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News Release

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Yentna Subsistence Fishery Closed

(Palmer) – In favor of protecting returning king salmon and increase fishing opportunities in the future, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is implementing the following closure for the Upper Yentna subsistence fishery located in the mainstem of the Yentna River from Martin Creek upstream to the confluence with the Skwentna River effective 4:00 a.m. Monday, June 25 through 11:59 p.m. Saturday, June 30, 2018.

This fishery closure is in conjunction with two sport fishing regulation closures released on the Susitna River and the Little Susitna River. A closure was issued for Units 1-6 of the Susitna River drainages closing king salmon fishing, including catch-and-release. Sport fishing gear is limited to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure when fishing in Units 1-6 of the Susitna River drainages in those waters normally open to king salmon fishing. In addition, a closure was issued for the Little Susitna River drainages closing king salmon fishing in all waters of the Little Susitna River from its confluences with Cook Inlet upstream to the Parks Highway Bridge.

“Cook Inlet is experiencing a low productivity run of king salmon stocks and reports from guides, anglers, and fish wheels indicate that the run strength in the Susitna River drainage is lower than expected at the outset of the season,” stated Deputy Director Tom Taube. “Closures on the king salmon fisheries are being felt throughout Alaska. ADF&G staff were optimistically cautious that the king salmon run would increase as the season progressed; however, that is not the case. Therefore, all fish within the Yentna drainage must be conserved to provide the greatest potential for achieving escapement goals in 2018; thus, it is warranted to now also close the Yentna River subsistence king salmon fishery.”

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for king salmon in the Deshka River is 13,000 to 28,000 fish, as measured at a weir located at river mile 7. Based upon average run timing, approximately 50 percent of the escapement should have passed the weir by June 19, 2018. At this time, only 3,974 fish have passed the weir and the total escapement is projected to be approximately 8,255 fish. ADF&G monitors escapement by post season aerial count of spawners on three streams within the Yentna River drainage that have SEGs: Peters Creek, Lake Creek, and Talachulitna River, and all three areas missed SEGs in 2017. The count on the Talachulitna River, which occurs upstream of the subsistence fishery, was only half the low end of the SEG range in 2017.

For additional information, please contact Deputy Director Tom Taube at (907) 465-4180.