

# Department of Transportation and Public Facilities



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS  
Traffic & Safety

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Chairman John Wood  
Alaska Board of Fisheries  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811

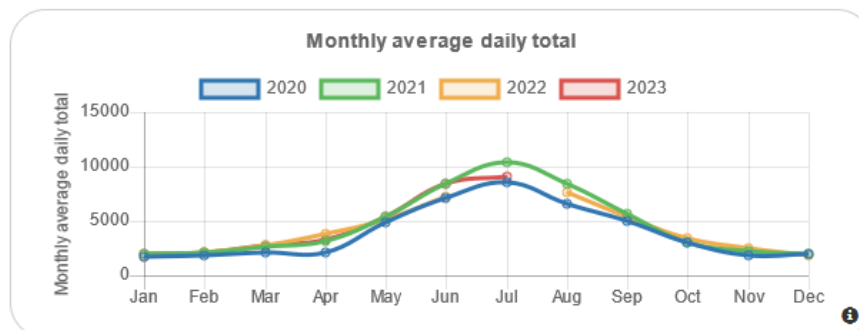
Dear Chairman and Board of Fisheries,

**Proposal 255** seeks to create a personal use dipnet fishery for salmon in the 20 Mile and Placer Rivers July 1-33.

The Traffic and Safety group at the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Central Region has public safety concerns surrounding access and parking for anticipated users of a Seward Highway dipnet fishery considered under Proposal 255. We request that ADFG study anticipated parking demand for this fishery, and design and construct off-highway parking facilities that meet the parking demand prior to opening a dipnet fishery for Twentymile and Placer Rivers. New parking facilities with capacity for 200 vehicles could range between \$4 and \$8 million dollars in capital costs and are not included in DOT&PF's planned projects.

We appreciate that the proposal recognizes the traffic safety concerns and proposes a weekday fishery as a solution. However, limiting the fishery to weekdays will not be a sufficient mitigation of safety issues. Traffic volumes recorded at a continuous count station on the Seward Highway at Placer River identify the highest annual traffic volumes in the month of July. Average weekday traffic volumes during for July 2023 were 8639 vehicles per day, which is 84% of the weekend volumes in July and two times the average annual daily traffic recorded at this station.

### Seward Highway MP 79.75 Traffic Volumes at Placer River:



Without adequate parking, we anticipate similar safety problems experienced at Bird Creek and the Hooligan Dipnet fisheries along the Turnagain Arm. Conflicts between through traffic, on-highway parking, and pedestrians at these fisheries required years of multiagency work to mitigate. Both fisheries required significant capital investments to construct new parking facilities as permanent solutions to these issues.

While DOT&PF has the authority to establish seasonal speed zones for high conflict areas, low driver compliance and increased enforcement make seasonal speed zones a less desirable solution than off-highway parking. Seasonal speed zones are intended as an interim measure and not a permanent solution to these safety issues. A seasonal 45 mile-per-hour speed zone was established for the hooligan fishery in 2009 while new parking facilities were being planned and constructed. Two new 100-space facilities at milepost 81.5 and 83 with interconnecting pathway were funded by DOT&PF through obligation of more than \$10 million dollars in federal highway funds. The existing seasonal speed zone is planned to be removed after completion of the milepost 83 parking facility, which is expected to begin this summer. In May of 2011, while the seasonal speed zone was in effect, a 6 year old boy suffered injuries as a pedestrian after being struck by a vehicle near the hooligan fishery.

Without new permanent off highway parking facilities, Proposal 255 would overwhelm the existing Twentymile River Access and Placer River parking facilities. DOT&PF wishes to work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to permit any approach roads required for new parking facilities prior to opening the Twentymile and Placer dipnet fisheries for public use.

Sincerely,

J. Orion LeCroy, P.E.  
Acting Regional Traffic and Safety Engineer

CC:

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Cynthia Ferguson, PE      DOT&PF Central Region Traffic, Safety, and Utilities Chief