

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSAL 249
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES' UPPER COOK INLET TASK FORCE**

The Upper Cook Inlet Task Force of the Board of Fisheries (Board) conducted its final meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday, February 14, 2013, at the Challenger Learning Center, 9711 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai, Alaska.

The Board established the Task Force to evaluate options for possible changes to the Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan and associated Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries regulations. This Task Force is made up of two Board members (who serve as co-chairs of the Task Force), three Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishers, one drift gillnet fisher, two sports fishers, one sports guide, one personal use (dip net) fisher, and one marine recreation member.

The purpose of the Task Force is to identify and discuss alternative management strategies that allow set gillnetting for sockeye salmon in the East side set gillnet fishery (ESSN) and inriver use of Kenai River king salmon during times of low king salmon abundance.

The Task Force Mission, Organization Statement, and all meeting information regarding the Task Force are available through the Department of Fish and Game Boards Support Section and will also be posted on the Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fisheries Task Force website at:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=ucitaskforce.main>

The Board's final recommendation for Proposal 249 is attached and can be found on the website above and Board of Fisheries website (under the Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues meeting information) at:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.meetinginfo>

Comments about this recommendation or related issues may be submitted to the board via the public comment procedures outlined in the legal published notice for the 2012-2013 board regulatory meetings posted at:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2012-2013/notice11-2-12.pdf>. To be included in the books prepared for board members before the March 19-24, 2013 meeting starts, comments must be received by March 5, 2013. Comments may be submitted later as record copies and will be part of the board's record for the March meeting. Any written public comments can be submitted via fax at (907) 465-6094 or mailed to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Boards Support Section, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526 by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issue meeting comment deadline of March 5, 2013. (All Alaska Board of Fisheries public comment standards apply.)

Monica Wellard, Executive Director
Alaska Board of Fisheries

2/20/13
Date

Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fisheries Task Force

Final Recommendations for Proposal 249

February 14, 2013

SPECIAL NOTES:

Upper Cook Inlet Task Force Website: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=ucitaskforce.main>
This website will remain active until the Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) meeting begins on March 19, 2013. The comment page will serve as mechanism for dialogue only and will not be considered part of the official Board of Fisheries record.

Comments about this recommendation or related issues may be submitted to the board via the public comment procedures outlined in the legal published notice for the 2012-2013 board regulatory meetings posted at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2012-2013/notice11-2-12.pdf>. To be included in the books prepared for board members before the March 19-24, 2013 meeting starts, comments must be received by March 5, 2013. Comments may be submitted later as record copies and will be part of the board's record for the March meeting. Any written public comments can be submitted via fax at (907) 465-6094 or mailed to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Boards Support Section, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526 by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issue meeting comment deadline of March 5, 2013. (All Alaska Board of Fisheries public comment standards apply.)

Inseason Management If Run Is Projected To Be At Low Return Levels:

- If by July 21 the late-run king salmon are projected to fall below the 15,000 sustainable escapement goal (SEG) take the following actions:
(Note: No vote was taken on changing to the July 21.)
 - 1) Make the SEG an optimal escapement goal (OEG) of 13,000 – 30,000 to allow some latitude for the department to assess uncertainties in run timing variability.
(Note: No consensus. Task Force voted 5 in favor 4 against for OEG)
 - 2) Restrict the inriver sport fishery to no bait.
 - 3) Change the East side setnet fishery (ESSN) fishery to be managed by emergency order (EO) authority to harvest of sockeye salmon. Friday 36-hour window will remain in place.
(Consensus on number 3.)

Consensus to either:

- a. Pairing no bait in the sport fishery with halving all available hours for the ESSN depending upon tier. (Note: No consensus. Task Force voted 5 in favor, 4 against.)
- Or
- b. 36-hour cap on ESSN hours when restricted. (Note: No consensus. Task Force voted 4 in favor, 5 against.)
 - c. Should there be a pairing of restrictions when the river goes to catch and release for sport fishing. (Note: No consensus. Task Force voted 5 in favor, 4 against.)

- d. Pairing catch and release sport fishing with 12-hour cap on ESSN hours. *(Note: No vote.)*
 - e. Pairing catch and release sport fishing with 18-hour cap on ESSN hours. *(Note: No vote.)*
 - 4) Restrict the marine sport fishery north of Bluff Point to no bait.
 - a. Change the no-bait boundary to be the South Anchor River conservation marker. *(Note: No consensus. Task Force voted 6 in favor, 3 against.)*
 - 5) Close the personal use fishery to king salmon harvest. *(Note: No discussion or vote on closing the PU fishery to retention of king salmon.)*
- If the department projects that the OEG of 13,000 will not be met then all fisheries will close. *(Note: No consensus on OEG.)*
 - On August 1, the following actions will take place:
 - 1) The inriver sport fishery will close by regulation.
 - 2) The commercial fishery will revert back to regular management plan with department oversight to ensure late-run king salmon escapements will be met.
 - a. Amend No. 2 to include reverting back to regular management plan. *(Note: No consensus. Task Force voted 5 in favor, 4 against.)*
 - If at any time prior to August 1, the department's assessments project an escapement greater than 15,000 SEG, restrictions shall end. *(Note: Consensus on this point of the plan as written.)*

Sunset after 2013 Season

- All task force members agreed that any provisions adopted as Proposal 249 will sunset after the 2013 season so that new ideas will be considered at the 2014 regular Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fisheries Meeting.