

RC 55

RC**Regarding Proposal 44****Submitted by Prince William Sound Setnetter's Association****In response to RC 45 submitted by CDFU**

Historical use patterns of setnet gear within the Eshamy District necessitates that setnet permit holders retain the ability for crews to deploy/operate/retrieve setnet gear independently of the permit holder.

The Yukon River is an in-river setnet fishery conducted over 1200+ miles of the Yukon River and adjoining waters. Regulation of setnet gear in the Yukon River allows a permit holder to deploy one unit of gear 150 fathoms in length (5 AAC 05.331(a)(1)). In PWS, setnet permit holders must deploy either 2 or 3 units of gear by law to fully utilize their full complement of 150 fathoms of gear.

The nature of the Prince William Sound setnet fishery dictates that existing regulatory language be enforced to address fishing patterns in Prince William Sound, not the Yukon River.

The largest sockeye salmon hatchery in existence is located within the Eshamy District. Hatchery returns to the district result in large buildup concentrations of sockeye salmon in all areas of the district. The largest portion of these buildup fish are harvested within the first 4-5 hours of any given fishing period. It is critical that all participants have equal opportunity to deploy/operate/retrieve gear during all portions of a fishing period.

Requiring the setnet permit holder to be present when gear is being deployed at the start, or any phase of operation during a fishing period, would result in setnet operators being denied access to harvest.

Adoption of regulatory language similar to the Yukon River would be extremely re-allocative and result in high levels of conflict between gear groups.