

CHILKAT INDIAN VILLAGE



"Yee gu.aa yax r'wan."

An Indian Reorganization Act Village
Under Act of Congress June 15th 1935
32 Chilkat Avenue Klukwan, Alaska
HC60 Box 2207 Haines, Alaska 99827
PH: (907) 767-5505
FX: (907) 767-5518
Email: klukwan@chilkat-nsn.gov

RC102

Alaska Board of Fisheries
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811
Fax number: 907-465-6094

January 14, 2018

Dear Chairman Jensen and Alaska Board of Fisheries Members,

The people of the Chilkat Indian Village of Klukwan rely on our summer subsistence fishery, and we object to the closing of Subsistence Salmon fishing on the Chilkat River in front of Klukwan while the commercial fisheries continue harvesting Chilkat King Salmon as by-catch.

It has been established that the Chilkat Tlingit's did not merely subsist but actually thrived in the Chilkat Valley because of the abundance of salmon in the Chilkat River. The variety of fish in the Chilkat River continue to feed our people through the subsistence process as it has for centuries. The Chilkat River is a tremendously valuable resource. Our ancestors named the River "Jilkaat Heeni" – Translated means "Storage container for Salmon" because all five species of wild Pacific Salmon, as well as Steel Head, and Dolly Varden Trout inhabit the Chilkat River. The Chilkat River wild stock salmon also supports a robust commercial gillnet fishing industry that is central to the economies of the Upper Lynn Canal communities.

It is our position that the limited number of King salmon that make it back to the Chilkat River are greatly impacted by how fish and game manages the inside water ways of Southeast Alaska. The Chilkat River is the end of the journey for the Chilkat King Salmon but they are not making it back to the river to spawn. They are being eliminated or caught in the salt water before they reach the fresh water of the Chilkat.

We propose that the Alaska Board of Fisheries take action that limits the bycatch of Chilkat King Salmon by closing Icey Straits, Hook Inlet and Chatham Straits to the Seine Fishing as it has been noted that the bycatch of the sein industry is not being monitored to the degree it could be to protect the King Salmon feeders.

What are the possibilities of restricting how far off shore the sein fleet fishes to avoid the king by- catch or require a smaller bag/ purse net for them to use and have them sort out the feeder Kings to avoid the loss of our King Salmon Stock?

We do treasure the King Salmon and do agree that something needs to be done to enhance the return of the Chilkat King. Chilkat Indian Village Tribal Government requests that the Chilkat King Salmon bycatch by the commercial fishing industry implementing fines, gear restrictions and guarding King Salmon milling around areas at Hook Inlet, Icey Straits, and Chatham Straits before shutting down subsistence fishing that our community has relied on for centuries.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberley Strong
Tribal President