

2-24-16
Submitted to the BOF Area M
by Dan Dunaway

for 155-2016 2007 meeting history

PROPOSAL 210 - 5 AAC 09.200. Description of districts and sections. Amend this regulation as follows:

Bring boundary into one mile from May 1 - June 30 for sockeye season.

ISSUE: Ability to go out three miles in Port Heiden, Three Hills and Ilnik fishing sections for sockeye season.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Continued interception of fish.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? N/A.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Terminal fisheries.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? No one as fishermen can adequately harvest terminal fisheries.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Past solutions, under current board, have reverted 30 years.

PROPOSED BY: Roland Briggs (HQ-06F-083)

PROPOSAL 210 - 5 AAC 09.200. Description of districts and sections.

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WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The intent of this proposal is unclear although the department believes this proposal would reduce most of the fishing area on the North and South Alaska Peninsula to within one mile of land from May 1 to June 30. This proposal mentions the Three Hills, Ilnik, and Port Heiden sections of the North Peninsula as areas of concern, but, as written, this proposal applies to the entire Alaska Peninsula salmon management area, including the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries. This proposal would reduce the amount of fishing area within the Alaska Peninsula management area by approximately 66 percent, from May 1 to June 30. The Three Hills and Ilnik sections open to commercial salmon fishing on June 25. This proposal is requesting that fishing not be permitted beyond one mile from shore from June 25-June 30 in this area. The proposal also references the Port Heiden area in which only the Inner Port Heiden Section is currently open to commercial salmon fishing and is considered a terminal fishery. The Outer Port Heiden Section has been closed to commercial salmon fishing since 1990. The proposal is unclear and may be requesting that sections closed to commercial salmon fishing such as the Outer Port Heiden and Caribou Flats sections be open to commercial salmon fishing from May through June 30 within one mile of the beach.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? During the commercial salmon fishing season, commercial fishing is permitted within state waters throughout most of the Alaska Peninsula. Within the Three Hills and Ilnik sections, the gillnet fleet is allowed to fish inside of 3 miles when the season opens on June 25. The Outer Port Heiden Section is closed to all commercial salmon fishing.

Existing management plans on the Alaska Peninsula have been adopted by the BOF that allow fishing outside of one mile from shore. This would severely limit the fishing area in the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries, Southeastern District Mainland, and North Peninsula fisheries. Meshik and Ilnik rivers have had surplus sockeye salmon escapements in recent years. This proposal would further increase the already excessive escapement levels into North Peninsula rivers as the fishing area would be reduced to within 1 mile of shore from June 25 to June 30.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Adoption of this proposal would change the fishing area in the entire Alaska Peninsula prior to July 1 to within one mile of land. In the Three Hills and Ilnik sections this proposal would only allow fishing within one mile of shore for six days, since existing regulations currently open the sections to commercial salmon fishing on June 25. Beginning July 1 fishing would be permitted out to three miles from shore again. There would likely be no effect on the Outer Port Heiden and Caribou Flats sections which are already closed by regulation (5 AAC 09.310 (a)(2)(B) and (9)) unless this proposal is requesting a May 1 opening date and fishing within one mile of shore prior to July 1 in these two areas already closed to commercial salmon fishing.

BACKGROUND: State waters are defined in regulation and typically allow fishing out to the three mile boundary line. The Outer Port Heiden Section was closed to commercial salmon fishing in 1990 due to the potential interception by Area M and Area T overlap fishermen intercepting coho salmon bound for Inner Port Heiden (Meshik River) during August and September. In 2005 and 2006, the Inner Port Heiden Section has had a small commercial salmon fishery during June for Chinook and sockeye salmon that local Area T (Bristol Bay) permit holders participate in. There has been a surplus of sockeye salmon entering into Meshik, Cinder, and Ilnik rivers in recent years that is underutilized.

Onshore winds often make fishing close to shore on the North Peninsula impossible due to seas conditions, numerous sand bars and a hazardous coastline. Limiting commercial fishing to within one mile of land from June 25-30 would also reduce the harvest during days with onshore winds and many vessels would not be able to participate in the fishery, therefore allowing more fish to enter local rivers.

Past tagging, migration, and genetic studies indicate that Bristol Bay sockeye salmon are well offshore of North Peninsula fisheries. This is supported in recent years by the Port Moller test fishery which annually documents the Bristol Bay run migration, the bulk of which passes well outside of current fishing areas of the Northern District. Scale pattern analysis in the past documented Bristol Bay sockeye salmon caught in the Ilnik Section. In 2006, the department began the Western Alaska Salmon Stock Identification Program (WASSIP) which uses genetic markers to differentiate between stocks in commercial fishery samples collected throughout western Alaska. These samples will provide information on the stock composition of the harvest of local and non-local stocks; however the results will not be available for a number of years.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative aspects of this proposal. The department is **OPPOSED** to the reduction of fishing area which may result in surplus escapement and lost harvest opportunity.

COST ANALYSIS: The department does not believe that approval of this proposal would result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.