

**PROPOSAL 136 – 5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area.** Allow only one fishing line per angler during the Fielding Lake winter fishery, as follows:

Under 5 AAC 74.010(7), add the following:

Only one closely attended line may be used when ice fishing

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Since approximately 2007 there has been a no bait restriction at Fielding Lake which has severe implications for those who enjoy ice fishing. The no bait restriction was implemented because harvests were exceeding an 80 fish a year recommended upper limit. A recent 2010-2011 stock assessment reached the conclusion that the 1999 estimate of mature lake trout was biased low resulting in an expanded population estimate. Harvest estimates since 2007 have been under half the upper limit set by the Department. Some years, far lower.

I believe there is room for compromise to allow reasonable ice fishing opportunities at Fielding Lake while limiting harvest to within the fair and appropriate levels set by the department.

If my other submitted proposal allowing a limited winter bait season is implemented, reducing the number of closely attended lines from two to one should also be implemented. The Lake Trout Management Plan indicates studies have shown that two lines can significantly increase catch rates. The Management Plan further discusses this alternative under their gear restriction section to limit harvest. Other studies indicate reducing the number of lines to one, very significantly increases the odds that jigging is the preferred fishing method. This has two very important results: first the catch rate can be significantly reduced, but not the opportunity, and second, mortality is reduced by better insuring lip caught fish.

If nothing changes, those who enjoy ice fishing at Fielding Lake will continue to have very limited opportunities to catch burbot and lake trout.

Other options considered:

- Keeping current regulations intact. My belief is this unreasonably limits fair opportunity when there are creative solutions available to promote opportunity and keep harvest within acceptable limits.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ethan Birkholz

(EF-C15-051)

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