

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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DIVISION OF SPORT FISH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMENDMENT TO THE 2008 COPPER RIVER PERSONAL USE DIP NET SALMON FISHERY SCHEDULE

The Chitina Subdistrict will be open from 12:00 noon **Thursday** August 28 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday August 31. There will be **no supplemental harvest** during this fishing period. This announcement does not change the twelfth opening of the Chitina Subdistrict, which will remain at 12:01 a.m. Monday August 18 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday August 24. The Chitina Subdistrict is open by regulation from 12:01 a.m. Monday September 1 through 11:59 P.M. Tuesday September 30.

As a reminder, the Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan and the Statewide Personal Use Fishing Regulations state that:

- The seasonal bag limit is a total of 15 salmon, one of which may be a king salmon for a household of one, and 30 salmon, one of which may be a king salmon for a household of two or more.
- Personal use fishers must possess **both** their Chitina Personal Use fishery permit and a valid resident sport fishing license when fishing.
- Of the total bag limit only **one king salmon can be kept.**
- **Steelhead cannot be kept,** and must be returned to the water unharmed.
- When a harvestable surplus of 50,000 salmon or greater will be present in the Chitina Subdistrict, by emergency order, a supplemental permit for 10 additional sockeye salmon will be issued to Chitina Subdistrict personal use permit holders.
- Harvest must be recorded on the permit **immediately.**
- The tips of the tail of personal use caught fish must be clipped **immediately** upon landing a fish.
- **Immediately** is defined as before concealing the salmon from plain view or transporting the salmon from the fishing site. **Fishing site** means the location where the fish was removed from the water and became part of the permit holder's bag limit.

The Miles Lake sonar ceased operation for the 2008 season on August 2. During August 4 – August 10, a total of 7,191 salmon were projected to pass the Miles Lake sonar. Copper River sockeye salmon migratory timing and the previous five-year average harvest and participation rates indicate sufficient numbers of salmon projected to allow 84 hours of fishing time during the week of August 25 – August 31, a reduction of 84 hours from the preseason schedule.

Section (f) of the COPPER RIVER PERSONAL USE DIP NET SALMON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN (5 AAC 77.591), states “The maximum harvest level for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery is 100,000 – 150,000 salmon, not including any salmon in excess of the inriver goal or salmon taken after August 31. If the Copper River District commercial salmon fishery is closed for 13 or more consecutive days, the maximum harvest level in the Chitina

Subdistrict is reduced to 50,000 salmon.”

The Copper River District commercial salmon fishery was closed from June 19 to July 4, a total of 16 days. In accordance with 5 AAC 77.591(f), fishing time for the 2008 Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery, based on salmon passing the Miles Lake sonar after July 2, will be determined using a maximum harvest level of 50,000 salmon rather than the original harvest level of 122,825 salmon. The 50,000 salmon harvest level will remain in effect through August 31, 2008.

The preliminary cumulative passage by the Miles Lake sonar for 2008 was 717,799 salmon. This is 116,674 salmon above the preseason projected cumulative passage of 601,125 salmon and is 208,639 salmon below the 2007 cumulative passage of 926,438 salmon on August 4.

All residents of Alaska qualify to participate in this personal use fishery. A Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Fishing permit and a resident sport fishing license are required to participate in this personal use fishery.

Public access, without a fee, to the Copper River is available in those areas where the eastern boundary of the 300’ wide O’Brien Creek Road easement reaches the ordinary high water mark of the west bank of the Copper River. The road approximately one mile beyond O’Brien Creek remains closed from that point and beyond. Boat launch access to the Copper River is available via the 17b easement located upstream of the Chitina-McCarthy Bridge on the east bank of the Copper River. Public access and boat launching is also available downstream of the Chitina-McCarthy Bridge on the east bank of the Copper River within the DOT ROW where it reaches ordinary high water. Boat launching is currently not available at O’Brien Creek.

Landowners in the area have incorporated a fee-based permit system allowing public access over their private lands along the Copper River. A brochure, which offers guidance into private land locations within the fishery area, is distributed with the permit. The Department urges dipnetters to respect the rights of private landowners.

When cleaning fish, the carcasses should be disposed of in fast moving water that washes the carcasses downstream such as O’Brien Creek or the Copper River. Leaving carcasses along the road, stream bank or in lakes is considered littering and subject to a \$1,000 fine.

Public camping is available at the DOT wayside on the east bank of the Copper River by the Chitina-McCarthy Bridge, waysides along the O’Brien Creek Road ROW, and a private campground at the Chitina Airport. The Liberty Falls Recreation Site remains closed. Wood cutting within the DOT ROW is prohibited.

Information regarding the fishery can be found at the ADF&G web site: www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/areas/ucus/chitina/chitina.cfm. This site provides information regarding the Upper Copper River fisheries including: fishery descriptions and summaries, maps of the subdistricts, a listing of vendors that carry the permits, and links to the sonar numbers and Emergency Orders. If you have any questions regarding the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery, please contact the ADF&G office in Glennallen at (907) 822-3309. Changes in the fishery openings will be announced at least 48 hours in advance. Fishery information is available 24 hours each day at (907) 822-5224 in Glennallen, (907) 459-7382 in Fairbanks and (907) 267-2511 in Anchorage. Please contact the information phone line prior to planning your trip to Chitina to insure that the fishery will be open when you arrive.

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