

PROPOSAL 237

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Create a Susitna River personal use dip net fishery, as follows:

(h) In the Susitna River, salmon may be taken by dip net as follows:

(1) from July 14 until EO closure date of the Northern District set net fishery, 7 days per week from 10 am to 5 pm daily.

(2) the annual limit is specified in 5 AAC 77.525.

(3) from boat or shore downstream of the northwest bank of the Susitna River/Yentna River confluence to Susitna River terminus at Cook Inlet.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Consider adopting a conservative 7-day per week Susitna River personal use dip net fishery.

The fishery would provide an opportunity for Alaska residents, living in the Susitna Valley, to harvest a reasonable amount of salmon for personal consumption throughout the year. A 7-day per week fishery would allow effort and harvest to be spread out over every day of the week. Such a fishery could be restricted by hours when fishing was allowed to remain conservative. A conservative participant level would also be maintained by access to the proposed fishing area — primary access is by boat or airplane, as there is no road access. Note: Even though this fishery is entirely within Game Management Unit 16B (a subsistence hunting area) this fishery is proposed as a personal use fishery, rather than a subsistence fishery, in recognition of the Susitna River salmon resource providing reasonable harvest opportunity for other Upper Cook Inlet user groups. Salmon abundances and conservation measures would be shared in common with other users.

Restricting legal fishing time to 7 hours per day/49 hours per week would allow significantly more daily hours when salmon could migrate through the fishing area unmolested. Since harvest would be allowed 7 days per week — some harvest opportunity would be available on most, if not all, days when large pulses of salmon were migrating through the harvest area. Legal fishing hours can be structured to encourage safer boating and easier enforcement during daylight hours, while also providing additional daylight hours after fishery closure that would be available to transport the inevitable broken down boats and their passengers back to homesites/campsites along the river system or to Deshka Landing. A 7 -hour-per-day fishing option would likely encourage more conservative daily fishery participation over multi-day or campout-along-the-river participation. A late season-ending date allows harvest/consumption by residents hunting moose within this popular subsistence hunting area.

A conservative Susitna River personal use fishery could be configured in any number of ways, this proposal provides additional points for Board and public consideration.

PROPOSED BY: Richard Sanderlin

(HQ-F19-089)
