

PROPOSAL 135 – 5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area. Prohibit the use of set lines in Grizzly and Jack lakes, as follows:

Add **Grizzly Lake** and **Jack Lake** to the list of lakes in the Tanana River drainage sport fish regulations in which “Burbot set lines may not be used”.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? State sport fish general regulations regarding the use of set lines for burbot are not consistent for a localized group of five lakes which are known to support burbot populations. These lakes are located near Nabesna and the geologic divide between the Upper Copper River drainage and the Tanana River drainage. Copper, Tanada, and Sheep Lakes are in the Copper River drainage, while Jack and Grizzly lakes are in the Tanana River drainage. Access is primarily by snowmachine trails originating from the Nabesna Road. Trails then cross and interconnect these lakes.

General regulations of the Tanana River Area (Jack and Grizzly Lakes) allow the seasonal use of set lines in all but five lakes, whereas, the general regulations of the adjacent Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Area prohibit the use of set lines in all lakes (including Copper, Tanada, and Sheep lakes). Fishermen travelling through and among these lakes could easily be confused as to which regulations apply.

Burbot are relatively long-lived and slow growing making them potentially vulnerable to overexploitation in small water bodies. Conservation concerns could arise if sustained trends of increased harvests were to occur on these lakes. Set lines are known to be a highly effective means of catching burbot. Due to conservation concerns, state regulations have banned the use of set lines in all lakes of the adjacent Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area since 1992.

Passage of this proposal will create burbot fishery regulations that are consistent for all lakes of this one localized area that are known to support burbot populations. It will standardize these regulations with those of the management area from which the fishery participants access the

lakes. It will also eliminate the incentive of utilizing unattended lines to target slow growing fish populations in the relatively small Grizzly and Jack Lakes.

PROPOSED BY: National Park Service (EF-C15-065)

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. Same 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)

PROPOSAL 137 – 5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area. Allow the use of bait during the winter fishery on Fielding Lake, as follows:

5 AAC 74.010(d)(7)(B) is amended to:

Modify the special regulations concerning bait, for Fielding Lake as follows:

The use of set lines is prohibited April 16-October 31: Only one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used November 1-April 15: Only one single hook, artificial lure, bait may be used.

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 quota. A recent 2010-2011 stock assessment reached the conclusion that the 1999 estimate of mature lake trout was biased low. In addition harvest estimates since 2007 have been under half the target quota. Same years, far lower.

I believe there is room for compromise to allow a limited winter season that allows bait, similar to nearby lakes at Summit and Paxson. A regulation allowing bait, but still prohibiting set lines from November 1 to April 15, will allow a reasonable opportunity to fish for lake trout as well as burbot and, I believe, still keep the lake trout fishery under the recommended harvest quota.

If nothing changes, those who enjoy ice fishing at Fielding Lake will have no opportunity to catch burbot and extremely limited success fishing for lake trout.

Other options considered:

- Keeping current regulations intact. My belief is this unreasonably limits fair opportunity.
- Changing size limit and harvest to one fish any size. My experience fishing since the minimum 26 inch rule went into effect, is the number and size of mature lake trout has increased. I wish to keep this as is.
- Catch and release only. This would be acceptable to me, but I feel is unwarranted given the current sustained fish population.
- Further shortening a proposed winter bait regulation, say from January 1 to March 31. I would be open to this if it would be more palatable, but honestly feel it is not needed.
- Adding a "one tended line" restriction. Studies indicate this greatly increases the odds that jigging is the preferred fishing method which will reduce mortality. This should be added and is in fact mentioned in the lake trout management plan as a possible alternative.

PROPOSED BY: Ethan Birkholz

(EF-C15-050)

PROPOSAL 138 – 5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area. Allow retention of Arctic grayling on the Chena River, as follows:

This proposal would allow a limited harvest of Arctic grayling less than 12 inches from June 1 to July 15 from a marker placed by the department 500 yards downstream of the Nordale Road Bridge to the confluence with the Tanana River including Piledriver Slough. From June 1 – July 15 the Chena River would remain closed to grayling retention above the Nordale Bridge. From July 16 to May 31 the entire Chena River would be closed to all grayling retention. The normal gear restrictions would apply. This regulation will sunset after three years.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Retention of grayling in a portion of the Chena River drainage.

The Chena River has been catch and release for Arctic grayling since 1991 (by EO and then regulation). The department has conducted virtually no studies on the population of Arctic grayling since 2005. The last stock assessments and abundance estimates are now 10 years old. The department has no funding for new work. The fishery is touted as one of the best “large” grayling streams on the road system and users report large congregations of fish on several stretches of the river.

The Fairbanks AC has supported the restriction to catch and release, but it was with the expectancy that the department would keep track of this population so that some harvest of grayling could be allowed without harm to the population. Anglers now concentrate the catch and release fishing at access points. The estimated mortality for the catch and release fishery is 5% to 7%. Because a large number of anglers on the lower river are children, visitors and new sports fishermen, some of the fish are treated pretty roughly in the catch and release fishery.

Our proposal would allow a very limited harvest. The limits would be both by season, size and bag limit and a sunset to the harvest regulation. The AC would like the department to have some information on the harvest because it has been so long since harvest was allowed; there is no data on the impact of limited harvest to the population. A three year “trial” would give the managers some information to work with. If this waterway is so popular it can be advertised in numerous “fish Alaska” type publications it should be studied for the potential for a return to some harvest. There is absolutely no need for the entire Chena River to catch and release forever. For example, the new Fairbanks hatchery can add fish to the system if the population starts to drop again.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F15-067)

PROPOSAL 139 – 5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area. Update the Tanana River Area stocked waters regulation, as follows:

5 AAC 74.010(c)(29) is amended to read:

(29) in stocked waters, the bag, possession, and size limit for rainbow trout, Arctic char/Dolly Varden, landlocked salmon, and Arctic grayling is 10 of all stocked species combined, of which no more than one fish may be 18 inches or greater in length; for the purposes of this paragraph, "stocked waters" include [ARTILLERY LAKE,] Backdown Lake, Ballaine Lake, Bathing Beauty Pond, Bear Lake (Eielson Air Force Base), Big "D" Pond, Birch Lake, Bluff Cabin Lake, Bolio Lake, Brodie Lake, Bullwinkle Lake, [CAVALRY LAKE,] Chena Lake, Chet Lake, CHSR 25.0 Mile Pit, CHSR 30.0 Mile Pit, CHSR 42.8 Mile Pit (Red Squirrel Pit), CHSR 45.5 Mile Pit, CHSR 47.9 Mile Pit, Coal Mine Road #5, Craig Lake, **Cushman Lake**, Dick's Pond, Doc Lake, Donna Lake, Donnelly Lake, Forrest Lake, Four Mile Lake, Fourteen Mile Lake, Geskakmina Lake, Ghost Lake, Grayling Lake [,] (Eielson Air Force Base), Hidden Lake (Eielson Air Force Base), Hidden Lake (Tetlin NWR.), [HORSESHOE LAKE,] "J" Lake, Jan Lake, Johnson Pit #2, [KENNA LAKE,] Ken's Pond, Kids Fishing Pond, [KIMBERLY LAKE,] Last Lake, Lisa Lake, Little Donna Lake, Little Lost Lake, Lost Lake, [LUKE LAKE,] Lundgren Pond, Manchu Lake, Mark Lake, Monte Lake, Monterey Lake, Moose Lake (Eielson Air Force Base), Mosquito Creek Lake, Mullins Pit, Nenana City Pond, Nickel Lake, [NO MERCY LAKE,] Nordale #2, North Chena Pond, North Pole Pond, North Twin Lake, Olnes Pond, Otto Lake, Parks 261 Pond, Paul's Pond, Polaris Lake, Quartz Lake, Rangeview Lake, Rapids Lake, Richardson Hwy. 28 Mile Pit, Richardson Hwy. 31 Mile Pit, Richardson Hwy. 81 Mile Pit, [ROCKHOUND LAKE,] Shaw Pond, Sheefish Lake, Sirlin Drive Pond, [SOUTH JOHNSON LAKE,] South Twin Lake, Steese Hwy. 28.8 Mile Pit, Steese Hwy. 29.5 Mile Pit, Steese Hwy. 31.6 Mile Pit, Steese Hwy. 33.5 Mile Pit, Steese Hwy. 34.6 Mile Pit, Steese Hwy. 35.8 Mile Pit, Steese Hwy. 36.6 Mile Pit, Stringer Rd. Pond, [STRYKER LAKE,] Triangle Lake, Wainwright #6, Weasel Lake, West Iksgiza Lake, Z Pit (Chena Floodway);

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In conjunction with each Alaska Board of Fisheries cycle, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reviews stocked waters to ensure consistency between the *Statewide Stocking Plan for Recreational Fisheries*, Tanana River Area stocked waters regulations, and the *Tanana River Area Stocked Waters Management Plan* (5 AAC 74.065). Stocked waters may be removed from the stocking plan, no longer stocked, and removed from the corresponding regulations due to a loss of public access, poor fish growth or survival, or insufficient fishing effort. As new waters are identified and included in the stocking plan they are added to the regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F15-049)

PROPOSAL 140 – 5 AAC 73.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Yukon River Area. Repeal Yukon River Area rainbow trout regulations, as follows:

5 AAC 73.010(b)(4) is repealed:
 (b) ...
 ...

(4) repealed / / [RAINBOW TROUT: THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT IS TWO FISH, OF WHICH ONLY ONE FISH MAY BE 20 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current Yukon River Area sport fishing regulations include a bag and possession limit for rainbow trout. Wild or stocked populations of rainbow trout are not present in the Yukon River drainage. The species has not been captured or observed during department assessment projects or reported in the Statewide Harvest Survey. The current regulation imposes unnecessary language for a species that is not present in the Yukon River drainage and may cause confusion among sport anglers who may expect to catch rainbow trout in the Yukon River drainage since there is a bag and possession limit in regulation.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F15-050)

PROPOSAL 141 – 5 AAC 01.120. Lawful gear and gear specifications. Recognize rod and reel fishing as a legal means for subsistence fishing in all of the Kotzebue District, as follows:

5 AAC 01.120(b) is amended to read:

(b) Fish other than salmon may be taken by set gillnet, drift gillnet, beach seine, fish wheel, pot, longline, fyke net, dip net, jigging gear, spear, and lead, or, as specified in (f) of this section, **by rod and reel** or by a hook and a line attached to a rod or a pole.

...

(f) a person may use a rod and reel or a hook and line attached to a rod or a pole when subsistence fishing only

(1) in the state waters of, and all flowing waters that drain into, the Chukchi Sea or Kotzebue Sound from **Point Hope**[CAPE ESPENBERG] to Cape Prince of Wales;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Recognize rod and reel as lawful gear for taking fish for subsistence and change the geographic area that 5 AAC 01.120 pertains to.

People in the Northwest Arctic Borough currently need a sport fish license to subsistence fish with rod and reel in state waters. Many fisheries, like herring snagging off the beach at Kotzebue and trout fishing in the Kivalina Lagoon, are carried out by people during a brief period using a rod and reel who otherwise do not fish with rod and reel the remainder of the year or for sport at any time. Others who fish in the region and around the state (whether residing in the region or not) regularly obtain sport fishing licenses. This would not be expected to change in any meaningful way if the proposal was adopted. This would be expected to pertain to a small number of individuals who use a rod and reel only for subsistence purposes in a very limited way in time and space.

Many of these same individuals being discussed currently do not purchase sport fishing licenses. The majority of their fishing is done by every other legal subsistence method throughout the year, which is basically everything from nets to hook and line through the ice. The only

exception to legal methods for subsistence fishing is rod and reel. Because they are used to being allowed to harvest hundreds of fish throughout the year by all other methods it should not be remarkable that they may not even think about it the very few times they may harvest fish with rod and reel. However, some of them have been subject to law enforcement actions over the years due to their lack of a license.

A similar allowance is provided on the northern Seward Peninsula.

PROPOSED BY: Kotzebue Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-C15-028)

PROPOSAL 142 – 5 AAC 01.220. Lawful gear and gear specifications. Change the dates gillnet gear may be used in the South Fork and Middle Fork of the Koyukuk River from November 1 through June 30 to August 20 through June 30, as follows:

5 AAC 01.220(f)(8) is amended to read:

Gillnets three and one-half inches, (current size restriction), may be used only from August 20–June 30.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Change the open period for when subsistence gillnet may be used in the Middle and South Fork permit area, from the current November 1 to June 30 season, to August 20 to June 30. This proposal would still protect salmon when present but allow fall harvest of whitefish, grayling, suckers, and pike. I collected salmon samples under ADF&G Commissioner’s permit from 2010 to 2013, for the Genetic Conservation Lab. I found only summer chum and Chinook salmon present in the upper Koyukuk drainages from July15 to August 15. I found no fall chum or coho in the Middle or South fork drainage.

PROPOSED BY: Jack Reakoff (EF-C15-029)

PROPOSAL 143 – 5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan. Reduce the bag and possession limit of northern pike in the Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 01.244(b)(2)(B) Minto Flats Norther Pike Management Plan to read:

(B) there is no daily or annual bag limit, except that in the area described in (G) of this paragraph, the bag limit is 5 [10] fish and the possession limit is 5 [20] fish and any fish that exceeds 30" will be handled carefully and immediately returned to the river.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? My concern is with the reduced population of pike in Minto Lakes as evidenced by the poor results of summer bait and fly fishing. I'm especially aware of the slow decline over the past 15 years. As a cabin owner and constant visitor to Minto for over 50 years, it's obvious to me that there

is an issue. I believe that the main issue is the subsistence fishery in the Chatanika Special Harvest Area (SHA) that is really a glorified sports fishery that occurs during the winter. After the lakes freeze, the pike migrate to the confluence of Goldstream and the Chatanika. Due to this concentration, the fishing is easy and the fish plentiful. Fishermen are high-grading and taking the larger, female pike and that has a large consequence on the overall population of pike in the system. Of the 80 permits that were issued in 2014/15, 300 pike were reported as taken. Since most of these were large pike, those were mostly female spawners. The average catch for the past 15 years, as reported, exceeds 500 fish per year -that's a minimum of 7,500 large fish gone, which increases significantly when you consider that many of these are the spawning females.

Minto used to be a wonderful fishing experience for the hundreds of people from the Fairbanks North Star Borough who fly or boat into the Lakes each summer. Now, 80 people (permit holders) are allowed to effectively destroy the largest pike fishery in the United States. That's not right or o.k. If thru-the-ice fishing isn't reduced, the population will continue to decline from the low it is now, and it will be very difficult to recover based on the fact that it takes 15 to 20 years to grow a large pike.

My ideal solution would be to close the winter pike fishery down in the Chatanika SHA for 10 to 15 years. I understand that you cannot close subsistence fishing without also closing sport fishing, so at a minimum I would like to see the bag limit and possession limit the same as sport fishing and size restrictions in place to help protect the larger females.

PROPOSED BY: Marv Hassebroek (HQ-F15-086)

PROPOSAL 144 – 5 AAC 01.220. Lawful gear and gear specification. Allow the use of five and one-half inch mesh gillnets across an entire channel in portions of the Koyukuk River for the purpose of targeting northern pike, as follows:

We would like to be able to continue to fish the way we once did, and be able to put a gill net across the entire channel of some waterways. There is a current season that allows us to use smaller mesh nets in the drainage, but we would like to be able to use larger mesh to target larger pike as the smaller mesh does not allow us to effectively catch the larger pike. We would like to do this in the spring when pike are moving out of the lakes and into the rivers.

We would like to be able to use up to a 5 ½ in. mesh until June 15 in Racetrack Slough off of the Koyukuk River as well as sloughs attached to the Huslia River. We would like to be able to use the larger mesh sizes across the entire slough. Since the intent of this is to target larger fish, the idea behind using the larger sized mesh it to allow the smaller whitefish to pass through the net unmolested.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are too many pike in parts of the Koyukuk River drainage. Pike are excellent predators and this is leading to a potential decrease in salmon smolt survival, as well as less small mammals and waterfowl.

Residents of Huslia used to string nets across sloughs and other pike heavy areas to catch large numbers of them for subsistence needs. This is no longer legal. We would like to change this regulation in order to harvest more pike for subsistence needs, as well as help increase salmon smolt survival, and the populations of small mammals and birds.

PROPOSED BY: Jack Wholecheese (HQ-F15-090)

PROPOSAL 145 – 5 AAC 77.174. Waters closed to personal use fishing. Repeal the regulation that prohibits the taking of northern pike in the Tanana River drainage personal use fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 77.174(a) is repealed:

(a) **Repealed** / / [WATERS OF THE TANANA RIVER DRAINAGE ARE CLOSED TO THE PERSONAL USE TAKING OF PIKE ABOVE THE MOUTH OF THE KANTISHNA RIVER].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Northern pike incidentally caught in the Subdistrict 6-C personal use salmon fishery cannot be retained and must be returned to the water dead or alive. The current regulations are inconsistent with the subsistence regulations in the surrounding areas, which allow incidentally caught northern pike to be retained. Available personal use incidental harvest data from Subdistrict 6-C (personal use area) shows that from 2004 through 2013, fishermen have reported the incidental catch of a total of 12 northern pike. Therefore, it is likely few northern pike are encountered in the personal use fishery. The stock of northern pike inhabiting this area is not believed to be in danger of overharvest, and there is no biological concern if retention of northern pike was allowed in this area at the current levels of incidental catch.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F15-029)

PROPOSAL 146 – 5 AAC 04.6XX. Fishing seasons. Create a directed commercial fishery for cisco in Norton Sound or Port Clarence Districts, as follows:

5 AAC 04.610 Fishing seasons. There is no closed season on cisco.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A market for Cisco (whitefish) is developing in Western Alaska. Cisco from streams in the Norton Sound District have been rumored to have been caught and sold. This is an attempt to legally allow this activity within Norton Sound or Port Clarence Districts. With this regulatory change, these sales would be legal under customary trade (\$500/permit) or under an F04B CFEC card.

PROPOSED BY: Southern Norton Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F15-091)
