



January 9, 2018

Alaska Board of Fisheries
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK, 99811-5526

Via Fax: (907) 465-6094

RE: Chilkat, King Salmon and Unuk River Chinook Salmon.

Dear Committee Members,

Please accept this letter on behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU) in support of conserving Chinook salmon runs in the Chilkat, King Salmon and Unuk Rivers. TU is the nation's largest sportsman's organization dedicated to coldwater conservation with more than 1,100 members and roughly 22,000 supporters in Alaska. TU members own and operate businesses—including both sport-fishing businesses and commercial fishing operations—that depend on Alaska's healthy and vibrant wild salmon and resident fish populations. In addition to our members in more remote parts of the state, TU has active chapters in Fairbanks, Anchorage and the Mat-Su, on the Kenai Peninsula, and in Southeast Alaska.

In light of the low preseason forecasts for the Chilkat, King Salmon, and Unuk rivers' Chinook salmon stocks, and their status as Stocks of Concern, the urgent need for conservative fisheries management is apparent. The hardships brought on by potential closures and restrictions to conserve these stocks will affect all user groups, but we all also share a responsibility to ensure these stocks remain healthy for future users and generations. The task of returning as many adult Chinook as possible to the spawning gravel of these rivers should be of paramount importance.

With that in mind, TU urges both the Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to adopt a focused and science-based strategy of stock-specific conservation measures designed to ensure Chinook runs in these important rivers are once again abundant. We support the implementation of spatial and temporal closures above and beyond the 2017 management actions to achieve this goal. While we understand these actions will result in the short-term loss of harvest opportunity for private sport anglers, subsistence and personal use harvesters, as well as short-term financial impacts to the charter and commercial fleets, the continued decline of these Chinook stocks will have far more dire and long-term consequences if appropriate conservation measures are delayed or not employed at all.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and for the Board's leadership in fisheries conservation.

Sincerely,

Austin Williams

Alaska Director of Law and Policy