

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES**FINDING FOR THE SKWENTNA RIVER
PERSONAL USE SALMON FISHERY**

At its meeting in Anchorage, Alaska in February 1996, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) after having received reports, both oral and written, from the staff and having received testimony, both oral and written, from members of the public, discussed several proposals which, if adopted, would have provided form subsistence salmon fishing opportunity in the Susitna and Yentna river drainages. The board after much deliberation adopted 5 AAC 77.526 (Skwentna River Personal Use Salmon Fishery) to provide increased opportunity for the personal use of salmon in the Yentna River drainage.

In December 1988, the board applied the eight criteria defined in 5 AAC 99.010(b), the Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game subsistence procedures, and determined that salmon stocks of the Yentna and Skwentna rivers do not support customary and traditional uses. During the deliberations in February 1996, the board again discussed the merits of addressing the eight criteria. After discussion, the board adopted a motion to reaffirm the December 1988 finding. The board decided it would be more appropriate to provide for increased salmon harvest potential through personal use harvest regulations. The board decided establishing a fish wheel fishery in this area had merit, therefore through standards established for personal use fisheries, adopted 5 AAC 77.526 (Skwentna River Personal Use Salmon Fishery).

Several factors contributed to the board's decision to establish a personal use salmon fishery in the Yentna River near the confluence of the Skwentna River. Information the board received from public testimony and the Mt. Yenlo Advisory Committee indicated there was a need by area residents to harvest fish for personal consumption in this area. Information provided by the department staff indicated that a fishery utilizing fish wheels that operated three days per week with 16-hour fishing days between July 15 and July 31 would not jeopardize sustained yield of the fishery resources. The board established daily reporting requirements and a 2,500 salmon harvest cap to further ensure the development of a sustainable and orderly fishery. Through discussion with the staff, the board recognized that the number of fish wheels operating in the area would be limited because of the limited number of sites in the four mile area open to fish wheel operation. The board understood that in most cases several households would utilize a single fish wheel. Household harvest limits were established at levels consistent with other Cook Inlet personal use fisheries. Established regulations provide that a household can only participate in the Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery or the Skwentna River Personal Use Salmon Fishery during a given season, not both fisheries.

Previously
(97-05-FB)
97-170-FB

The board noted that it would be a good idea to re-evaluate this management plan during the next board cycle to ensure that the fishery is not jeopardizing the sustained yield of salmon stocks and that it is being conducted in an orderly manner.

At Sitka, Alaska

Date: January 31, 1997

Approved: (7/0/0/0) (Yes/No/Absent/Abstain)


Larry Engel, Chair
Alaska Board of Fisheries