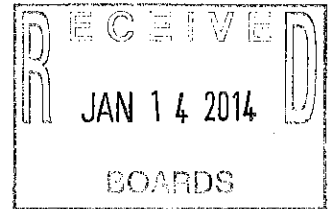
I am a Resident Sport Angler, Conservationist, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen

Cody Kreitel
6605 McGill Way Unit B
Anchorage, AK 99502

January 7, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

In areas like the Kenai River, many people feel like I do that king salmon are more important as a sport fishery than as a commercial fishery. In my mind, the obvious decline in the number of king salmon returning to the Kenai demands your attention. When returns, catch rates, and angler hours all drop by three quarters in less than a decade, something is wrong and business as usual is no longer acceptable. At the fast approaching Board of Fisheries meetings for Cook Inlet, please make king salmon management a priority consideration.

I grew up fishing on the Kenai River and all over Southcentral Alaska. As a kid, I was in awe at the size and numbers of fish that were so abundant in our local waters. I thought there were so many fish in such a pristine habitat that it would always be that way. Sadly, that reality is slipping away. For the last 5 years I have excluded myself from any sportfishing for King Salmon in a personal effort to make a difference. I wish this were not the case. I want to resume fishing for Kenai Kings and I think all involved in the use of the resource - commercial, personal use, and sport - should share the burden of conservation equally so that our future generations can enjoy these amazing fish the same way I have.

Cody Kreitel - Alaskan Born Alaska Resident

Adequate numbers of king salmon must be allowed to spawn. We must manage the Kenai River king run for maximum sustained return, not for minimum escapement goals. Managing for lower numbers of spawning king salmon is a bad idea and leaves no room for margin of error. Recent returns show a change from the historical norms: there are now a larger proportion of younger fish; all fish are smaller at age; there are a larger proportion of immature males; and there are a smaller number of the larger, more fecund females. All of these issues with the quality of the more recent king salmon escapements points to taking a precautionary, conservative management approach.

I support proposals:

#188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000

#207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

When one group is restricted, all should be restricted. We should place paired restrictions upon sport, personal-use and commercial set net fisheries so that all participants share in the burden of conservation equitably in times of scarcity. Commercial set net fishermen must share in the conservation of Kenai kings; once bait and or harvest restrictions occur in the sport fishery, commercial fishermen must be restricted to regular periods only.

I support proposals:

#209: Paired restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and set net fisheries

#211: Allows for incremental gear restrictions for set net fisheries



Alaska residents should not have to buy our fish back from commercial fishermen. There should be increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal-use fishing for sockeye on the Kenai River. I support the expanded use of the commercial drift-gillnet fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye in Upper Cook Inlet.

I support proposals:

#169: Kenai sockeye bag limit starts at 6, not 3

#161: Allow more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River

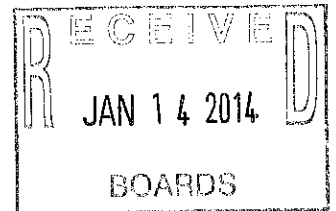
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#248: Coho bag limit of 3 when set net fishery closes

#126: Prohibit commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits

#139: Expand time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye



I am a life-time Alaska resident and have enjoyed the abundance our rivers provide. I hope my children and grand-children can enjoy the same bounty. It is not only important for personal self-reliance but also as a family bonding moment when sport-fishing or dipnetting for salmon. We need to protect these resources in a sustainable manner so that the abundance can continue indefinitely. Current commercial interests should never be put ahead of the long-term sustainability of a fish and wildlife resources. I am for commercial fishing. I love sportfishing. I would like to see both of these industries in Cook Inlet survive for many more generations.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries faces an urgent responsibility to give clear direction on how best to mitigate the king salmon disaster occurring in Cook Inlet and on the Kenai River. Simply lowering escapement numbers and then maintaining status quo management is not a recipe for long-term success. I urge you to take the necessary time to fully work through the king salmon conservation and management issues at your next meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. There is no higher priority than this.

Sincerely,

Cody Kreitel

Cody Kreitel
6605 McGill Way Unit B
Anchorage, AK 99502

Email address: ckreitel@nge-tft.com

Phone number: 9079035900

Additional information about me:

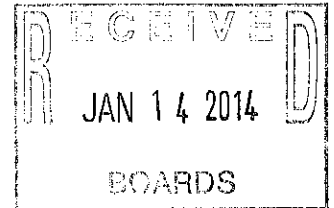
I am a Resident Sport Angler, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen

James Fena/Shirley Alberg
35555 K Spur Hwy #247
Soldotna, AK 99669

January 7, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery

Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

In areas like the Kenai River, many people feel like I do that king salmon are more important as a sport fishery than as a commercial fishery. In my mind, the obvious decline in the number of king salmon returning to the Kenai demands your attention. When returns, catch rates, and angler hours all drop by three quarters in less than a decade, something is wrong and business as usual is no longer acceptable. At the fast approaching Board of Fisheries meetings for Cook Inlet, please make king salmon management a priority consideration.

We are permanent residents of Sterling AK, mile 32 of the Kenai river. We have 10-20 guests during the months of June, July and August who come to enjoy Alaska's beautiful scenery and participate in the Kenai River Sport Fishery bringing many dollars in revenue to the state and Kenai Borough. Please protect our king and red salmon fishery.

Adequate numbers of king salmon must be allowed to spawn. We must manage the Kenai River king run for maximum sustained return, not for minimum escapement goals. Managing for lower numbers of spawning king salmon is a bad idea and leaves no room for margin of error. Recent returns show a change from the historical norms: there are now a larger proportion of younger fish; all fish are smaller at age; there are a larger proportion of immature males; and there are a smaller number of the larger, more fecund females. All of these issues with the quality of the more recent king salmon escapements points to taking a precautionary, conservative management approach.

I support proposals:

#188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000

#207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

The Alaska Sustainable Salmon Policy directs that the burden of conservation will be applied to users in close proportion to the users' respective harvest of the salmon stock. Where the impact of resource use is uncertain, but likely presents a measureable risk to sustained yield, priority should be given to conserving the productive capacity of the resource. All user groups need to bear in the burden of conservation of Kenai River king salmon in an equitable manner.

I support proposals:

#209: Paired restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and set net fisheries

#211: Allows for incremental gear restrictions for set net fisheries

I support increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal use (dipnetting) fishing in Cook Inlet. Alaskans greatly depend upon the fish harvested in these fisheries. The social, recreational, cultural and economic values generated in these fisheries are much greater in value than those generated in the area's commercial salmon fisheries. As a public resource, it makes most sense to manage Cook Inlet



salmon resources for the greatest number of Alaskans - those that fish and harvest in the sport and personal use (dipnetting) fisheries.

I support proposals:

#169: Kenai sockeye bag limit starts at 6, not 3

#161: Allow more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River

#112: Raise trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing

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#248: Coho bag limit of 3 when set net fishery closes

#126: Prohibit commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits

#139: Expand time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues. I appreciate your consideration of my thoughts and concerns. As you consider the many proposals, remember - Long Live the Kings!

Sincerely,

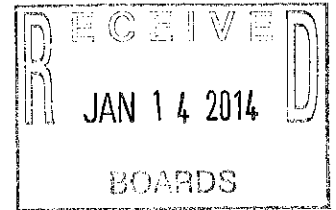
James Fena/Shirley A

James Fena/Shirley Alberg
35555 K Spur Hwy #247
Soldotna, AK 99669

Email address: j.fena@gci.net
Phone number: 9072523404

Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Conservationist, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen

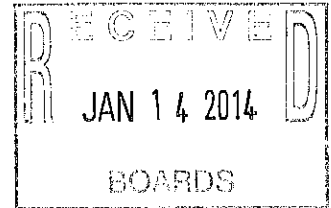




MaLai Smith
4731 Talus Drive
Anchorage, AK 99516

January 7, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery



Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

I am very concerned about the decline of king salmon in Cook Inlet, especially on the Kenai River. Kenai kings are important and must not be ignored. The health of king salmon is now threatened. When you consider actions at your next meeting, please keep these ideas in mind.

Hello, I am a lifelong Alaskan resident, and have fished here my entire life. I strongly believe that the salmon are not owned by any one special interest group. The number one goal needs to be to promote sustainability of the fishery for future generations.

Adequate numbers of king salmon must be allowed to spawn. We must manage the Kenai River king run for maximum sustained return, not for minimum escapement goals. Managing for lower numbers of spawning king salmon is a bad idea and leaves no room for margin of error. Recent returns show a change from the historical norms: there are now a larger proportion of younger fish; all fish are smaller at age; there are a larger proportion of immature males; and there are a smaller number of the larger, more fecund females. All of these issues with the quality of the more recent king salmon escapements points to taking a precautionary, conservative management approach.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 188 that seeks to maintain an optimal escapement goal of 5,300 - 9,000 for early-run Kenai kings and proposal 207 that seeks a new optimal escapement goal of 20,000 - 40,000 for late-run Kenai kings.

Commercial fisheries in Alaska do a great job in providing food resources to national and global markets. However, the majority of Alaskans do not want to be dependent upon that supply chain for an essential food source for their families. Many Alaskans put fish in their freezers from a rod and reel and / or dipnet. Nowhere do more Alaskan families depend upon access and opportunity to harvest fish than in Cook Inlet, home to the state's largest sport and personal use (dipnet) fisheries. I favor reasonable opportunities for Alaskans to harvest meaningful numbers of fish for consumption.

Therefore I am in support of proposal 169 that starts the Kenai sockeye bag limit at 6 fish, proposal 161 that allows more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River, proposal 112 that raises the trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing, proposal 156 that mandates a Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing, proposal 248 that sets a coho bag limit of 3 fish with the set net fishery closes, proposal 126 that prohibits commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits, and proposal 139 that expands time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye.

These issues are important to me because I want my kids and future generations to experience the excitement of catching salmon on rod and reel. I do not believe that future generations will have this opportunity unless we have the guts to face the facts that commercial fishing is devastating salmon runs in Alaska and other fisheries throughout the world.

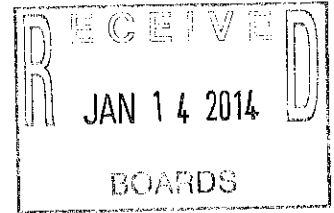


Thank you for listening to my views on these subjects. Together we can all make a lasting difference in the long term health of our fishery resources. I trust you will do the right thing when considering how best to conserve and restore once healthy salmon runs to their former glory.

Sincerely,

MaLai Smith

MaLai Smith
4731 Talus Drive
Anchorage, AK 99516



Email address: thaiflower_76@yahoo.com

Phone number: 907-222-3990

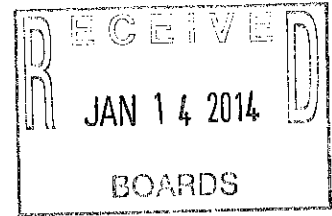
Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Conservationist, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen

James Brophy
3909 Geneva Place
Anchorage, AK 99508

January 8, 2014

RE: Letter of support for Upper Cook Inlet sport fishery



Glenn Haight
Alaska Board of Fisheries Executive Director
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chair Johnstone and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

Kenai River king salmon are world famous - but today they face an uncertain future. I urge you to take responsible action to help return these giants to a healthy population. At the upcoming Board of Fisheries for Upper Cook Inlet, I ask that you to take a serious look at king salmon conservation. These are some thoughts about issues you will consider.

I have fish the Kenai River with my family since 1970, therefore; know the river well from both the lower and upper regions. I am appalled at what lack of concern has been made to protect the mighty Chinook. I wish all Chinook fishing was limited to only catch and release and eliminate the use of netting from June - July for the following 5 years until a professional count has been subjected until adequate numbers are returned. No opportunity for by-catch should be considered. And if other Salmon species operate or return during the same Chinook return period, consider them an opportunity for those numbers to grow. Let's put the river back where it was 100 years ago and re-evaluate future harvest six years from now. Jamey Brophy 907-351-6494

It is short-sighted to manage a fully allocated resource with multiple groups wanting fish on the basis of yield instead of maximizing the overall returns. A larger pie allows more fish to be utilized by more users. Put more king salmon into the Kenai River to spawn, not less. Lowering the escapement goals for kings is not a viable or responsible long-term policy.

I support proposals:

#188: Early-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 5,300-9,000

#207: Late-run Spawning Escapement Goal of 20,000-40,000

All fishermen can be passionate to a fault, as our needs are always great with families to feed. However, during times of crisis everyone is responsible for the health of our fisheries. Success requires the best efforts from everyone to sustain future returns. No one should be exempt in the conservation of Kenai River king salmon.

I support proposals:

#209: Paired restrictions for sport, personal use (dipnet) and set net fisheries

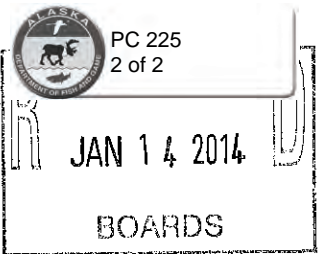
#211: Allows for incremental gear restrictions for set net fisheries

Alaska residents should not have to buy our fish back from commercial fishermen. There should be increased, meaningful opportunity for sport and personal-use fishing for sockeye on the Kenai River. I support the expanded use of the commercial drift-gillnet fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye in Upper Cook Inlet.

I support proposals:

#169: Kenai sockeye bag limit starts at 6, not 3

#161: Allow more sockeye to enter and spawn in the Kenai River



- #112: Raise trigger to open Kasilof beaches to set net fishing
- #156: Mandate Tuesday window closure for Kasilof set net fishing
- #248: Coho bag limit of 3 when set net fishery closes
- #126: Prohibit commercial set net fishermen from stacking (doubling) permits
- #139: Expand time for commercial drift fleet to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye

Kenai River king salmon have a special place in my heart - I care deeply about them. All the best as you work towards effective solutions in ensuring their sustainability as one of the world's greatest sport fisheries. Fish On!

Sincerely,

Jamey Brophy

James Brophy
3909 Geneva Place
Anchorage, AK 99508

Email address: brophyjamey@gmail.com

Phone number: 907-351-6495

Additional information about me:

I am a Resident Sport Angler, Personal Use / Dipnetter, Concerned Citizen