

## Mt Yenlo Advisory Committee RC

### Coho escapement numbers Deshka weir

|      |         |      |         |
|------|---------|------|---------|
| 2000 | 26,387  | 2010 | 10,393  |
| 2001 | 29,927  | 2011 | 7,508 a |
| 2002 | 24,612  | 2012 | 6,825   |
| 2003 | 17,305  | 2013 | 22,341  |
| 2004 | 62,940  | 2014 | 11,578  |
| 2005 | 47,887  | 2015 | 10,775  |
| 2006 | 59,419a | 2016 | 6,820a  |
| 2007 | 10,575  | 2017 | 36,869  |
| 2008 | 12,724  | 2018 | 12,962  |
| 2009 | 27,348  | 2019 | 10,445  |
| 2020 | 5,368b  |      |         |
| 2021 | 3,431b  |      |         |
| 2022 | 3,137b  |      |         |
| 2023 | 1,817a  |      |         |

As can be seen escapement counts averaged from 2000 -2009 about twice the 2010- 2019 numbers even throwing out the incomplete count years. Although recent counts are incomplete 2021 and 2022 counts are not exciting numbers for even the time they had them the weir in. 2023 is pretty much a complete count as they likely missed few silvers when the weir was flooded from July16 to July 27. It is a rare year that during this time period count numbers over 1,000 fish . More rare this decade. That would be once since 2010. It is also rare that big numbers come in after August 26 when the weir was pulled unless it is a real low water year which 2023 obviously not. That has happened once in the last decade. Even more rare is to have an early run and late run in the same year.

### Commercial coho salmon catch from all Cook Inlet districts

|      |         |      |         |
|------|---------|------|---------|
| 1985 | 667,213 | 2010 | 207,350 |
| 1986 | 756,830 | 2011 | 95,291  |
| 1987 | 451,404 | 2012 | 106,775 |
| 1988 | 560,022 | 2013 | 260,963 |
| 1989 | 339,201 | 2014 | 137,419 |
| 1990 | 500,634 | 2015 | 216,032 |
| 1991 | 425,724 | 2016 | 147,495 |
| 1992 | 468,911 | 2017 | 303,642 |
| 1993 | 306,822 | 2018 | 232,290 |
| 1994 | 580,567 | 2019 | 163,863 |
| 1995 | 446,954 | 2020 | 139,240 |
| 1996 | 321,411 | 2021 | 147,602 |
| 1997 | 152,404 | 2022 | 102,163 |

Basically the commercially harvest in cook inlet averages less than half what it was pre 1997 and the escapement numbers this decade on the Deshka weir average less than half what they did the previous decade and fishing has been getting worse. We think this means the coho runs are declining.

From Area Management Report For Recreational Fisheries of Northern Cook Inlet, 2000.

“The Talachulitna River became Alaska's first catch and release river trout fishery in 1977. Beginning in 1987 catch and release strategies were initiated in most of the Lake Creek drainage, ..... **Catch and release strategies were adopted to perpetuate quality fishing RATHER THAN TO PROTECT OR REBUILD DEPRESSED STOCKS** ( Engle and Vincent-Lang). “

The rainbow retention limit for Lake Creek in 1984 was 5 per day ; in 1986 it was 2 per day, the Talachulitna retention limit was 10 per day in 1976. All other streams in Unit 4 were 5 per day in 1986. The committee has little concern that going back to a 5 per day limit will be a conservation issue as it never was.

“This management strategy also requires the use of unbaited artificial lures in all flowing waters from September 1 through May 15 to enhance survival of released fish at a time when trout are often a targeted species.” Source ADFG

Hardly anybody is fishing for trout from September 15 to May 15<sup>th</sup> in **unit4**. They are not an often targeted species they are a rarely ( almost never) targeted species. If we are catching trout to eat, release mortality does not exist, so bait really doesn't matter. It only matters in that it is the only practical way to catch trout under ice most of the current” you can harvest trout, but you won't be able to catch them” season.

There is a current restriction on retention from April 15 to June 15 to protect rainbow trout when they are spawning and often a targeted species. From April 15<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> they are not targeted at all in Unit 4. It is frozen or breakup or high muddy water. There is fair amount of pressure in June. Nothing like when we had King Salmon fishing open. It is unclear to the committee, why a trout harvested during spawning is a biological or conservation concern? Are not all the salmon harvested during the spawn? May 15 to June 15 was ( Until it was made illegal) the historical time frame when the local community harvested fresh rainbow trout, after a long winter of no fresh fish and at a time when the trout were located at the mouth of almost any small to medium sized stream. Grayling also. After June 15 most of these trout have migrated up these streams or where ever and trout fishing does not pick up again until the fall when trout become somewhat inedible due to eating salmon eggs and flesh.

The trout management plans have been basically an allocation from consumptive users to non-consumptive users, not conservation in Unit 4. Since 1987 more and more streams and parts of streams in Unit 4 have been restricted to catch and release and seasons for consumptive users have been shortened. For some reason non-consumptive users seem to think that catch and release cannot be practiced in areas open to consumptive use, even though we witness catch and release practiced in areas open to consumptive use every year. Members of the committee also question how restrictions on non-consumptive use, when there is an annual harvestable surplus, and no conservation concern are even legal under the Constitutional mandate to manage Alaska's natural resources under the Sustained Yield principle?

This regulation began in 1999 and replaced catch and release.

Willow Creek upstream of bridge current 2023 fishing regulation

April 15 – June 15 No Retention

June 15 – April 14 **1 per day, 1 in possession less than 16 inches**

Proposal 225 as amended would make Unit 4 managed similar to Willow creek above the bridge. It would manage trout in Unit 4 as a trophy rainbow trout fishery. It would also allow people to harvest rainbow trout for food during the entire year again.

There was a time when the Susitna drainage was not divided into the current units and many of the Susitna wide management ideas applied to unit 4 made no logical or conservation sense. The current dolly varden regulation is an example. Now that the Yentna drainage is it's own entity the committee wants to make regulations that reflect the realities of Unit 4, not the more accessible areas of the Susitna drainage. We also feel trout regulations should reflect today's realities not the realities of 20 years ago.

King salmon Escapement numbers Aerial counts

| Year | Lake Creek | Talachulitna |  |
|------|------------|--------------|--|
| 1985 | 5803       | 5145         | Most of these occurred with human harvest of salmon. Bait fishing for King salmon was legal until 1994. The release mortality of rainbow trout most likely severely declined in Unit 4 during King season with the disappearance of bait fishing from May 15 to June 13. |
| 1986 |            | 3686         |  |
| 1987 | 4898       |              |  |
| 1988 | 6663       | 4112         |  |
| 1990 | 2075       | 2694         |  |
| 1991 | 3011       | 2457         |  |
| 1992 | 2322       | 3648         |  |
| 1993 | 2869       | 3269         |  |
| 1994 | 1898       | 1575         |  |
| 1995 | 3017       | 2521         |  |
| 1996 | 3514       | 2748         |  |
| 1997 | 3841       | 4494         |  |
| 1998 | 5056       | 2759         |  |
| 1999 | 2877       | 4890         |  |
| 2000 | 4035       | 2414         |  |

2023

These are the total run numbers today's reality.

As can be seen 30 years ago when we adopted these overly restrictive rainbow trout regulations, we didn't have a problem with king salmon runs or the coho salmon runs.