

PROPOSAL 33 - 5 AAC 24.361. Copper River King Salmon Management Plan. Establish a biological escapement goal of 28,000 king salmon for the Copper River drainage, as follows:

Amend the *King Salmon Management Plan* to achieve a BEG of 28,000 kings, rather than a sustainable escapement goal of 24,000.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) has often responded to declining king stocks by lowering the escapement goal. Recently this practice led to a management disaster on the Kuskokwim River. The department is still trying to explain how a lowered goal for king salmon in the Kenai is now justified by its newer sonar technology, when the old technology was touted as being very accurate at counting kings. The Miles Lake Sonar does not distinguish between kings and sockeye, so the department uses several much less reliable methods to predict escapement. Several years ago, after not meeting escapement, the goal was lowered from a minimum 28,000 to 24,000 kings. The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) has the authority to set biological escapement goal (BEG) and has done so for many other king salmon stocks, while directing the division to manage for that goal. The board should look at the recent restrictions placed on all fisheries, as well as not meeting even the reduced goal and determine whether the Copper River kings deserve a biological escapement goal more in line with historical escapement numbers rather than based on the currently depleted runs and imprecise counting methods.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Advisory Committee (EF-C14-159)

PROPOSAL 34 - 5 AAC 24.361. Copper River King Salmon Management Plan. Amend the Copper River King Salmon Management Plan to provide additional management measures for king salmon in the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery as follows:

(e) In the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence salmon fishery, if the commissioner determines that additional conservation measures are necessary to achieve the escapement goals, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery season and immediately reopen a season during which **any one or a combination of the following restrictions may be taken to reduce king salmon harvest in the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence salmon fishery in the following priority order:**

(1) a bag limit is established for king salmon taken by fish wheel;

(2) the bag limit for king salmon taken by fish wheel or dip net is reduced;

(3) the retention of king salmon taken by either fish wheel or dip net is prohibited;

[OR]

(4) modify methods and means [ARE MODIFIED TO REDUCE KING SALMON HARVEST IN THE GLENNALLEN SUBDISTRICT SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHERY].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2011, the Alaska Board of Fisheries modified the *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* to provide the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) emergency order authority to restrict the harvest of king

salmon in the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery to ensure the escapement goal is met. However, current language within the *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* is limited to either prohibiting retention of king salmon or modifying methods and means. Explicit authority is needed to set or alter bag limits within the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery. The language proposed herein provides the department with emergency order authority to establish a bag limit for king salmon taken with a fish wheel and/or reduce the bag limit for king salmon taken with either a fish wheel or dip net while still providing reasonable subsistence opportunity and ensuring the Copper River king salmon sustainable escapement goal is met.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-070)

PROPOSAL 35 - 5 AAC 01.647. Copper River Subsistence Salmon Fisheries Management Plans; and 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Prohibit the use of monofilament mesh in dip net bag webbing in subsistence and personal use fisheries, as follows:

For the purpose of this section a dip net may not be constructed of monofilament material or any other single strand "gillnet" material commonly used in commercial fishing. Dip net mesh must be constructed of braided line or other material commonly used in sport fishing landing nets designed to minimize the harm done to the fish.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? King salmon are large fish that are prone to damage from handling. King salmon caught in dipnet fisheries in dip nets made of monofilament gillnet mesh are almost always badly tangled. Most king salmon tangled in gillnet mesh are drug up on the banks and allowed to flop around on the rocks or in the bottom of the boat until they can be untangled. By the time they are untangled they are often dead or mortally injured. The old braided mesh dip nets did not tangle fish nearly as bad as the now common gillnet mesh. King salmon in the Copper River Valley have declined and retention of king salmon in the personal use fishery has been restricted or eliminated over the last few years. The requirement to release most or all king salmon has caused the release of a high number of king salmon and the death of many valuable king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist (EF-C14-064)

PROPOSAL 36 - 5 AAC 01.647. Copper River Subsistence Salmon Fisheries Management Plans; and 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. In subsistence and personal use fisheries, prohibit removing a king salmon from the water if it is to be released, as follows:

A king salmon that is to be released may not be removed from the water prior to release.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? King salmon are large fish that are prone to damage from handling. King salmon caught in dipnet fisheries in dip nets are

almost always badly tangled. Most king salmon caught in dip nets that are intended for release are drug up on the banks and allowed to flop around on the rocks or in the bottom of the boat until they can be untangled. By the time they are untangled they are often dead or mortally injured. King salmon in the Copper River Valley have declined and retention of king salmon in the personal use fishery has been restricted or eliminated over the last few years. The requirement to release most or all king salmon has caused the release of a high number of king salmon and the death of many valuable king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist (EF-C14-065)

PROPOSAL 37 - 5 AAC 01.647. Copper River Subsistence Salmon Fisheries Management Plans; and 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Require a department operated check station to monitor subsistence and personal use harvest and permit compliance in the Chitina and Glennallen subdistricts, as follows:

5 AAC 01.XXX A 24-hour checkpoint manned by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) to check fish wheel permits and personal use permits and harvest levels for sockeye and Chinooks.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Reinstate a 24-hour checkpoint at Chitna and five miles from Chitina at the five mile airport. The checkpoint would be manned by the department to check fishing permits and number of sockeyes and Chinooks harvested by fish wheel and dip net.

Enforcement does not have the man power or time to check to ensure that the 10-hour regulation of checking fish wheel in this area is being enforced or to determine if over harvest is occurring. Illegal harvest will continue if a check point is not installed and manned by the department. Fish wheels at the Chitina airport and downstream to Chitina-McCarthy Bridge are run 24-hours, day and night, throughout the fishing season. Harvest of personal use fisheries are not checked to determine if fish caught matches harvest regulations.

The participation and harvest levels in this fishery have significantly increased in recent years. A checkpoint and better in-season harvest monitoring is needed in order to responsibly manage this fishery.

The amount of harvest of sockeye and Chinook from fish wheels north of Chitina-McCarthy Bridge and personal use fisheries is questionable; check point is necessary to determined harvest levels for Chinook and sockeyes.

PROPOSED BY: Ahtna Tene Nene' Customary & Traditional Use Committee (HQ-F14-030)

PROPOSAL 38 - 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Change the opening date for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery to open as early as June 1, but not later than June 11, as follows:

5AAC 77.591(b)

(b) Salmon may be taken from **June 1** [JUNE 7] through September 30. The commissioner shall establish a preseason schedule, including fishing times, for the period **June 1** [JUNE 7] through August 31 based on daily projected sonar counts at the sonar counter located near Miles Lake. This abundance-based preseason schedule will distribute the harvest throughout the season. The commissioner may close, by an emergency order effective **June 1** [JUNE 7], the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishing season and shall reopen the season, by emergency order, on or before **June 11** [JUNE 7], the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishing season and shall reopen the season, by emergency order, on or before **June 11** [JUNE 15] depending on the run strength and timing of the sockeye salmon run. Adjustments shall be made to the preseason schedule based on actual sonar counts compared to projected counts. If the actual sonar count at Miles Lake is more than the projected sonar count, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the season and immediately reopen it during which additional fishing times will be allowed. If the actual sonar count at Miles Lake is less than the projected sonar count, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the season and immediately reopen it during which fishing times will be reduced by a corresponding amount of time.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Re-establish the Chitina Personal Use Dip Net Fishery (CPUDF) opening date to earliest June 1 and the latest June 11. CPUDF fishing periods are determined based on a pre-season schedule established from projected sonar counts and from the actual run strength and timing of the sockeye run. At any time the commissioner may, by emergency order, shorten or lengthen fishing times in the CPUDF based on the actual sonar counts at the Miles Lake counter. During the December 2011 Prince William Sound/ Copper River Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting in Valdez, the board delayed the then CPUDF opening which opened June 1 and no later than June 11, to language saying the earliest opening would be June 7 and the latest June 15. This later opening was supposedly in response to getting more early fish to upriver subsistence users. Keep in mind that between 2003 and 2012 out of the average yearly total during that period of 1,549,548 sockeye and king salmon harvested by all users (commercial, personal use, subsistence and sport) the CPUDF average annual harvest during that period was 115,210 sockeye and king salmon or 7% of the total harvest of all users. During that same period the average annual commercial harvest of sockeye and king salmon was 1,304,272 or 84% of the 1,549,548 total. If more fish are needed in the upriver subsistence fishery, the board should be looking to the 84% for their relief. Reducing, by regulation, the ability of the CPUDF dipnetters to fish by 7 days only shortens the time available to them to harvest salmon to feed their families. If the sonar counts are poor the

commissioner would still have the authority to delay the CPUDF opening until June 11, but if the sonar counts are good then dipnetters should be allowed to fish on June 1 as they have in the past.

PROPOSED BY: Chitina Dipnetters Association & Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-C14-149)

PROPOSAL 39 - 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Change the Chitina Subdistrict personal use annual limit to be based on household size, as follows:

Change the Chitina Personal Use Dip Net Fishery (CPUDF) annual bag limit to match the Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Dip Net Fishery annual bag limit (25 salmon for a permit holder and 10 salmon for each additional household member).

5 AAC 77.591 (e) would read “The annual limit for a personal use salmon fishing permit is **25 salmon for a permit holder and 10 salmon for each additional household member** [15 SALMON FOR A HOUSEHOLD OF ONE PERSON AND 30 SALMON FOR A HOUSEHOLD OF TWO OR MORE PERSONS] of which no more than one may be a king salmon.[the language addressing supplemental periods would be deleted].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The issue we would like the Board to address is the inadequate bag limit for the CPUDF.

The current bag limit for the CPUDF is set at 15 salmon for a household of one and 30 salmon for a household of two or more. For a family of two this equates to 15 salmon per household member. For a family of six or more, however, it means five or less salmon for each member. And that’s for the entire year. That is far too little salmon for our larger families and the current bag limit does not consider how many members are in a household.

5AAC 77.591 (e) also calls for supplemental periods in the CPUDF and the taking of 10 extra salmon. These supplemental periods are problematic. They are only one week long and the timing of the periods often do not match the actual arrival of the surge of salmon into the dip net fishery and they create extra work for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, (ie. data assessment, emergency orders, media notification). For a Fairbanks permit holder who has previously filled his bag limit, it is not worth the approx. 675 mile round trip to participate in a supplemental period for only 10 extra salmon.

The Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery has an annual bag limit of 25 salmon for a permit holder and 10 salmon for each additional household member. This is a far more equitable bag limit. We would like the Chitina Personal Use Dip Net Fishery to have the same annual bag limit as this fishery. This would standardize the bag limits for both Personal Use Dip Net fisheries and if passed by the board, supplemental periods could be eliminated.

Chitina personal use dipnetters harvest salmon to feed their families, not to make money and not for sport.

PROPOSED BY: Chitina Dipnetters Association & Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-C14-147)

PROPOSAL 40 - 5 AAC 77.XXX. New Section. Require charter operators that transport personal use fishermen keep a daily logbook, as follows:

A vessel for hire will keep a daily logbook indicating number of customers, where and by what method fish were caught, and the number by specie.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Require any vessel that commercially transports personal use fisherman to keep a daily logbook. The board and department have always stressed the need to quantify trends in our fisheries. The use of "water taxis" has increased over the last decade and there is a lack of information on how it has affected the fishery. Does it displace participants whom do not hire? Does the newer act of trawling with a dipnet from a hired vessel increase efficiency from shore based methods? A logbook system would answer these questions and more from these commercial operations.

PROPOSED BY: Shawn Gilman (EF-C14-049)

PROPOSAL 41 - 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Repeal reduction of the Chitina Subdistrict personal use allocation if the commercial salmon fishery is closed for 13 or more consecutive days, as follows:

5 AAC 77.591 (f)

.....

(f) The maximum harvest level for the Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Salmon Fishery is 100,000 - 150,000 salmon, not including any salmon in excess of the in-river goal or salmon taken after August 31. [IF THE COPPER RIVER DISTRICT COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERY IS CLOSED FOR 13 OR MORE CONSECUTIVE DAYS, THE MAXIMUM HARVEST LEVEL IN THE CHITINA SUBDISTRICT IS REDUCED TO 50,000 SALMON.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal the language in 5AAC 77.591 (f) "If the Copper River District commercial salmon fishery is closed for 13 or more consecutive days, the maximum harvest level in the Chitina Subdistrict is reduced to 50,000 salmon for the remainder of the season."

The Chitina Dipnetters Association. has in the past proposed that the above language be deleted. The Chitina Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery (CPUDF) has fishing periods determined by a pre-season schedule established by the commissioner using projected daily counts of salmon passing the Miles Lake sonar counter. This schedule is meant to distribute the harvest

throughout the season. Adjustments shall be made to the preseason schedule based on actual sonar counts compared to projected counts. If the actual sonar count at Miles Lake is more than the projected sonar count, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the season and immediately reopen it during which additional fishing times will be allowed. If the actual sonar count at Miles Lake is less than the projected sonar count, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the season and immediately reopen it during which fishing times will be reduced by a corresponding amount of time.

As stated above, if the salmon run numbers are low triggering closures in the commercial fishery, this will also be reflected in the salmon sonar counts at Miles Lake and the commissioner will also by emergency order, close or reduce dipnet openings.

The CPUDF has an allocation of 100,000–150,000 salmon. There is no justification to reduce the dipnet fishery allocation to 50,000 because of commercial fishery closures especially when the reduction would be for the rest of the dipnet season even though salmon numbers may within a week or so rebound.

PROPOSED BY: Chitina Dipnetters Association and Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-C14-148)

PROPOSAL 42 - 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Change the maximum harvest level for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery to 100,000 salmon, as follows:

5 AAC 77.591 (f), “the maximum harvest level for the Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Fisheries should be changed from 100,000–150,000 to a maximum of 100,000, not including any salmon in excess of the in-river goal or salmon taken after August 31. Keep the rest of 5 AAC 77.791 (f) as written in regulation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The maximum harvest level for the Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Fisheries should be changed from 100,000–150,000 to a maximum level to 100,000, not including any salmon in excess of in-river goal or salmon taken after August 31. Keep the rest of the regulation in 5 AAC 77.591 (f) as is.

The number of participation in the Copper River Personal Use Fisheries has increased over the years to approximately 10,000+, who fish for salmon in the Chitna Subdistrict. Copper River salmon cannot sustain impacts from the continuation of over harvesting by personal use fisheries. As more participation increases in the Copper River Personal Use Fisheries, more sockeyes will be harvested by personal use fisheries; population of sockeyes will decrease over a period of time and will create a conservation concern.

A week after the opening date of personal use fisheries, the run strength of Copper River sockeyes slows down considerably for some of the upriver subsistence use fisheries. This may or may not be due to the Copper River sockeyes run strength or timing. It could be that personal

use fisheries is intercepting and harvesting most of the sockeyes. Some of the upriver subsistence fisheries have observed that harvest levels for sockeyes slackens noticeably after personal use fisheries opens for the fishing season.

PROPOSED BY: Ahtna Tene Nene' Customary & Traditional Use Committee (HQ-F14-029)

PROPOSAL 43 - 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Establish an allocation of 3,000 king salmon to the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery, as follows:

5AAC 77.591(f) would read:

The maximum harvest level for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery is 100,000–150,000 salmon, **which includes an allocation of 3,000 king salmon**, not including any salmon in excess of the inriver goal or salmon taken after August 31.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Allocate 3,000 king salmon to the Chitina Personal Use Dip Net Fishery (CPUDF).

The CPUDF has a per permit season bag limit of 1 king salmon. Since 2009, retention of king salmon in the CPUDF has been severely restricted. From 2009–2013, because of these restrictions, the average annual harvest of king salmon in the CPUDF has been 663 fish. During that same period the average annual commercial king harvest was 12,415, for the Copper River District and Glennallen District subsistence fisheries combined it was 3,014, and for sport fisheries of the Copper River (no data yet for 2013) from 2009–2012 the annual average harvest is 1,494. Of these different fisheries, closing the CPUDF to the retention of the 1 king salmon bag limit has the least effect on increasing the escapement of king salmon to their spawning grounds.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game relies on in-river king salmon data provided by the Eyak run mark/recapture fish wheels. Using this data in 2013, the commissioner closed king salmon retention in the CPUDF after the first 2 weeks of the dipnetting season even though final escapement numbers show final 2013 king salmon spawning escapement was 5,000 kings above the minimum.

The CPUDF is an Alaska resident only fishery. Residents use this fishery to bring home an annual supply of salmon for their families much the same as in a subsistence fishery. In 1999, the Board of Fisheries reduced the CPUDF king bag limit from 3 to 1. The 1 king bag limit was based on an entire season harvest of 3,000 king salmon. From 2000–2008 when Chitina dipnetters were allowed to harvest their 1 king unrestricted, the annual harvest ranged between 2,000–3,000. We are asking the Board to allocate 3,000 king salmon to the CPUDF so dipnetters

can harvest their 1 king unrestricted during that period when kings are passing through the dip net fishery, which usually lasts till July 15, approx. halfway through the dipnet season.

PROPOSED BY: Chitina Dipnetters Association & Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-C14-150)

PROPOSAL 44 - 5 AAC 24.310. Fishing seasons. Prohibit commercial salmon fishing until a salmon is recorded at the Copper River sonar, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 24.310(a) to add "...the first commercial salmon opening of any year may only be announced after the department has verified by sonar that a salmon has escaped into the river."

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Kings in the Copper River have been the subject of numerous harvest restrictions and prohibitions in recent years. Escapement goals (even lowered goals) have not been consistently met. Genetic studies have identified three runs of kings. The upper river stocks enter the mouth in May, and these stocks have been subject to the most restrictions including complete restrictions on harvest in the Gulkana River, and significantly restricted harvests in the Chitina fishery. While the commercial fleet has recently been fishing outside the barrier islands more than regulations require, they are still harvesting thousands of kings from this imperiled upriver stock. When runs were healthy, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game always announced the first mid-May opener several days or weeks in advance, historically declaring a 12-hour opening inside the barrier islands. While advance notice is helpful for the fishers and processors to plan, it can be devastating to the early kings, especially when there is a late spring and the Copper River is full of ice and low water, preventing the kings from entering the river and causing them to mill longer in the mouth, where they are easily harvested by getting rolled up in loose hanging mesh dragging along the bottom of the river channels, or outside the islands in the same loosely hung mesh. If the sonar is not deployed by May 17 it is because the river is full of ice and the fish are not there anyway.

With the decimated king runs in the upper Copper River, especially the Gulkana, it is biologically indefensible to allow such a high rate of exploitation on these early returning fish by having commercial opener(s) before even a single fish has been counted inriver.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Advisory Committee (EF-C14-155)

PROPOSAL 45 - 5 AAC 24.361. Copper River King Salmon Management Plan. Repeal mandatory inside-waters closure in Copper River King Salmon Management Plan, as follows:

Repeal mandatory inside commercial closures for any statistical week from regulation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Mandatory inside closures.

The use of mandatory closures has always been unnecessary as Alaska Department of Fish and Game has the authority and shown the ability to manage the fisheries. Alaska Department of Fish and Game also opposes mandatory closures on sport fisheries because they have to be instituted even if the circumstances of the year and run strength do not require them. I am not suggesting getting rid of inside closures as a tool if conditions warrant, just ridding the mandatory language from statute.

PROPOSED BY: Shawn Gilman (EF-C14-050)

PROPOSAL 46 - 5 AAC 24.3XX. New Section. Restrict retention of commercially caught king salmon for a person’s own use to not exceed the king salmon sport bag limit in area caught, as follows:

The regulation requiring "home pack" to be recorded, should specify that home packed king salmon may only be retained by a single commercial license holder present on the vessel and that the number of kings harvested, but not sold, may not exceed the applicable sport harvest limits for the area fished.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current regulation allows a commercial fisher, and presumably any crew member, to harvest an unrestricted number of king salmon for personal consumption without a subsistence permit, personal use permit, or even a sport fishing license. This unlimited consumptive use of a fully allocated fishery needs to be addressed seriously by the board. Someone should publicly justify why an individual person (Alaskan or not) should be allowed by law to kill and keep threatened kings for personal consumption or to give away to friends, neighbors, relatives or others. Yes, though these fish would likely be harvested anyway, they should all be sold as envisioned by the concept of commercial fishing. No other Alaskan, and especially no other person by virtue of their occupation, gets to keep as many kings as they want for their personal consumptive use. There are significant opportunities for these persons to harvest kings in sport and even subsistence fisheries with their commercial gill nets. If the home pack of kings is still justified despite the fact that many thousands of Alaskans have been, in recent years, completely denied the opportunity to harvest even a single king to eat from the Copper River, or have been limited to a single king, this harvest should be limited based on the applicable local sport fishing bag and possession limits.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Advisory Committee (EF-C14-158)

PROPOSAL 47 - 5 AAC 24.361. Copper River King Salmon Management Plan. Allows use of dip nets for commercial salmon fishing during emergency order closures of the commercial drift gillnet fishery, as follows:

During times when the commissioner determines that it is necessary for the conservation of king salmon, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the commercial gillnet fishing season

and immediately reopen a fishing season during which dip net gear may be used and all king salmon caught in a dip net must be returned immediately to the water.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Conservation of king salmon and harvest of abundant sockeye salmon within the inside closure of the Copper River district described in 5 AAC 24.350(1)(B).

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-C14-146)

PROPOSAL 48 - 5 AAC 24.XXX New Section. Mark district boundaries, as follows:

Re-establish the installation and maintenance of markers for the commercial fishing boundaries on the Copper River Flats during the commercial fishing season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are no regulatory markers for the commercial fishing boundaries on the Copper River Flats. These boundaries are established by landmarks which are often obscured during periods of low visibility, forcing commercial fishers to rely on other, indirect, means of determining their position relative to these boundaries. These markers had been in place previously.

PROPOSED BY: Native Village of Eyak (EF-C14-129)

PROPOSAL 49 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Change the sport fishing season opening date for king salmon on the Klutina River from July 1 to June 1, as follows:

Extend the sport fishing season on the Klutina River waters to June 1 through August 10.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Klutina River in the Upper Copper River system has two runs of king salmon. The first run hits the Klutina River around June 1. The current season allows sport fishing of king salmon only from July 1 through August 10. This season deprives Alaskan sport fishermen any opportunity to catch a first run fish in June.

If nothing changes only the commercial fishing fleet will continue to be the only ones able to catch a first run king salmon bound for the Klutina River waters.

PROPOSED BY: Jim West (EF-C14-068)

PROPOSAL 50 - 5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Prohibit use of barbed hooks, multiple hooks, and bait when fishing for king salmon in the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Area, as follows:

5 AAC 52.022 (a) (3) (D) only, unbaited, single, barbless hooks, artificial lures may be used

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Recreational anglers hook and release king salmon in the waters. King salmon are caught and released, which may cause harm to the king salmon. King salmon that are hooked and released will have permanent scars, and are damaged by barbed hooks.

Data for 2012 shows the number of fish caught and released for Gulkana River Drainages, which includes Upper Reach, Lower Reach, and unspecified was 565. Data for 2012 shows the number of fish caught and released for the Klutina River, Tonsina, Tazlina Upstream of Gulkana, Downstream of Klutina, and other waters was 1,410. Data does not specify what species were caught and released.

These numbers show how many days sport fisheries efforts were in some of the water bodies in Upper Copper / Upper Susitna Management Area (UCUSMA). In 2012, the average sport fishing effort (angler-days) in the UCUSMA by lakes and streams in the Gulkana River Drainage was 8,117, for the Upper Susitna Drainages for lakes and streams, the total angler days was 7,788 and for the Copper River Drainages, that includes Klutina the total angler days was 18,030, Tazlina angler days was 380, above Gulkana sport fishing effort was 894, below Klutina, total angler days was 628. Total number of angler days for these water bodies is 36,904 days of fishing effort.

With this many number of days of recreational anglers' effort to catch king salmon, sockeye or other species, the harm to king salmon being caught and released increases. As king salmon travel to spawning grounds, the mortality rate increases as more catch and release king salmon in water bodies occur.

A hook and release mortality in the Kenai River [for] Chinook Salmon Recreational Fishery Report, showed that "short term (1–5 day) hooking mortality for early run (125) and late run (120) Chinook, that were tagged using radio telemetry, was 8.8% and 5.9%; most mortality took place within 72-hours of release". The report also showed that "hooking location was a factor that significantly affected mortality, Chinook salmon hooked in the gills has a significantly reduced chance of surviving"..... Eight percent of the early run and five percent of the late run is a significant loss and shows that salmon that are hooked and released are harmed and perish as a result. The report also states that only a small amount of Chinooks were hooked in the gills, this still shows that harm is being done to Chinooks that are caught and released by fishermen.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) data indicates that 5,272 Chinooks were caught and released in the Upper Copper River in 2011. An eight percent mortality would indicate 422 king salmon were killed by catch and release in 2011. The entire sport fish harvest of Chinook

in 2012 was only 459. ADF&G data indicate that 1,410 Chinook were caught and released in 2012. An eight percent mortality rate would indicate 113 Chinooks were killed by catch and release mortality in 2012. The harvest in 2012 the fishery was restricted because of conservation concerns. The 422 catch and release mortality in 2011 was almost the entire harvest in 2012. Catch and release mortality at any level is unacceptable when there is a conservation concern.

PROPOSED BY: Ahtna Tene Nene' Customary & Traditional Use Committee (HQ-F14-027)

PROPOSAL 51 - 5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Prohibit use of barbed and multiple hooks for king salmon once an angler has taken a bag limit or annual limit of king salmon, as follows:

5 AAC 52.022(a)(x)General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area
(a)

...

(15) If an angler has reached the daily or annual limit for King Salmon; only single barbless hooks may be used. All other methods remain the same as anglers that have not reached their limit.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently king salmon fishermen are allowed to continue fishing with the same gear after they have reached their daily limit and annual limit. Once these limits have been reached, their fishing becomes catch and release fishing by definition. All catch and release fisheries should require single barbless hooks to minimize the harm to king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist (EF-C14-067)

PROPOSAL 52 - 5 AAC 24.361. Copper River King Salmon Management Plan. Prohibit use of barbed and multiple hooks with or without bait if the sport fishery is restricted to catch-and-release, as follows:

5 AAC 24.361(c)(2)(C)(X) Copper River King Salmon Management Plan
(C) designate the fishery as a catch and release fishery only;
(x) if a catch and release fishery is designated; only single, barbless hooks may be used
(xx) if a catch and release fishery is designated; the use of bait may be retained or restricted

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The restrictions on sport fishing for king salmon in the Copper River Valley have been devastating to the very small communities that depend on this fishery for much of their annual income. The current

management plan does not allow for the use of bait when fisheries are restricted to catch and release only. This effectively completely closes the fisheries on the glacial tributaries of the Copper. The water in these tributaries is very cloudy (much more so than the Kenai) and eliminating bait in the fishery decreases hook ups by over 95%. These rivers are also very fast and not conducive to "back trolling". We would like the commissioner to have the option to allow the use of bait in catch and release fisheries. In addition, all catch and release fisheries should require barbless hooks to minimize the harm to king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist (EF-C14-066)

PROPOSAL 53 - 5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area, and 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Clarify that a single-hook artificial lure is an artificial lure with one single-hook or one fly as follows:

5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. (a)

...

(1) in all flowing waters, only **one** unbaited, single-hook, artificial **lure** [LURES] may be used;

(2) in all lakes, except Crosswind Lake, Lake Louise, Paxson Lake, Summit Lake, Susitna Lake, and Tyone Lake, bait and artificial lures may be used; in Crosswind Lake, Lake Louise, Paxson Lake, Summit Lake, Susitna Lake, and Tyone Lake, a hook and bait may be used only as follows:

(A) from April 16–October 31, only **one** unbaited, single-hook, artificial **lure** [LURES] may be used;

(B) from November 1–April 15, only single-hooks may be used; bait may be used;

5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

...

(9) in the Gulkana River drainage,

(A) from June 1–July 31, only **one** single-hook, artificial **fly** [FLIES], with a gap that does not exceed three-quarters inch between the point and shank, may be used in that portion of the Gulkana River downstream from the Richardson Highway Bridge to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 500 yards downstream of the confluence with the Copper River; additional weight may only be used 18 inches or more ahead of the fly;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations are unclear whether artificial lures with two single hooks or two artificial flies may be used when regulations state that only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used. Unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure regulations are in place to provide for sustained yield of rainbow trout, Arctic

grayling, Dolly Varden, lake trout, or king salmon. Prefacing the language by the word “one” clarifies that only one artificial lure with one hook or only one artificial fly may be used. This would provide consistency in area regulations within the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River area.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-071)

PROPOSAL 54 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Increase the Arctic grayling bag and possession limit in the Gulkana River drainage, as follows:

5 AAC 52.023 (h) Fishing seasons and periods. In the Gulkana River Drainage, under

5 AAC 52.023 (h), **10** [5] per day, **10** [5] in possession. Only **5** [1] 14 inches or longer may be possessed as a part of the daily bag limit and possession limit. Only baited single hook may be used.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Increase possession, bag limit and size of Arctic grayling harvest in the Gulkana River Drainage (5 AAC 52.023(h)) and allow baited, single hook.

Fuel costs to drive to fishing areas are expensive in the Copper River Basin communities. Fuel cost is more than \$4.00 per gallon. In some Copper River Basin communities, it is more costly and expensive for those who have low and seasonal incomes. Harvesting only five grayling per day with regulatory restrictions causes hardship and it is discouraging to be allowed to harvest only 5 per day.

Using baited, single hook, to harvest Arctic grayling is better than using un-baited, single hook. Arctic grayling are attracted to baited, single hook. Using bait is a lot better to fish with than unbaited, single hook and artificial lures. The success rate is higher when using bait to fish Arctic grayling.

If there is a decline in Arctic grayling populations, the department can take appropriate actions to limit size, possession and bag limit in the Gulkana River Drainages.

PROPOSED BY: Ahtna Tene Nene’ Customary & Traditional Use Committee (HQ-F14-028)

PROPOSAL 55 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Amend special provisions for rainbow trout in Tebay River drainage, as follows:

(23) In the Tebay River drainage,

(A) in Summit Lake **and Bridge Creek**, the bag and possession limit for rainbow/steelhead trout is 10 fish, of which only one may be greater than 18 inches in length;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Bridge Creek is the outlet stream of Summit Lake (a remote, high alpine lake in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park) and the main spawning location for Summit Lake rainbow trout. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game conducted a large-scaled removal operation in 1999, 2004–2011, and 2013 to change this rainbow trout population from a stunted population with no fish larger than 16 inches to a stable population composed of multiple size classes ranging up to 24 inches or greater. To maintain the improved size structure of the rainbow trout population in Summit Lake, the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a 10-fish bag limit, of which only one may be greater than 18 inches in length, and removed the spawning closure for rainbow trout at the December 2011 meeting. Most of the sport fishing effort in this area occurs from the shore of Summit Lake near the outlet or within the first mile of Bridge Creek. Bridge Creek was not included in the 2011 regulations. This proposal would align the regulations in Bridge Creek and Summit Lake and provide the best management strategy to maintain the desired population structure.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-073)

PROPOSAL 56 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Update the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Area stocked waters regulation, as follows:

(28) in stocked waters, the bag and possession limit for rainbow/steelhead trout, Arctic char/Dolly Varden, landlocked salmon, and Arctic grayling is 10 fish in combination, of which only one may be greater than 18 inches in length; for the purposes of this paragraph, "stocked waters" include Arizona Lake, Buffalo Lake, Connor Lake, Crater Lake, Dick Lake, DJ Lake, Gergie Lake, John Lake, Junction Lake, [KATHLEEN LAKE, LITTLE CRATER LAKE, LITTLE JUNCTION LAKE,] North Jans Lake, Old Road Lake, Peanut Lake, Pippin Lake, Round Lake, Ryan Lake, Sculpin Lake, Silver Lake, Strelna Lake, South Jans Lake, Squirrel Creek Pit Lake, Tex Smith Lake, Three Mile Lake, Tolsona Lake, Tolsona Mountain Lake, **and** Two Mile Lake [AND VAN LAKE];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In conjunction with each Alaska Board of Fisheries cycle, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reviews stocked waters to ensure consistency between the *Statewide Stocking Plan for Recreational Fisheries*, the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area stocked waters regulations, and the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area Stocked Waters Management Plan (5 AAC 52.065). Stocked waters may be removed from the stocking plan, no longer stocked, and removed from corresponding regulations due to a loss of public access, poor fish growth or survival, or insufficient

fishing effort. As new waters are identified and included in the stocking plan they are added to the regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-074)

PROPOSAL 57 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Amend methods and means for burbot in a portion of the Copper River drainage to reference statewide regulations, as follows:

(3) in the Copper River drainage, in that portion of the mainstem of the Copper River downstream from the confluence of the Copper River and the Slana River,

...

(B) [THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR BURBOT IS FIVE FISH]; burbot may be taken with more than one line and hook, **including a set line, as described in 5 AAC 75.033** [ONLY UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

(i) WITH SPORT FISHING GEAR, AS DEFINED IN 5 AAC 75.020, ICE FISHING GEAR, AS DEFINED IN 5 AAC 75.021, OR A SET LINE, AS DEFINED IN 5 AAC 75.995;

(ii) THE AGGREGATE NUMBER OF HOOKS MAY NOT EXCEED FIVE HOOKS;

(iii) ONLY SINGLE HOOKS WITH A GAP BETWEEN THE POINT AND SHANK THAT IS LARGER THAN THREE-FOURTHS INCH MAY BE USED;

(iv) IF USING A SET LINE, EACH HOOK MUST BE SET TO REST ON THE BOTTOM, AND EACH LINE MUST BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE ANGLER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ON A TAG OR LABEL ATTACHED TO THE SHOREWARD END OF THE LINE OR ABOVE THE ICE, UNATTENDED SET LINES ARE PROHIBITED AND MUST BE PHYSICALLY INSPECTED AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 24 HRS];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations for burbot set lines in a portion of the Copper River drainage mainstem are redundant with statewide regulations in 5 AAC 75.033. The proposed change would eliminate the duplication and simplify regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-072)
