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Matanuska Susitna Borough
Public Testimony

1. Maintain and enhance the Conservation Corridor in the drift gillnet fishery management plan.

i. The Conservation Corridor – Andy Couch

- a. A Strong Conservation Corridor Protects unmonitored, less abundant, and Northern District Salmon Stocks in Upper Cook Inlet Fisheries.
- b. Historically, the larger the pre-season projection of Kenai sockeye by ADF&G, the fewer Susitna coho and sockeye successfully made it north to their natal streams to spawn. This was a result of indiscriminate mixed stock drift gillnet harvests.
- c. It is impossible to harvest one stock at a time in a mixed stock fishery like UCI. However, confining fishing closer to shore in terminal areas, as defined by the expanded Kenai and Kasilof Harvest Zones is an effective means to pass Northern bound salmon which run primarily up the middle of the Central District.
- d. "Terminal" fishing areas, called harvest zones, allow fish migrating to northern streams to pass through a Conservation Corridor. The concept builds off of the highly successful terminal stock fisheries management program in Bristol Bay enables commercial fishermen to harvest Kenai and Kasilof sockeye closer to shore while protecting less abundant Northern bound salmon stocks. This system WORKS!
- e. Terminal stock harvest strategy accounts for the funnel-shaped geography of Upper Cook Inlet and the gauntlet style commercial mixed-stock fishery, ensuring the Inlet's less productive salmon stocks including northern bound coho and sockeye pass through the Central District to reach their spawning grounds in Northern District drainages.
- f. The uncertainty caused by Federal Management in the EEZ necessitates more conservative posture be adopted by the Board within remaining state managed waters.
- g. The greatest success in conserving Northern bound salmon stocks has been establishing and maintaining the Conservation Corridor.
- h. Based on these facts the FWC recommends the Board:

- **Affirm a commitment to terminal stock fisheries management by limiting all drift gillnet fishing in state waters to the expanded harvest zone. This is a proven method to allow for stock specific harvest of Kenai and Kaslof sockeye while protecting less productive Northern District stocks.**
- **Reject any expansion of the drift gillnet fishery in state managed waters.**
- **Consider and adopt a Super Exclusive management system for drift gillnetting in waters managed by the State of Alaska.**