

**PROPOSAL 50**

**5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

Prohibit guiding on the Naknek River drainage during spring from the marker at Lake Camp downstream to the marker at Rapids Camp, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 67.022(d)

My solution to this issue would be to completely ban guiding on the Naknek during the Spring from the marker at lake camp to the marker at rapids camp. Protecting these fish and their spawn should be of the utmost importance.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The issue I would like the board to address is the issue of Spring guiding on the Naknek river, specifically the area from lakecamp from the marker at Trefons cabin to the marker at rapidscamp.

I firmly believe that there should be a no guiding policy on the Naknek river during the spring spawning period. These trout in the Naknek are overly pursued from the opener on June 8th until the lodges leave mid October or early November. With so much pressure put on this fishery, I believe it is time to implement a no guiding policy during the spring spawn. One only has to look on the many social media sites in the spring to observe what is being done to these rainbows on this river.

These magnificent fish are spawning. It is a time when these fish should be completely left alone unharrassed and allowed to spawn uninterrupted. Not only is it unethical to fish for spawning rainbows it should be against the law.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jason Lazore

(EF-F18-010)

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## **PROPOSAL 51**

### **5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

Establish a limited guide permit system between September 10 and October 20 in a portion of the Naknek River, as follows:

Limited permit fishery, from September 10 through October 20, from the marker located at Rapids Camp up stream to the marker located at Trefons cabin on the Naknek river. Any user who hosts guests and would like access to the upper Naknek river must acquire a registration permit. No user, entity or LLC can hold more than 2 permits unless they have more than 12 guests at a single time, no single guide operator may hold more than 1 permit. Any entity or user may hold 3 permits if they have a guest capacity of more than 12.

For initial issuance no more than 2 permits per entity maybe awarded until it is shown there are permits left available. Each permit allows no more than 3 anglers per boat. Actual permits will be required to be obtained by any commercial, business or private entities that use the river to host trips. Local residents will be excluded from this requirement, provided they are not taking guests, other than family members, fishing. There will be a total of 14 permits issued, the criteria for issuance will be based upon 1) physical location of the entity or individuals base of operations to the fishery 2) Alaska residency 3) recent years and number of years of documented use during September 10 through October 20 4) entity or individuals record of compliance with all rules and regulations of the state of Alaska. Each factor will have a possibility of 10 points and the higher the points the higher placement to receive a permit(s) Points shall be awarded to applicants based on each of these factors. The closer an individual or entity's base of operations is to King Salmon on the Naknek river the more points to be awarded. For every 10 miles of distance a base of operations is from the Naknek river the applicant has 1 point deducted. If the entity or individual is a full time, permanent Alaska resident, 10 points will be awarded; non-resident applicants will receive no points. The longer use of the Naknek river during September 10 through October 20 through ADF&G log book records, the more points shall be awarded, if an applicant has proven use of the upper Naknek River since the inception of the logbook program they will receive 10 points, for every year usage is not recorded a point will be deducted. If the Entity or individual has a clean record of abiding by the rules and regulations of the State of Alaska, they will receive 10 points, for every recorded and convicted violation of an entity or individual a point will be deducted. If there are more than 14 qualified applicants scoring the maximum allotted points for the issuance of these permits, the permits will be drawn out of the hat until all 14 are filled. If there are not 14 applicants for these permits, the stipulation for a maximum of 2 permits per entity will be waived and applicants can hold a maximum of 3 permits for 5 years at which time the permittees will be re-evaluated. If there are still permits left over, they will be held in suspension until a qualified applicant applies to request them. These permits will not be transferable to another user, when an entity goes out of business or is no longer an active user for one or more years, the permits will once again be available for users to obtain with the same guide lines as outlined above. The permits will remain in the hands of the individual or entity to which they were awarded and will be evaluated once every five years and once again awarded as specified above with priority given to users who originally had permits issued to themselves or an entity that had a permit(s) issued to them, for re-issuance. The permits will be priced at a cost to cover the costs of the state to issue and maintain the program as determined by the states offices, these costs will be assessed yearly

and non-payment will be considered non-compliance and the permit will go back to the state and be available to a new or existing user.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Participation in the Naknek River, late fall, rainbow trout fishery has increased to the point of discomfort by all users from overcrowding on the water. The portion of river that is involved in this fishery is relatively short in length and quite limited in accessibility for anglers. This has significantly affected the quality of the experience anglers enjoy while fishing the upper Naknek river. The constitution of the state of Alaska protects quality as well as quantity in fisheries and this issue directly relates to the quality of experience available on the river since there are no current stock concerns for the rainbow fishery and there may not be for many years as this is primarily a catch and release fishery.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nanci Morris Lyon

(HQ-F18-051)

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## **PROPOSAL 52**

### **5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

Limit the number of clients a sport fishing guide or sport fishing guide business may have while targeting trout in a portion of the Naknek River drainage, as follows:

5 AAC 67.022 (d) (XXX).

Commercial entities (Lodges, guide services, businesses including LLC's, rental boat operators, fishing clubs) are limited to four guests/anglers at any given time to fish for trout. Guests may fish for other species, or fly out to other creeks, but on the Naknek, only four guests at one time can fish for rainbow trout. Each commercial operator will have four badges (similar to the Brooks River guide badge), issued by Fish and Game. These badges are to be worn by each person fishing one rod, for trout. Badges can be rotated or transferred to other guests of the same operation during the day. They must be visible on the arm, so this regulation can be easily enforced. Non-compliance can result in a fine for both the angler and the commercial entity to which the badge was assigned. Badges are not transferrable. Commercial entities are prohibited from using LLCs, in attempts to justify more than 4 badges. Dolly Varden, Arctic Char and Arctic Grayling occupy similar habit to trout, are equally affected and therefore included in this regulation.

#### **Naknek River Drainage:**

Upstream from ADF&G markers located ½ mile above Rapids Camp to ADF&G markers at Trefon's cabin at the outlet of Naknek Lake:

June 8 – October 31: **Each commercial entity will have four badges, one per angler, to sport fish for Rainbow Trout, Dolly Varden, Arctic Char and Arctic Grayling. Badges must be worn on the arm of the angler and visible at all times.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Sport fishing pressure on the Naknek River trout fishery has skyrocketed to the point of unsustainability. Once a river where local guides and residents could enjoy catching the world's largest trout, it is now a river overrun by guided, transported self-guided, boat rentals and fishing clubs. The number of sport fishing guide registrations has nearly doubled from 45 in 2005 to 86 in 2016. Data has not been officially accumulated for 2017, but we anticipate the guide registrations to be well over 90. This is almost a 100% increase in guide pressure on the Naknek River in the last seven years. Approximately 5 miles long, the upper portion of the Naknek offers about 14 spots anglers can fish for trout. The capacity for each spot, to ensure quality of experience, is 2-4 anglers. Currently, there are multiple boats in each spot, many with 4 – 6 anglers in each boat. This compounds pressure on the resource, effecting younger trout the most. Age classes of smaller trout are underrepresented, forecasting a dramatic decline in larger fish in the future. Equally critical is the quality of experience. Increased pressure is creating a competitive, hostile and even dangerous environment. Inexperienced, and often unlicensed boat drivers are running the river without bearing in mind rules of road and basic etiquette. With guide licenses so easy to acquire, professionalism is lacking. Guests are being dropped off to wade in areas with heavy current, with no boat nearby in case of emergency. This is a slippery slope. *If left unchecked, such pressure is threatening three things of tremendous value: the health of a world-renowned trout fishery, the quality of experience for all user groups, and a way of life for locals.*

The majority of pressure is by out of state commercial entities who, over the last seven years, have lost sight of or have no consideration of the sustainability of this fishery. The focus has shifted from quality of experience, to quantity of money. These low quality, high volume operations, wreak havoc on our resource and leave our state. Left unchecked without regulation, these revenue-generating businesses will be copied, thriving on the misconception that Alaska is a limitless resource. Similar to a virus, the more these operations succeed; the more they squeeze out smaller sustainable businesses, which market for low volume and high-quality experience for ALL user groups. Guests, who have been fishing the Naknek every year for 15 years, are not returning. Locals can no longer go out on a Sunday and find a place to fish. Future stewardship of this river rests in the hands of younger generations in the community. If they are not able to experience the resource, they will not be inclined to protect it. Currently, there are many taking, but not enough giving back. This imbalance is not sustainable and must be managed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Naknek/Kvichak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F18-088)  
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## **PROPOSAL 53**

### **5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

Establish guide permits in a section of the Naknek River drainage, as follows:

Commercial operations that provide guides and/or boats to trout fishermen from ADF&G markers located ½ mile above Rapids Camp to ADF&G markers at Trefon's cabin at the outlet of Naknek Lake must register with ADF&G to prove their acknowledgment of the need to conserve this resource and enjoy it responsibly. This registration should result in a permit to qualified entities and shall apply to Dolly Varden, Arctic Char and Arctic Grayling, in addition to Rainbow Trout. This permit shall apply year round excluding the spring closure, which should remain in effect. See more detail below:

This permit should contain language stating that all clients shall be briefed on the proper techniques for catching and handling the trout, respecting the river banks/waters and observing river etiquette. For guided operations, the permit shall acknowledge that businesses will not send clients out without licensed/certified guides (including coast guard licensure). For unguided boat rentals, the proprietor will be required to issue operators' certificates to individual clients who prove their boatmanship. Liability for any infraction or accident will be borne by both the business and the individual operating the boat. (Really, I don't think commercial boat rentals should be allowed for this section of the river at all!!)

Between June 8- December 31, this permit shall stipulate that commercial entities will only allow four guests at any time to fish for trout within the aforementioned section of the Naknek River. Each successfully permitted commercial operator will have 4 certificates issued by Fish and Game that will be carried by the persons fishing for trout in this section of the river. Certificates can be transferred to other guests of the same operation during the day but only 4 people total can fish at a time. Between January 1-April 8, only 2 certificates may be used at any one time. Non-compliance will result in a fine for both the angler and the commercial entity. Certificates are not transferrable to other operations. Certificates shall be issued to a "parent company" and subsidiaries will not be issued additional certificates.

This overall permit and the individual certificates must be applied for each calendar year.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** I'm an Alaska resident and I've been fishing the Naknek River for rainbow trout for over 17 years. During that time the sport fishing pressure on the trout fishery has absolutely exploded, especially since 2010. On this remote river where locals and lodge-goers alike could historically expect to enjoy epic fishing in September and October in relative solitude, it is now nearly impossible to find even a speck of space on the riverbank to pull over and fish. I used to fish the river in September with ease and no feeling of over crowding, now I've been pushing my short trips back later and later every year to avoid the massive increase in guided trips that are now extending deep into October. The river is only approximately 5 miles long, and offers about 12-15 legitimate spots for trout fishing. These spots are now stacked with people during all daylight hours for nearly 2 months. That's simply too much fishing pressure on this fragile resource. Anglers are primarily targeting the large trophy class rainbow trout for which the river is famous, but the use of relatively large hooks and heavy

gear will likely result in higher mortality rate for the smaller fish that are considered "bycatch" by most fishermen. This fact coupled with the unavoidable mortality of large fish due to long fights and picture taking is a double-edged sword that will likely result in an overall decrease in the numbers of large fish and the quality of the fishery overall. Fish with hooking scars were once rare and now it's common.

A major factor in this over fishing is the lodges' ever increasing focus on volume and money. First, this leads to a high percentage of inexperienced and often unlicensed guides, as well as, do-it-yourself operations that put people and fish in great danger. These do-it-yourself operations are the worst offenders. This river is dangerous and unguided fishermen likely don't understand the true power of the river or the fragility of these large trout. Second, many of the new outfitters are out of state commercial businesses who don't understand or have lost sight of the sustainability of this fishery. Now that fly fishing has become a fad and social media and reality tv has put us on the map in a big way, the world has become smaller and people are flocking to Alaska. The number of hungry anglers wanting to notch a trophy rainbow will continue to increase exponentially and these businesspeople will cash in as quickly as possible until the resource is depleted. It's human nature. One need only look to the rivers on the road system, such as the Kenai, to see what can happen when fishing pressure is allowed to explode, unchecked. I've all but quit fishing the Kenai for trout, as it's become combat fishing in every way.... even worse than the famous combat sockeye fishery. This Naknek resource is NOT limitless.

The other effect of this sad exploitation is that the small, sustainable local guides are being pushed out of the market to some extent. I've personally know perennial guests, who have been fishing the Naknek for years, that have given up due to the rodeo that this fishery has become. Likewise, locals can't really go out and find a reasonable spot to fish in peace until late October.

Luckily the fishing on the Naknek is still fantastic and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to save it. Preservation will rely on combining the full might of the local stewards and regulatory agencies to implement a meaningful management plan NOW. It has to happen now.

**PROPOSED BY:** Dan Kirsch

(EF-F18-015)

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**PROPOSAL 54**

**5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

Limit the hours guides or clients can fish on a section of the Naknek River, as follows:

I suggest as a resolution to this problem, a regulated fishing time that guides and clients are allotted to be on the river fishing from lake camp to rapids camp. This allotted time could start at 8am and end at 6pm. After 6pm no guides or clients will be allowed to trout fish from that area.

This would allow time for residents to enjoy the fishing on an uncrowded river and would also give the trout a much needed break from the constant traffic and pressure.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** An issue I would like the board to address concerns the hours guides and clients are spending on the upper river of the Naknek trout fishing. Specifically the area from the marker at lake camp to the marker downriver at rapids camp.

From the opener June 8th until well into October, the number of guides and clients trout fishing has exploded in the past few years. Being that the trout fishing mainly occurs in the upper part of the river, this is a very small area and is overrun with guides and clients pretty much all season long from the early hours in the morning until late in the evenings.

Guides are sent out early in the morning to secure spots for the lodges clients who arrive after having breakfast. Guides are left on the river to occupy spots while the clients are brought back to the lodge for lunch and then returned to fish spots secured by the guides "holding" the area for them on the river. When the clients are headed in for the day, now it's the guides time to fish. They drop the clients off and head right back out.

I am all for people fishing this river and enjoying its trout but over the last few years this river has become grossly overrun with guides and clients. Venturing upriver after work or on the weekend for people that live here and want to enjoy the rainbow fishing usually results in a wasted trip being that the spots on the river are all occupied by lodges. I myself live here to enjoy what the area has to offer and I'm letting you know that the upper river is and has been out of control for some time now. Something must be done not only to protect this valuable resource but to allow the people that live here to enjoy as well.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jason Lazore

(EF-F18-012)

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**PROPOSAL 55**

**5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

Limit the days guides or clients can fish on a section of the Naknek River, as follows:

5 AAC 67.022(d)(4)

My proposed solution to this problem us as follows:

No guiding on Sundays or Thursdays. This will mean no clients without guides, no dropping clients off unguided and no lodge guides on the river. The area affected by this would be the area at Lake Camp from the marker at Trefons Cabin to the marker at Rapids Camp.

I believe that it is time to implement such a regulation on the Naknek because it has become obscenely abused and overused by lodges and guides and time should be allotted for folks and families that live here and deserve their time on a river that used to be a place to relax and unwind.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The issue I would like the board to address concerns the extreme overabundance of guides and clients fishing on the Naknek River for rainbow trout.

In the past 20 plus years of living in King Salmon fishing the Naknek river for rainbow trout, Lately I have witnessed the extreme overabundance of guides and clients trout fishing on the Naknek River. Gone are the days of going "upriver" after work or on the weekend to fish and relax. This river is mobbed by guides and their clients starting on the opener June 8th, going well onto October and sometimes November. Gone also is the etiquette on this river. When you are lucky enough to find a spot to fish upriver it usually comes with a consequence being that you will be fishing in a non stop wake zone because of all of the boats going up and down the river - boats carrying 4 to 6 fisherman apiece.

The other consequence that I have witnessed and personally experienced multiple times last fall is the complete and utter lack of etiquette from multiple guides from the multiple lodges that are fishing clients on the river. From having boats float right through the water I am fishing , to having guides drop clients off less than 20 yards below me while fishing - the etiquette has totally disappeared on the river. If you so desire to leave at the earliest hours of the morning to secure a spot - don't bother. You will only find yourself upriver going to each spot only to find a guide waiting there for the lodge to bring clients upriver to the spots that their guides are "holding."

It is very sad what has happened to this trout fishery over the last few years. I am so thankful that I got to enjoy this fishery long ago when there was only a small handful of locals that fished during the fall time and even during the summer when you could go up to the rapids after work and relax. I do not oppose change but I do oppose the abuse of such a beautiful resource that many locals cannot even enjoy anymore.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jason Lazore

(EF-F18-013)

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