

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-RS-1-19-03

Issued at Soldotna, July 25, 2003

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 26, 2003

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. August 15, 2003, unless superceded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes approximately 1.5 miles of river bank to fishing at three different locations on the Kenai River. The areas closed are along the south bank of the Kenai River between approximately river mile 17.5 and 18.0, known as the Grubba property; the north bank of the Kenai River between approximately river mile 19.1 and 19.6, just upstream of the Department of Fish and Game's sockeye salmon counter; and the north bank of the Kenai River between approximately river mile 45.8 and 46.3, in the vicinity of Thompson's Hole. These areas are posted with regulatory markers delineating the closed areas. These areas are closed to all fishing, except from a boat that is located more than 10 feet from shore and not connected to the shore or any riparian habitat.

These regulatory changes are effective at 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 26, 2003.

REGULATION:

5 AAC 56.065 RIPARIAN HABITAT FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Notwithstanding 5 AAC 56.065, the following provisions are effective:

The south bank riparian habitat of the Kenai River at approximately river mile 17.5 to 18.0 as delineated by department markers is closed to all fishing except from a boat that is located more than 10 feet from shore and not connected to the shore or any riparian habitat.

The north bank riparian habitat of the Kenai River at approximately river mile 19.1 to 19.6 as delineated by department markers is closed to all fishing except from a boat that is located more than 10 feet from shore and not connected to the shore or any riparian habitat.

The north bank riparian habitat of the Kenai River at approximately river mile 45.8 to 46.3 as delineated by department markers is closed to all fishing except from a boat that is located more than 10 feet from shore and not connected to the shore or any riparian habitat.

Kevin C. Duffy,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Mark S. Gamblin,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Protection of riparian bank habitat areas is critical to assure that the fishery resources of the Kenai River are conserved for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. One threat to riparian habitat is trampling by anglers fishing for sockeye salmon. The areas listed above are critical fish habitat that has been prone to bank degradation by shoreline anglers. The objective of this emergency order is to prevent expansion of shoreline angling impacts onto these areas of critical fish habitat

Stream bank erosion with loss of critical habitat has occurred with increased shore angling activity at each of the listed locations. The Grubba property is managed by the State under an easement requiring that riparian habitat be protected from heavy angling activity. The sonar site is a grassy bank habitat with very sandy, fragile, and erosive soils that experienced a large increase in angling activity in 2001. This resulted in erosion that threatened critical habitat and potentially threatens the integrity of the sonar site immediately downstream.

The Thompson Hole area is part of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The Department of Fish and Game, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has concluded that heavy use by shore-based anglers during the sockeye salmon season has caused loss of critical riparian habitat.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 2 Office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.