

PROPOSAL 93

5 AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan; and 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Manage the personal use dip net fishery on the lower Kenai River subject to achieving the inriver goal, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 21.360 (g) as below

5 AAC 21.360 (g) The department shall manage the personal use dip net fishery in the lower Kenai River subject to the requirement of achieving the current in river goal as follows: If the commercial fisheries are restricted during the week from Sunday through the mandatory set net closure, the affected personal use fishery shall close as of 7:00 AM Friday, reopening at such time as a regular commercial period is fished.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There is no paired restriction for dip net PU and commercial fisheries in the Kenai River. Focusing the management of the PU fishery on the SEG, while the commercial fishery is managed to an In-River goal, as stipulated in the current management plan is inherently unequal, and forces unequal distribution of the conservation burden.

My assumption is that a MAJORITY within all user groups would actually prefer to have harvest opportunity rather than fish swimming by; it may be the better option for the board to make all fisheries equally based upon achieving an SEG. The proposal I'm submitting here is based upon the scenario in which the BOF decides to retain an In-River goal.

A paired restriction is necessary to the management goal of managing primarily for commercial uses based on abundance. Beginning on July 20th, commercial fisheries may be further restricted or closed based upon a forecasted In-River Goal. A management decision to restrict the commercial fishery shall lead to the closure in the affected dip net fishery until such time as the commercial fishery has been reopened.

This restriction / closure may not seem like an equally paired restriction, however, excellent opportunities still exist in the sport fishery, with bag limits and opportunity more closely aligned to a stated objective of achieving an In-River goal. A complete closure of the commercial fisheries should lead to a closure in the sportfishery.

The intent of this proposal is to begin to share the burden of conservation at the current level of an In-River goal. Ultimately in order to promote regular openers for all commercial gear types as well as the PU fishery, managing to a SEG may be preferable to In-River goals.

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(EF-F19-105)
