

ACR 8

Prohibit operation of dipnet gear from a boat to harvest salmon for subsistence purposes in the Glennallen Subdistrict (5 AAC 01.620).

CITE THE REGULATION THAT WILL BE CHANGED IF THIS ACR IS HEARD. 5 AAC 01.620. Lawful gear and gear specifications.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS? STATE IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM. Dipnetting from a boat on the Copper River is not a customary and traditional method or practice. Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use fisheries have created an efficient method of harvesting schools of salmon that are held up in pockets along the Copper River. Dipnetting from boats in the Glennallen Subdistrict does not meet the criteria for a customary and traditional fishery. The Ahtna people did not dipnet from boats.

Dipnetting from boats with the state subsistence fishery opens 80 miles of river (nearly 10 times the Chitina Subdistrict) to unlimited participation with a very large limit (nearly 10 times the personal use limit). This is a loophole that will continue to be exploited and grow. In 2018 this resulted in forcing closure of the state subsistence fishery and therefore forced closures of all other fisheries when some could have been opened in a restricted and monitored manner.

It was very apparent that many new fishers were expanding the use of the Glennallen Subdistrict. We have observed boats fishing near traditional fish wheels causing damage with boat wakes and user conflicts. Many reports of stolen fish from wheels by new fishers running the river with boats in Chitina, Copper Center, Tazlina, Gulkana and even up as far as Chistochina. This has been an increasing trend that can be expected to continue.

New information and concern is a conservation concern for Sockeye returns to spawning grounds. According to ADFG, Miles Lake Sonar Weir cumulative fish counts for 2018 was 697,310. Last year it was 723,426. Both years Sockeye runs and strength have been low, next year's fish count is expected to be another low year run for Sockeye. Kings runs were good this year, however that was probably due to commercial fisheries mandatory closure this past summer. Next year, we may have King Salmon conservation concern, too.

We cannot wait for 2 years for the Alaska Board of Fisheries to take action.

WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PREFER? 5 AAC 01.620 (k). Dip netting from a boat in the State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict is unlawful.

STATE IN DETAIL HOW THIS ACR MEETS THE CRITERIA STATED ABOVE.

- a) **for a fishery conservation purpose or reason:** Dip netting from a boat is an efficient method way of harvesting too many sockeye and kings in the Copper River. The ability of unlimited personal use fishers to switch fisheries makes it impossible to regulate the fishery without closing or restricting the state subsistence fishery.
- b) **to correct an error in regulation:** When the C&T determination was made for the Glennallen Subdistrict, dipnetting from boats was not considered customary and

traditional. It was a difference in the Chitina Subdistrict and why it was determined to be a personal use fishery and not customary and traditional.

- c) **to correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted:** Dip netting in the Copper River began with dip nets being used by hand in the Copper River, now it is being used along with a boat to harvest kings and salmon. This evolving method of dip netting has allowed subsistence and personal use fishermen an advantage of harvesting salmon in pockets of water along the Copper River and increasing their harvest of salmon.

Because of the unlimited nature of the State subsistence fishery due to McDowell, there is no way to slow harvest by closing personal use. Dipnetters from boats merely switch fisheries and was actually encouraged this year by department announcements. A large unlimited user base can easily overharvest the resource. Limits set for the Glennallen Subdistrict anticipate a fixed and known number of fishing sites. Dipnetting from boats with the state subsistence fishery opens 80 miles of river (nearly 10 times the Chitina Subdistrict) to unlimited participation with a very large limit (nearly 10 times the personal use limit}. This is a loophole that will continue to be exploited and grow. In 2018 this resulted in forcing closure of the state subsistence fishery and therefore forced closures of all other fisheries when some could have been opened in a restricted and monitored manner.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED PRIOR TO THE REGULAR CYCLE? Low number of Sockeyes will continue to be the norm on the Copper River. King Salmon population will diminish with this practice of harvesting salmon. King Salmon will not reach spawning grounds. More and more closures of the state subsistence fishery will occur and other user groups will be forced by statute and regulation to remain closed when the fishery could be managed better. Too much non-traditional fishing power in the state subsistence fishery makes the whole system unmanageable. This hurts all user groups and puts the resource at a very high and unnecessary risk of overharvest.

STATE WHY YOUR ACR IS NOT PREDOMINANTLY ALLOCATIVE. The allocation plan is set by the board and managed by in season managers. A new and non-traditional and highly effective method of harvest in the state subsistence fishery basically forces all allocation to the subsistence fishery. Once the state subsistence fishery is restricted, all other user groups must remain closed regardless of the run strength or allocations set by the board. This proposal makes it possible to manage the allocations set by the board. It does not propose any changes to allocation.

IF THIS REQUEST IS ALLOCATIVE, STATE THE NEW INFORMATION THAT COMPELS THE BOARD TO CONSIDER AN ALLOCATIVE PROPOSAL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR CYCLE. See #6 above, this proposal does not make any allocation changes.

STATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE FISHERY THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ACR. Ahtna people are primarily state and federal subsistence users operating fish wheels. In the past a large proportion of the customary and traditional Ahtna fishery was conducted by dipnet from shore or spruce pole stands connected to the shore.

STATE WHETHER THIS ACR HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE, EITHER AS A PROPOSAL OR AS AN ACR, AND IF SO, DURING WHICH BOARD OF FISHERIES MEETING. This proposal was submitted at a prior board cycle on the Copper River and was voted down.

SUBMITTED BY: Ahtna Tene Nene'