

PROPOSAL 179 – 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.
Add Thursdays as a day only non-motorized vessels may fish on the Kenai River downstream of Cunningham Park, as follows:

The purpose of this change is to add a Thursday Drift-only day on the lower portion of the Kenai River in addition to the already existing Drift-only Monday.

Change Drift only section header to read:

Drift-only days (downstream of Skilak Lake):

[DRIFT-ONLY MONDAYS (DOWNSTREAM OF SKILAK LAKE)

Add to Drift –only section;

- **Thursdays, May 1 – July 31 (except Memorial Day)**
- **Between the Sterling Hwy bridge and the mouth of the Kenai River:**
- **Closed to fishing from any motorized vessel that has on board more than one single motor greater than 10hp. A motor 10hp or less may be used only downstream of an ADF&G marker at Cunningham Park, and only after fishing from the vessel has stopped for the day.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Heavy, high density motorized vessel use is responsible for excessive turbidity, increased erosion, and safety issues. There are other social issues associated with crowding that are compounded by motorized vessel use in the current configuration of the fishery. Another drift day on the river, open to both guided and unguided anglers with no time restrictions, will help address hydrological and social issues and may promote more folks to invest in resource friendly drift boats. This would also reduce the exploitation of Late Run (LR) Chinook on the Kenai and allow more fish to move upriver and disperse during subsequent days. A 2011, ADF&G memo regarding driftboat harvest states, **“The creel estimates for late-run Mondays were approximately 4.2% of the total late-run harvests in both 2009 and 2010.”** New boat use patterns indicate that most of the Chinook fishing is now taking place in the lower portion of the river.

Our proposal seeks to offer an additional day of drift boat use below the Soldotna Bridge while still allowing for motorized use for the majority of the river above the bridge. This “split-use philosophy is in keeping with conclusions in the 2010 DNR Kenai River Recreational Study that says, **“ The majority of driftboat users (80%), drift boat guides (85%), and bank anglers (55%) support additional “drift-only” days on the lower and middle river, while the majority of powerboat users (50%) and powerboat guides (70%) are opposed. Opinions about “drift-only” days on one segment at a time suggest “compromise” options may be workable. There is little consensus about the best times for “drift-only” days, but support is greatest in higher density periods.”**

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition

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