

PROPOSAL 94 – 5 AAC 07.365. Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan. Establish an inriver run goal for the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan, as follows:

5 AAC 07.365. Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan is amended to read:

(c) In the king salmon fishery,

(?) establish an Inriver Run Goal of 120,000 to 218,000 Chinook salmon, which is the historical median escapement +/- 30% plus the proposed nested ANS for communities upstream of Bethel.

(A) This inriver Run Goal would result in a level of escapement that ranges from the upper end of the current escapement goal, to well above the current goal.

(B) This inriver Run Goal provides a level of subsistence harvest opportunity upstream of Bethel consistent with historical opportunity. The level of annual escapement that would result also would provide decades of sustainable subsistence and commercial fisheries in the Kuskokwim River.

(1) when the projected escapement of king salmon is below the drainage-wide escapement goal range, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, close the commercial, sport, and subsistence king salmon fisheries,

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Stony-Holitna Advisory Committee has submitted three separate proposals to use as tools in addressing this issue. The three proposals (see Proposals 96 and 97) would be most effectively considered as a group in sequential order with this being the second proposal. However, each proposal could stand alone.

Reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of Chinook salmon has not been provided for many years in the middle/upriver communities on the Kuskokwim River. This has been especially evident over the last five years when there has been a limited harvestable surplus. The communities from Bethel and the surrounding area have harvested a disproportionate share of the Chinook. Currently there are no limits or reporting requirements for Chinook on the Kuskokwim. The increase in harvest at the lower end of the Kuskokwim results in not allowing enough Chinook to continue upriver to make escapement and provide a reasonable opportunity for those communities upriver of Bethel to meet their needs. The effect gets progressively more pronounced the further upriver a community is located.

Establish an inriver goal at a specific point, the Bethel Test Fishery, to guide managers in allowing enough Chinook upriver to provide reasonable opportunity for the middle/upriver communities. This inriver goal could be set as the historical (1976-2013) median Chinook salmon escapement plus the nested ANS for the communities upriver of Bethel.

PROPOSED BY: Stony-Holitna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F15-042)
