

**PROPOSAL 186 - 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.** Only barbless hooks allowed in the Kenai River upstream of the Lower Killey River, as follows:

Regulation should read as follows: In the Kenai River upstream of the Lower Killey River only barbless hooks, or hooks with the barb completely pinched are allowed from August 21-May 1

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Damage to Rainbow Trout in the Kenai River Catch and Release Fishery

Rainbow trout and dolly varden in the Kenai River typically show mouth damage from poor fish handling practices in the Kenai River. This degrades the fishery because a majority of fish from the Kenai are extremely ugly, in a fishery for wild trout it is very important for many anglers seeking a near wilderness experience to catch undamaged fish. Gill lice are very common throughout the stock of rainbow trout on the Kenai River. Gill lice have been shown to lower a trout's fitness, it has also been shown that rainbow trout can only be infected by lice while under stress. The intense fishery on the Kenai causes stress to nearly every fish. Barbless hooks have been shown to greatly reduce handling time and greatly reduce mouth/lip damage to released fish while having minimal to a positive effect on landing rates.

Other solutions include a year round barbed hook ban, which while optimal likely has little support amongst salmon anglers and the status quo.

**PROPOSED BY:** Patrick McCormick

(EF-F16-126)

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**PROPOSAL 187 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.** Allow only barbless, unbaited, single-hook gear on the Kenai River from January 1 – August 1, as follows:

Only a single, unbaited barbless hook, lure, fly, or attractant may be used from January 1 through August 1 on the Kenai River.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The issue I would like to address is the continual low escapement of Kings into the Kenai River. The measures that have been implemented have not worked.

**PROPOSED BY:** Tom Corr (EF-F16-112)  
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**PROPOSAL 188 - 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.** Allow only one single-hook or one single-hook lure, as follows:

Kenai River – Lower Kenai River Mainstem and Skilak Lake

Add; under METHODS AND MEANS  
Gear restrictions:

- **In flowing waters, Only one single – hook or one single – hook lure may be used**

Delete; All other mention of hook types in this section.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** On the Kenai River there are multiple and confusing regulations concerning when single or multiple hooks may be used and where on the river multiple hooks are allowed.

Multiple hooks cause unnecessary damage to fish caught incidentally and to those deemed to small to keep, resulting in increased mortality, especially when bait is also allowed. Multiple hook plugs used in the trout fishery cause a lot of mouth, gill-plate and eye injury and using multiple hooks on Coho increases mortality on lost and released fish, with a species that is already known to have very high mortality rates anyway.

Single hooks are all that are needed for anglers to successfully catch all species of fish on the Kenai River. Single hooks make it easier to release fish. We are facing uncertain times in our fisheries abundance cycles and user demands on our resources are expected to increase. Catch and release methods are already the mainstay of our successful trout fishery and they are becoming more prevalent as a step up measure in our King fishery, so any measure that makes it easier to release fish and reduce mortality just makes since in these changing times.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai Area Fisherman’s Coalition (HQ-F16-009)  
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**PROPOSAL 189 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.** Allow fishing from shore after harvesting a bag limit of coho salmon, as follows.

Allow fishing from shore for sockeyes on the Kenai River after catching a limit of coho from a boat.

language should read no fishing from a boat after retaining a limit of coho.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** as the regulations are currently an anglers can not go fish for sockeyes from shore after they have have caught a limit of silvers from a boat, a simple solution is to change the language to no fishing from a boat after catching a limit of coho.

**PROPOSED BY:** Mel Erickson (EF-F16-136)

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**PROPOSAL 190 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.** Expand the waters open to fishing after harvesting a bag limit of coho salmon in the lower Kenai River, as follows:

Coho Salmon Lower Kenai River

\*After taking a limit of coho (silver) salmon from the Kenai River a person may not fish in the Kenai River downstream of the Pillars State Recreational Site on that same day.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** After taking a bag limit of coho salmon from the Kenai River a person may not fish in the Kenai River downstream of the Soldotna Bridge on that same day. I would like to see the regularity marker moved down to the pillars boat launch (from the Soldotna Bridge) which is a easily identifiable marker just above the tidal zone. This would allow those that would like to continue to fish to be able to do so without having to travel upstream of the Soldotna Bridge. It would decrease crowding in other parts of the Kenai River by allowing anglers to switch gear to pursue other species in this area. What happens now is anglers either catch and release coho until they are ready yo stop fishing for the day or they are forced to travel to another part of Kenai River to continue to fish on that day.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai River Professional Guide Associatiom (EF-F16-142)

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**PROPOSAL 191 - 5 AAC 57.170. Kenai River Coho Salmon Management Plan.** Increase Kenai River coho salmon bag limit from two fish to three, as follows:

Increase coho daily bag and possession limit in the Kenai River from two fish to three fish beginning on the day after the closure of the set net fishery in the Upper Subdistrict.

Corresponding regulatory changes are:

(C) from July 1 through **the day upon which the set net fishery in the Upper Subdistrict is closed for the season** [AUGUST 31], the daily bag and possession limit for coho salmon 16 inches or greater in length is two fish;

(D) from **the day after the set net fishery in the Upper Subdistrict is closed for the season** [SEPTEMBER 1] through November 30, the daily bag and possession limit for coho salmon 16 inches or greater in length is three fish;

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** For nearly 40 years, the daily bag and possession limit for coho salmon in the Kenai River was 3 fish, 16 inches or greater in length. In response to low coho abundance during the late 1990's, bag and possession limits were reduced to 2 fish as part of a comprehensive plan that included restrictions on commercial fisheries. Since that time, abundance has improved. Commercial fisheries are no longer restricted specifically to conserve Kenai River coho salmon, yet the sport fishery still operates under the lowered bag and possession limit for the first part of the run in August. Increasing the bag and possession limit from 2 to 3 fish in August would not jeopardize the sustained yield for the resource, would provide increased opportunity for harvest and would produce additional economic value for the fishery.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai River Sportfishing Association (HQ-F16-068)  
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**PROPOSAL 192 - 5 AAC 57.122. Special Provisions for the seasons bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Middle Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.** Shorten the Kenai River coho season by closing October 31, as follows.

Lower Kenai River Mainstem

September 1 - October 31, 3 coho per day

November 1 - June 30 No retention of coho salmon

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently fishing for coho salmon in the Kenai River is allowed downstream of Skilak Lake July 1 - November 30. There is a growing fishery in the middle Kenai River during the later part of the coho salmon season. Many of these late arriving coho salmon spawn in the area from Bings Landing upstream to Skilak Lake and they do not have adequate protection in this area during a time of year when the water flow drops drastically which in turns exposes the areas that they are congregating in. Simply moving the season closing date to October 31 would go a long ways to protect these coho stocks. With more anglers enjoying the fall fishing season it seems prudent to do what we can to ensure the sustainability of the late arriving Kenai River coho.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai River Professional Guide Association (EF-F16-146)  
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**PROPOSAL 193 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area. and 5 AAC 57.150. Russian River Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.** Create an archery fishery for sockeye salmon in a section of the Russian River, as follows:

**5 AAC 57.150. Russian River Management Plan.** Amend the plan to include the following:

**5 AAC 57.150(g) (NEW)** The Department is authorized to set aside a section of the river (*e.g.*, above the Falls that has not been opened to salmon fishing previously) designated as a bow-fishing only area. For purposes of this provision, "bow-fishing" means that Sockeye salmon may be taken by bow and arrow; the arrow must have a barbed tip and be attached by a line to the bow; for the purposes of this provision, "bow" means a long bow, recurve bow or compound bow. (*See e.g.*, 5 AAC 57.120(9).) A struck fish shall be considered taken and be counted in the bow-fisherman's daily limit. In addition to a valid fishing license, a bow-fisherman must have passed a bowhunter certification course.

The Fisheries Board could further consider amending the following sport fishing sections as follows:

**5 AAC 57.120(a)(4)(A)(vi)** Sockeye salmon may be taken by bow and arrow in a section of the Russian River as designated by the Department in the Russian River Management Plan. For the purposes of this provision, "bow" means a long bow, recurve bow or compound bow; the arrow must have a barbed tip and be attached by a line to the bow.

**5 AAC 57.123 (9)** Russian River in a designated area, Sockeye salmon may be taken by bow and arrow in a section of the Russian River as designated in the Department's Russian River Management Plan. For the purposes of this provision, "bow" means a long bow, recurve bow or compound bow; the arrow must have a barbed tip and be attached by a line to the bow.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The sport fishery of bow-fishing should be expanded to include salmon.

**Recreational value.** More than 21.6 million Americans of all ages enjoy archery. Young and old alike enjoy shooting their bows. Anchorage, Fairbanks, Eagle River, Wasilla, Juneau and Kenai and other communities offer static ranges for the public that are maintained by non-profit archery associations. Those in Southcentral include Screaming Eagle, Cook Inlet Archers, NW Archers, black Sheep (JBER) and Kenai Archers. Other regions have clubs as well : Golden North Archery Association (Fairbanks), Prince of Wales Archery (Thorne Bay), Prince William Sound College-Archery club (Valdez). This underscores the [popularity of archery throughout the state.

The State maintains shooting ranges at the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park, Fairbanks Indoor Shooting Range and Hunter Ed Facility and the Juneau Hunter Ed Facility and Indoor Shooting Range. These would likely experience greater use by archers of all ages, a benefit to the youth and adults of our communities.

**Educational value.** The National Archery in the Schools Program, (NASP) is a Nationwide Youth Archery program developed in Kentucky in 2002. Here in Alaska the program is a joint venture between NASP, the Department of Education and the Division of Wildlife Conservation. Several archery equipment manufacturers and local sportsman’s organizations are also program partners. The program promotes self-confidence, team work, discipline, physical fitness and participation in the life-long sport of Archery. The program provides Archery instruction in a physical education environment to *all* boys and girls grades 4 – 12. Millions of kids across America participate in this great program.

The Division of Wildlife Conservation offers Alaskan hunters opportunities to become certified bowhunters. Bowhunting classes certify more than 800 Alaskan hunters each year. Beginning July 1, 2016, an NBEF/IBEP bowhunter certificate will be required for all big game hunters in Alaska. The Alaska Bowhunter education program meets the National Bowhunter Education Foundation, (NBEF) and International Bowhunter Education Program, (IBEP) certification requirements. Bowhunter education classes are taught by dedicated volunteer instructors who commit valuable time and offer years of experience.

**Economic value. To the State:** The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act places an 11% excise tax on the sale of archery equipment including bow-fishing gear. This money is shared with Alaska and other states for use in Wildlife Restoration (i.e., building structures or improving lands or waters as wildlife habitat) and basic/enhanced hunter education and safety programs, as well as construction, operation and maintenance of archery ranges for public use. 50 CFR 80.50. In a Clarion newspaper report, the State has received more that \$38 million in Pittman-Robertson funds since 2000. It is submitted that this program could enhance sales of archery equipment – bowfishing as a form of hunting that supports stream enhancement programs - and add an element to the ADFG conservation plan that would help increase the State’s share of the Pittman-Robertson funds.

**To the local economy:** All major box stores sell archery equipment and larger communities have archery specialty stores. Allowing salmon to be bow-fished would likely increase sales of archery equipment significantly. Most major archery companies sell one or more models of specialty bows designed for bowfishing. Adopting this change in the regulations would likely be economically beneficial to these Alaska businesses and to local economies.

**PROPOSED BY:** J. Michael Robbins (EF-F16-008)  
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**PROPOSAL 194 - 5 AAC 57.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Middle Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.**  
Create a size limit for lake trout in Hidden Lake, as follows:

In Hidden Lake, the bag and possession limit for lake trout is one fish **under 16 inches of length** [with no size limit}

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Lake Trout are an extremely slow growing fish with a long life span that need a substantial amount of time to naturally grow.

These fish are easily susceptible to population declines through changes in the environment and over-fishing. Hidden Lake was a top destination on the Kenai Peninsula for Lake Trout fishing that is in a steady decline in fishing quality, especially with fish in the 24 to 30-inch classes during the last couple of decades.

There has been little biological data available to manage the Lake Trout population within Hidden Lake. It would be more prudent to manage this fishery conservatively until further research and studies can be done to more accurately measure the overall population and sustainability of this fishery.

With the continued harvest of the largest fish within Hidden Lake the breeding stock will continue to be heavily diminished. This hardship on the overall Lake Trout population has resulted in a lower sustainable yield for recreational sport fishing purposes.

By allowing current regulations to continue the Lake Trout population will have very unfavorable conditions for older fish to properly grow and propagate. Without changes to the current regulations there is almost no chance to have a positive outcome in future Lake Trout populations within Hidden Lake.

**PROPOSED BY:** Will Lee

(EF-F16-012)

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