(Proposal 14 will be heard and public testimony will be taken at both the LCI and UCI meetings and deliberated at the UCI meeting).

PROPOSAL 14 - 5 AAC 56.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area., 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 59.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area., 5 AAC 60.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area., 5 AAC 61.110. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Susitna River Drainage Area., and 5 AAC 62.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the West Cook Inlet Area. Allow snagging for sockeye salmon in all Cook Inlet freshwater lakes, as follows:

Allow sockeye salmon not hooked in the mouth to be retained in Fresh water Lakes in the Cook Inlet Drainage.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It is almost impossible to catch sockeye salmon in the mouth unless there is some current, Sockeye salmon do not bite unless in late spawning stage,

PROPOSED BY: Andy Housh (EF-F16-135)

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(Proposal 34 will be heard and public testimony will be taken at both the LCI and UCI meetings and deliberated at the UCI meeting).

PROPOSAL 34 - 5 AAC 56.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area., 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 58.030. Methods, means, and general provisions – Finfish., 5 AAC 59.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area., 5 AAC 60.120.

General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area., 5 AAC 61.110. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Susitna River Drainage Area., and 5 AAC 62.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the West Cook Inlet Area. Allow party fishing in Cook Inlet fresh and salt water for all species except king salmon, as follows:

Allow party fishing in Cook Inlet salt & fresh water for all species except King Salmon.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? 100% of private anglers & 95% of guided anglers party fish for most species, current rules make criminals out of all them, Tis rule is also non-enforcable for private anglers, & only enforceable on guided anglers if there iran undercover cop nearby or onboard the vessel. When fishing for abundant species with high bag limits such as black rockfish, sockeyes, pinks & others it is almost impossible to keep track of which individual anglers caught what & how many, example is 5 anglers fishing for pinks with limit of 6, it is easy to count to 30, but is very easy to lose track of how many each individual angler has retained.

PROPOSED BY: Andy Housh (EF-F16-137)
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PROPOSAL 144 - 5 AAC 56.XXX. Sport fishing by proxy., 5 AAC 57.XXX. Sport fishing by proxy., 5 AAC 58.XXX. Sport fishing by proxy., 5 AAC 59.XXX. Sport fishing by proxy., 5 AAC 60.XXX. Sport fishing by proxy., and 5 AAC 61.XXX. Sport fishing by proxy. Require that when proxy fishing in Upper Cook Inlet, once a bag limit is taken the next legal bag limit must be retained, as follows:

Notwithstanding 75.011 (Sport Fishing by Proxy) In Upper Cook Inlet, once a bag limit is taken either on behalf of a person under AAC75.011 or under a resident fishing license, the next legal bag limit must be retained.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Proxy Fishing abuse. In cases where regulation requires once a bag limit is taken fishermen must stop fishing, fishermen may continue catch and release fishing under the guise of proxy fishing. This change would end this abuse and allow the benefit of proxy fishing to continue.

PROPOSED BY: Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-043)
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PROPOSAL 145 - 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., 5 AAC 57.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Middle Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 57.123. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 59.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage

Bowl Drainages Area., 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area., 5 AAC 61.112. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size lmits, and mehthods and means for Unit 1 of the Susitna River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 61.114. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 61.118. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 4 of the Susitna River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 61.120. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 5 of the Susitna River Drainage Area., and 5 AAC 61.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and meanas for Unit 6 of the Susitna River Drainage Area. Allow only barbless hooks in Upper Cook Inlet flowing waters closed to salmon fishing, as follows:

In Upper Cook Inlet flowing waters closed to salmon fishing, only barbless hooks or hooks with the barb completely pinched may be used year round.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Damage to Rainbow Trout in Catch and Release Fisheries

Rainbow trout and dolly varden in Upper Cook Inlet typically show mouth damage from poor fish handling practices. This degrades the fishery because a majority of fish from are extremely ugly, in a fishery for wild trout it is very important for many anglers seeking a near wilderness experience to catch undamaged fish. Gill lice are very common throughout the stock of rainbow trout on throughout southcentral Alaska. Gill lice have been shown to lower a trout's fitness, it has also been shown that rainbow trout can only be infected by lice while under stress. The intense and extremely productive fishery during salmon spawning causes stress to nearly every fish. Barbless hooks have been shown to greatly reduce handling time and greatly reduce mouth/lip damage to released fish while having minimal to a positive effect on landing rates.

Other solutions include banning barbless hooks for all waters however this would not be acceptable to bait fishermen in consumptive fisheries.

PROPOSED BY: Patrick McCormick (EF-F16-127)

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<u>PROPOSAL 146</u> - 5 AAC 56.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area., 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 58.030. Methods, means, and general provisions – Finfish., 5 AAC 59.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area., 5 AAC 60.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area., 5 AAC 61.110. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Susitna River Drainage Area., and 5 AAC 62.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual,

and size limits, and methods and means for the West Cook Inlet Area. Require the use of circle hooks when fishing for sockeye salmon, as follows:

The Board of Fisheries should implement the circle hook as the legal hook for sockeye fishing.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The sockeye sports fishery has become very popular. The method of catching sockeye is with a single hook coho fly stripped through the water to try to legally hook the sockeye in the mouth. The hook commonly snags the salmon in the tail, dorsal fin or other parts of the body and has to be released. This happens frequently and a lot of sockeye die from the stress of catch and release. The hooks are also good a hooking people. There is a better way, with circle hooks. Circle hooks are much less likely to snag a salmon other than in the mouth. This would dramatically reduce catch and release mortality. Circle hook are also much safer and less likely to snag a persons body. The halibut fishery was reluctant to use circle hooks but now they are the norm because of their efficiency.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-170)
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<u>PROPOSAL 147</u> - 5 AAC 57.160. Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan. and 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Start the Kenai River early-run king salmon fishery as an unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention fishery, as follows:

The solution is that the Board require ADF&G managers to (1) embrace the all to under-utilized management tool of hook and release fishing, (2) implement a reasonable management philosophy that "minimizes mortality yet maximizes opportunity" and (3) put in place a clear "step up" plan that begins with single hook, no bait, hook and release fishing and monitors the run daily either liberalizing or restricting it based on how the run shapes up. Presently, the ER king fishery is completely closed for its duration, whereas NO chinook sport fishing is allowed during May and June. this is a terrible loss of opportunity to both resident and non-resident anglers, but one that is worth enduring IF (capital IF!) the hardship actually produces substantial savings. Sadly, this is not the case: by utilizing ADF&G's own data and multiplying total angler effort in May/June with angler success rate and then Hook and Release mortality averages (5-8%) the data shows that 25-50 total fish were saved by a complete closure over a two month period. Now, if the run is so dire that escapement numbers were clearly going to fall under the current goal, then the sport fishery must be closed. Sustainability of the resource must remain as priority above anglers needs or desires. However, if and when the ER is projected to be ONE single fish over the minimum, a step-up process from 'hook and release' to harvest to full bait should be implemented. Presently, with The Departments reluctance to utilize the proven effective tool of Hook and Release fishing, it seems that ADF&G's management philosophy is to create maximum hardship that produces minimal gains. While I am sure this is not intentional, the fact remains that NOT allowing Hook and Release fishing is providing for extremely minimal savings.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the board to address the repeated complete closures of the Early Run Kenai River king salmon sport fishery so

that anglers can once again enjoy this remarkable resource, this quiet time, and thereby take some pressure off of the Late Run KR king salmon fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Brush (EF-F16-066)
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PROPOSAL 148 - 5 AAC 57.160. Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan. Rewrite the *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan* to redefine early-run stocks and establish age- and sex-based escapement goals, as follows:

(REPEAL AND READOPT 5 AAC 57.160)

5 AAC 57.160. Kenai River Early-run Tributary Stock King Salmon and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure an adequate escapement of early-run king salmon into the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers, to conserve the unique large size early0run king salmon in the Kenai River, and to provide the department with management guidelines. **In the Kenai River the early-run tributary stock of King salmon are those king salmon going past the sonar counter at river mile 14 prior to June 22.**

(b) The department shall manage the Kenai River early-run **tributary stock of** king salmon sport and guided sport fisheries to achieve the optimal escapement goal of 5,300 – 9,000 fish **age 4 or older of which 50 percent must be female**.

(c) The department shall manage the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport and guided sport fisheries to achieve the sustainable escapement goal, ensure adequate escapement of naturally-produced king salmon, and to minimize the effects of conservation actions for the Kenai River on the Kasilof River.

(d) In the Kenai River, the entire river is closed to king salmon fishing from January 1 until July 1 and from July 1 that portion above the sonar counter at river mile 14 is closed to king salmon fishing until such time that the age, sex and size composition of these tributary stocks returns to levels as were seen when his plan was first promulgated in 1988. The river will remain closed above the Sonar Counter until the Department comes back to the Board during a regularly scheduled BOF meeting with data on the age, size and sex of these tributary fish which warrants the reopening of some portion of this part of the river.

(e) Because of the run timing of these Kenai River king salmon hey are not harvested by the UCI commercial fishery; however the Department should take actions as appropriate in any other fishery where there is significant harvest of these tributary stocks of king salmon which may be causing this age, sex and size decline.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 1988 when the first management plan for Kenai River Early-run Kings was made the Department did not have the genetics technology they have now. July first was erroneously set as the demarcation of early and late-run king salmon (McKinley 2013). We now know that setting the escapement goals based on run timing was incorrect and that the goals should have been set based on biology (Reimer 2016) as Tributary (prior to June 22) and Mainstem (after June 22). Because of this error the Tributary

stocks have been getting shorted by the counting of 20 to 30 percent of the escapement actually being of mainstem origin. In addition McKinley found that over 50 percent of the harvest from July 1 to July 15 above the Soldotna Bridge is actually Tributary stocks which are erroneously subtracted from the mainstem escapement. This means that the escapement of tributary bound stocks is much reduced from what the Department has been reporting. Because of this and the prosecution of the fishery, tributary stocks bound for Beaver Creek, Soldotna Creek, Slikok Creek and Juneau Creek are gone or going to extinction from overharvest.

Additionally the Department found that the sonar counts from 1986 to 2011 (26 years) were not correct and recreated them using a Bayesian model of unknown performance. In 2012 ADF&G began counting with DIDSON sonar which was supposed to be the solution, but by 2013 a CIP was submitted to replace DIDSON with AIERS because of insurmountable problems with the DIDSON counts (Swanton 2013). This CIP included funding for 2 years of SSART (mark/Recap) which was supposed to assess this new counting technology, reports of this study were to be completed by the spring of 2014 and 2015. Reports from the in-river gillnetting, inriver creel and SSART projects mention the bias and errors associated with these programs as well as the statewide harvest survey which are used with the mixture model to determine a daily sonar count. When the escapement from the weirs operated by FWS and the age/sex composition are compared to the sonar count at either location, river mile 8.6 or 14 it is quite obvious that the sonar counts are well below the estimates produced by the weirs, mark/recapture or by the SSART method. The same is true when you compare the age/sex composition from the weirs to the numbers produced from the netting program. While we are still waiting for the reports from the 1.8 million dollar CIP from 2013 which are already 1-2 years late, we are left with an Early Run Tributary stock which is in trouble and should be listed as a stock of concern. The age of these Chinook is declining to where over half of the males are now under 4 years old, and the FWS estimates of females in Killey and Funny rivers has shifted from a majority of 1.4 age fish to now the majority are 1.3 age. Even more troubling is over 75 percent of the return is now male. Since the department seems incapable of taking action in this fishery it is left to the Board to establish that this stock is a Stock of Concern and close the fishery until this stock recovers in age, sex, size and numbers.

PROPOSED BY: Debra Blossom (HQ-F16-111)

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<u>PROPOSAL 149</u> - 5 AAC 57.160. Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan. Revise *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan*, as follows:

Revise the management to achieve to following goals.

1. Manage for escapements comparable to the historical average and range.
2. Manage conservatively at low run sizes to optimize future returns.
3. Provide fishery opportunity based on abundance.

Establish a "step-up" regulatory strategy that replaces the slot limit with an effective but precautionary alternative:

A. Limit harvest to fish under 30 inches at run sizes which produce escapements within the OEG in order to optimize fishery opportunity while also providing some harvest opportunity on small fish sizes that have been historically underexploited.
B. Liberalize fishing opportunity at run sizes which produce escapements exceeding the OEG while also encouraging increased harvest of small fish sizes to balance potential angler preferences for larger fish.
C. Repeal the "over 55 inches" provision and the sealing requirements that help implement this provision.

AAC 57.160 Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan (a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure an adequate escapement of early-run king salmon into the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers, to conserve the unique large size early-run king salmon in the Kenai River, and to provide the department with management guidelines.

(b) The department shall manage the Kenai River early-run king salmon sport and guided sport fisheries to achieve the optimal escapement goal of 5,300 – 9,000 fish, to provide reasonable harvest opportunities over the entire run, and to ensure **escapement of a representative age and size composition of the run** [THE AGE AND SIZE COMPOSITION OF THE HARVEST CLOSELY APPROXIMATES THE AGE AND SIZE COMPOSITION OF THE RUN].

(c) The department shall manage the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport and guided sport fisheries to achieve the sustainable escapement goal, to provide reasonable harvest opportunities over the entire run while ensuring adequate escapement of naturally-produced king salmon, and to minimize the effects of conservation actions for the Kenai River on the Kasilof River.

(d) In the Kenai River,

(1) **Repeal** the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and other special provisions for early-run king salmon set out in 5 AAC 57.120(a)(2)(i) and (iii), the provision in 5 AAC 57120 (b)(1) addressing the annual limit of king salmon less than 28 inches in length taken from the Kenai River from January 1 through June 30 and **Replace as follows.**

(2) if the spawning escapement is projected to be less than the lower end of the optimal escapement goal, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, restrict as necessary the taking of king salmon in the sport and guided sport fisheries in the Kenai River to achieve the optimal escapement goal using one of the following methods:

(A) prohibit the retention of king salmon **greater than** [LESS THAN 55 INCHES IN LENGTH, EXCEPT KING SALMON LESS THAN] 20 inches in length, downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake through June 30, and require that upstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, from July 1 through July 14, only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure, as described in 5 AAC 57.121(1) (J), may be used when sport fishing for king salmon and only king salmon less than 20 inches in length [~~AND 55 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH~~] may be retained; or

(B) close the sport and guided sport fisheries to the taking of king salmon in the Kenai River

(i) downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake through June 30; and

(ii) from July 1 through July 14, upstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake;

(3) if the spawning escapement is projected to fall within the optimal escapement goal, the commissioner may, by emergency order, liberalize the sport fishery downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, [~~BY ALLOWING THE USE OF BAIT~~] if the department projects that the total harvest under a liberalized sport fishery will not reduce the spawning escapement below the optimal escapement goal as follows;

(i) only king salmon less than **30** [~~42~~] inches in length [~~OR 55 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MAY~~] to be retained;

(ii) only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure, as described in 5 AAC 57.121(1) (J), may be used when sport fishing for king salmon and;

(iii) allow one king salmon less than 30 inches to be retained per day in addition to daily and annual bag limits and allow an individual who retains a king salmon less than 30 inches to continue to fish for king salmon.

(4) if the spawning escapement is projected to exceed the optimal escapement goal, the commissioner may, by emergency order, liberalize the sport fishery downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, by one or more of the following:

(i) allow the use of bait;

(ii) allow retention of king salmon of all sizes

(iii) allow one king salmon less than 30 inches to be retained per day in addition to daily and annual bag limits and allow an individual who retains a king salmon less than 30 inches to continue to fish for king salmon.

~~(4) a person may not possess, transport, or export from this state, a king salmon 55 inches or greater in length taken from the Kenai River from January 1 through July 31, unless the fish has been sealed by an authorized representative of the department within three days after the taking; the person taking the fish must sign the sealing certificate at the time of sealing; the seal must remain on the fish until the preservation or taxidermy process has commenced; a person may not falsify any information required on the sealing certificate; in this paragraph,~~

~~(A) "sealing" means the placement of an official marker or locking tag (seal) by an authorized representative of the department on a fish and may include~~

~~(i) collecting and recording biological information concerning the conditions under which the fish was taken;~~

~~(ii) measuring the specimen submitted for sealing; and~~

~~(iii) retaining specific portions of the fish for biological information, including scales, fin rays, and vertebrae;~~

~~(B) "sealing certificate" means a form used by the department for recording information when sealing a fish.]~~

(e) In the Kasilof River, the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and other special provisions for king salmon are set out in 5 AAC 56.120(1) and 5 AAC 56.122(a) (8).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Management plan provisions are contrary to plan goals and have produced undesirable unintended consequences.

- The size slot limit restricting harvest to fish less than 42 inches prevents managing harvest to closely approximate the size and age composition of the run by design.
- At large run sizes, the protected size slot results in escapements that exceed the optimum escapement goal.
- The size slot has failed to eliminate fishery selectivity. Harvest remains concentrated on the largest fish allowed under the slot. Smaller fish continue to be substantially under harvested relative to abundance.
- While the slot limit has eliminated the harvest of fish over 42 inches, it has failed to increase relative abundance of large fish which ADFG has determined results from ocean conditions.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai River Sportfishing Association (HQ-F16-073)

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PROPOSAL 150 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Start the Kenai River king salmon sport fisheries as unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention, as follows:

I encourage a new approach to managing King Salmon on the Kenai River that includes a proactive, conservative approach beginning with single hook, no bait, catch and release only fishing on opening day. Fisheries managers would have the ability to step up and allow bait and/or harvest as the run develops and provided more information about the true strength of the run. Catch and release fishing results in very low mortality (according to ADF&G's study), and therefore would be a great way to continue allowing opportunity, while simultaneously minimizing harvest of these special and unique fish in need of additional protection during a time of low abundance.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It's no secret that the Kenai River King Salmon have had several tough years in a row, and despite the period of low abundance, the decision has been regularly made to open the river to full harvest on July 1st. Given the unpredictable and borderline-crisis status of this run, the July 1st opener is an irresponsible management practice, at best. If the fishery shows signs of a weak run, the decision can be made to further restrict, but there's no way of knowing if it's too late, and there's no way to go backwards and put back those fish that have already been harvested. So why not add some proactive strategies to our current reactive management plan? It would be a logical, conservation minded, and responsible addition to the current reactive strategies utilized by ADF&G, and widely supported by the community that cares most about the sustainability of our special fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Mark Wackler (EF-F16-128)

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PROPOSAL 151 - 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan., 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., and 5 AAC 57.160. Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan. Repeal barbless hook provisions in Lower Kenai River, as follows:

I suggest the Board revisit this topic under "housekeeping" and repeal the restriction. The use of barbless hooks only penalizes a novice angler such as our youth who wishes to CATCH one Kenai River king during a Catch and Release Emergency Order. Restrictions that make it increasingly difficult to even catch a fish continue to be implemented. In the future, after correcting this dangerous precedent, I respectfully suggest that Board focus on restrictions that limit the HARVEST of said chinook, rather than hand-cuffing our future anglers with regulations that are not supported by hard data and studies. If ADF&G wishes to do a new study, and the data that the new study provides clearly shows that KR king salmon mortality is substantially reduced through the use of barbless hooks, then myself and other conservation minded anglers would support a regulation change.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board to address the highly alarming adoption of a new sport fishery regulation during the last BOF cycle that was based on emotion rather than data. Three years ago, a particular Board member stated that he desired a barbless hook restriction on Kenai River kings to be "his legacy that he left behind". Those are powerful words. The problem with the adoption of this policy is not "the legacy" per se but the precedent that this type of action sets, namely passing restrictive regulation without data or a specific study to support the change. In this particular instance, there is no data that shows that the survival rate of Hook and Release Kenai River king salmon is increased by utilizing barbless hooks. Rather, the ADF&G September 1991 Hook and Release Mortality study by Terry Bendock shows numerous variables impacting a KR kings survival rate, the foremost being the location of the hook, not the presence of a barb.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Brush (EF-F16-064)
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<u>PROPOSAL 152</u> – 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. Expand the dates to prohibit back trolling and tie to prohibition of bait, as follows:

Special Regulations

That portion of the Kenai River between ADF&G regulatory markers located at River mile 11 and River mile 12

A) May 16 - July 31

Back-trolling prohibited when bait is allowed to be used during the King salmon season. A person may not sport fish for any species from a vessel that is making upstream progress relative to the water with the aid of a motor

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? That portion of the Kenai River between ADF&G regulatory markers located at River mile 11 and River mile 12.

A) July 1 - July 31

Back trolling prohibited. A person may not sport fish for any species of fish from a vessel that is making upstream progress relative to the water with the aid of a motor.

When this regulation was adopted it was tied with when the lower Kenai River went to bait. As the popular method to fish this area was to drift thru River mile 12 down to 11 dragging a spin n glo and eggs. There was conflict between the two different methods of fishing which led to this regulation being adopted. However, when the sport fishery is not allowed to use bait during this timeframe very few anglers choose to drift. Changing the dates for the entire King season and tying the no back-trolling to when the River goes to bait would benefit all anglers instead of the few that like to drift without bait. Remember that those that would prefer to drift can still do so in this area even without the use of bait. I would like to see the dates of July 1 - July 31 be changed to say from May 16 (this is when the Didson begins counting King salmon) - July 31 no back trolling between River mile 11 and River mile 12 only when bait is allowed.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai River Professional Guide Association (KRPGA) (EF-F16-139)
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PROPOSAL 153 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Prohibit fishing for king salmon from markers 300 yards below Slikok Creek upstream to Skilak Lake, as follows:

Add to "Lower Kenai River Mainstem and Skilak Lake" seasons and bag limits for King Salmon; **300 yards below Slikok Creek upstream to Skilak Lake: Closed to king salmon fishing** [300 YARDS BELOW SLIKOK CREEK UPSTREAM TO SKILAK LAKE: JANUARY 1 – JULY 14: 1 PER DAY, 1 IN POSSESSION, MUST BE LESS THAN 42 INCHES IN LENGTH OR LONGER THAN 55 INCHES. JULY 15 – JULY 31: 1 PER DAY 1 IN POSSESSION.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? On the Kenai Peninsula for many decades fishing for Chinook salmon has only been allowed in the lower reaches of most streams open to fishing for Chinook salmon. The Kenai River is the one exception to that protective management practice. In the Kenai River fishing for Chinook salmon is open for fifty river miles. This area includes major spawning areas for both early run and late run fish. While there are closed areas around stream mouths to protect some components of early run fish those protected areas do not protect mainstem spawners. We propose limiting fishing for Chinook salmon to downstream from 300 yards below Slikok Creek.

In recent years we have seen a troubling pattern of near record low returns of both early and late run Kenai River Chinook salmon to the Kenai River. We believe the recent declines in statewide Chinook fisheries are largely due to marine survival issues, however, we also feel that part of our Kenai River decline can be linked to in-river harvest patterns; fishing on middle river mainstem spawning fish throughout the entire King salmon season, insufficient spawning area protections and multiple years of over-harvest of the population due to biased high sonar counts. We are also concerned that the procedure in place that counts all Chinook harvest after July 1st against the Late Run has resulted in less Early Run escapement than reported.

History seems pretty clear that factors such as population growth, increased use, commercialization and development make it almost impossible for us to sustain indigenous wild Chinook salmon populations. Unless we alter our behavior we will join the long list of streams dependent on hatchery-produced fish. We will not be able to sustain the high-density sport fishery that has developed on the Kenai River unless we consider a more conservative approach of protecting production to secure future run strength sustainability.

We believe this type of conservation measure is both prudent and necessary as we face a future of population growth and increased demands on our Kenai River King salmon resources. This regulation change would be consistent with the closures prescribed by the Department over the last several years to insure adequate Early Run escapement. It would also provide spawning area protection for mainstem Late Run fish as well. This measure would provide all spawning and staging King salmon an area where they can spawn in certain age class diversity free of selective harvest practices, catch and release mortality and spawning disruption.

The 2013 AYK Chinook Salmon Research Plan suggests that years of selective harvest of the largest fish can result in increasingly male based sex ratios, decreased size of spawners and a general decline in the return of the largest age classes. It will also result in lower than expected returns because of fecundity and egg quality of smaller females in the return. It goes on to say, that without efforts to counteract size selectivity and exploitation rates, improvements would be slow to materialize, requiring multiple generations. If we continue with the current management plan of allowing harvest all the way to Skilak Lake all season long we will severely hamper our opportunity to rectify our Kenai King salmon issues.

We believe this type of pro-active conservation measure would provide spawning certainty for insured long term sustainability of these valuable stocks while still providing for a vibrant sport fishery and harvest opportunity in the lower 18 miles of the Kenai River.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition (HQ-F16-008)

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PROPOSAL 154 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Expand the waters of the Kenai River closed to fishing for king salmon, as follows:

Move the finish line for chinook salmon sport fishing from the outlet of Skilak Lake (river mile 50) down to the lower boundary of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (river mile 45.5).

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area (a) Unless otherwise specified in 5 AAC 57.121 - 5 AAC 57.123 or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, the following are the general seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means that apply to sport fishing for finfish in the Kenai River Drainage Area:

(1) salmon may be landed only with the aid of a landing net or by hand;

(2) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, as follows:

A) may be taken only from January 1 - July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at **the lower boundary of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge at river mile 45.5** [THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE], with a bag and possession limit of one fish, as follows:

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Middle Kenai River from the outlet of Skilak Lake downstream to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge boundary is a known spawning area for both early and late-run chinook salmon on the Kenai River. The early-run chinook using this area to spawn are a small, biologically unique, and sensitive species group. The chinook salmon species in the Kenai River are facing a critical juncture in vitality and viability. Since Kenai River king salmon are experiencing a period of low productivity and, since 2009, below average run strength, a conservation effort to protect these fish on their spawning grounds is warranted.

PROPOSED BY: Heather Pearson (EF-F16-091)

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PROPOSAL 155 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Expand the waters of the Kenai River closed to fishing for king salmon, as follows:

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area

(a) Unless otherwise specified in 5 AAC 57.121 - 5 AAC 57.123 or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060 , the following are the general seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means that apply to sport fishing for finfish in the Kenai River Drainage Area:

(1) salmon may be landed only with the aid of a landing net or by hand;

(2) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, as follows:

(A) may be taken only from January 1 - July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located **approximately one mile upstream from the mouth of the Lower Killey River** [AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE], with a bag and possession limit of one fish, as follows:

(i) from January 1 - June 30, from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, and from July 1 - July 14, from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of the Slikok Creek upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located **approximately one mile upstream from the mouth of the Lower Killey River** [AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE], only king salmon that are less than 42 inches in length or 55 inches or greater in length may be retained;

(B) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length may not be taken

(i) in the Kenai River upstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located **approximately one mile upstream from the mouth of the Lower Killey River** [AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE], including Kenai Lake; and

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Chinook Salmon that arrive in the main-stem Kenai River between the Killey River sanctuary and Skilak Lake prior to July 31 are vulnerable to harvest in a given year whereas fish that arrive after July 31 are protected from harvest. If nothing is changed, different harvest opportunities and likely different harvest rates could affect the composition and run-timing for this aggregate of early-arriving main-stem spawners. Apparent shifts in spawn timing have already been reported by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Department; Reimer 2013). Non-random harvest on small, discrete spawning stocks imposes risks to population sustainability, and harvest selection can eventually lead to elimination of specific spawning groups (Olver et al. 1995).

Why: Chinook Salmon abundance in the Kenai River and throughout Alaska has been decreasing since around 2007. Some stocks are also exhibiting declining trends in size and age, including Kenai River Chinook Salmon that spawn on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (Kenai NWR), either in tributary streams (Funny River escapement analyzed by Boersma and Gates 2016) or the main-stem Kenai River (late-run commercial harvest analyzed by Lewis et al. 2015). Several mechanisms have been identified as potential drivers of these trends (e.g., size-selective harvest, competitive interactions, and changing environmental conditions), but the evidence is not conclusive for a specific cause (Lewis et al. 2015).

The main-stem Kenai River below Skilak Lake serves as an important spawning area for Chinook Salmon. In fact, river miles 46 and 47 on the Kenai NWR represent some of the highest densities of spawners in the entire watershed (Reimer 2013). Most of the main-stem spawners in this area are part of the late run that enter the Kenai River in July and August, but a small number are part of the early run that enter the Kenai River during May and June.

Although anecdotal information from local residents indicates this early-arriving group of main-stem spawners was likely at higher levels of abundance in previous years, recent work by the Department indicates only a small number of early-run fish currently spawn in this area (Reimer 2013). Between 2010 and 2013, the Department successfully radio-tagged and tracked early-run Chinook Salmon to spawning areas, but only a small proportion (about 2.5%) spawned in the main-stem Kenai River between the Kenai NWR boundary and Skilak Lake. Regardless of the uncertainties inherent in these data, one thing is clear -- only a small number of early-run main-stem spawners are found in the area. Any Chinook Salmon sport fishery in this stretch of river during July is in large part a terminal fishery for this group of main-stem spawners, and results in harvest pressure on other fish migrating through to other parts of the watershed where they are currently protected from harvest.

The Department (McKinley et al. 2002) reported that disproportionate harvest for early-run Chinook Salmon occurred in the past, mainly early in the season during years of restrictions to the fishery. Harvest rates were disproportionately higher in May and early June compared to later in June in years when the fishery was restricted to catch-and-release or trophy fishing (Figure 24 in McKinley et al. 2002). McKinley et al. (2002) recognized that disproportionate harvest of early-run Chinook Salmon in May or June could have biological impacts such as shifts in run-timing and thus recommended managing the inriver Chinook Salmon sport fishery to avoid disproportionately harvesting either early or late arriving fish.

A similar threat currently exists for Chinook Salmon that spawn in the main-stem Kenai River between the Killey River sanctuary and the outlet of Skilak Lake. Table 16 of Reimer (2013) presents information that indicates mainstem-spawning Chinook Salmon established site fidelity in the Moose River to Skilak Lake section as early as July 7 to July 9 in 2012 and 2013 and indicates some fish likely completed spawning and died prior to July 17. These fish represent the early-arriving portion of the run and would all be vulnerable to harvest in this stretch of river in most years, whereas the vast majority of main-stem spawners in this stretch of river arrive after July 31 and are protected from harvest. Different harvest opportunities and likely different harvest rates for the early-arriving group of fish could lead to changes in composition and shifts in run timing.

Although McKinley et al. (2002) found no observable trends or other evidence for shifts in run timing for early-run Chinook Salmon, data presented by Reimer (2013) indicates spawn timing for early-run main-stem spawners has shifted and appears to be about a month later than observations in 1990. As presented in Figure 9 of Reimer (2013), the median post-spawning mortality date for early-run main-stem spawners in 1990 was about July 19 whereas the median post-spawning mortality date for early-run main-stem spawners from 2010-2013 was about August 21. Spawn timing for all main-stem spawners now appears to be similar regardless of when they enter the Kenai River and forms an overlapping continuum as noted by Reimer (2013).

The effect of this proposal will be to close approximately 4.5 miles of the main-stem Kenai River downstream of Skilak Lake to sport fishing for Chinook Salmon. This represents about 8% of the entire Kenai River downstream of Skilak Lake. This proposal will reduce the harvest of both early- and late-run Chinook Salmon by an unknown amount. There will be little change in regulatory complexity since our proposal simply extends the existing Chinook Salmon sport fishing closure for the Kenai River above Skilak Lake to an additional 4.5 miles of main-stem river below Skilak Lake.

Very few guided anglers target Chinook Salmon in this stretch of the river and very few fish are harvested. Therefore, very few anglers will likely be impacted by a closure to Chinook Salmon fishing in this stretch of river. Also, since this stretch of river has in essence been closed through in-season emergency orders since 2011, there should be no noticeable increases in use or crowding in any lower river fisheries. Since past fishery performance in regard to effort and harvest may have little or no relationship to future fishery performance (effort and harvest), managing this stretch of river to avoid differential harvest of even a small number of fish is appropriate, especially given the current small number of fish estimated to use this area during July.

Current resolution of genetic information does not allow for finer-scale management of Chinook Salmon that spawn in the main-stem Kenai River. However, given what we know about current abundance and observed declining trends in size and age, a cautionary approach to management is appropriate and prudent.

One of the principles of the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Policy is that "salmon escapement should be managed in a manner to maintain genetic and phenotypic characteristics of the stock by assuring appropriate geographic and temporal distribution of spawners as well as consideration of range, sex ratio, and other population attributes." This principle is consistent with tenets of the U. S. Fish

and Wildlife Service's policy on Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health (601 FW 3) which directs the Service to maintain biological integrity on national wildlife refuges, defined as "Biotic composition, structure, and functioning at genetic, organism, and community levels comparable with historic conditions…" Managing the main-stem Kenai River below Skilak Lake to avoid differential harvest of Chinook Salmon will address the needs of both policies and both agencies, and promotes conservation of the overall Kenai River Chinook Salmon stock complex. Maintaining life history diversity and biocomplexity is important not only for the long-term sustainability of the overall stock, but also for the overall sustainability of the fisheries that exploit the stock (Hilborn et al. 2003).

There are other spawning areas for Chinook Salmon in the main-stem Kenai River upstream of the Slikok Creek closure area that may also benefit from regulations that restrict harvest. For example, a large proportion of early-run main-stem spawning fish located above Slikok Creek after July 15 in 2010-2013 (range 29 to 71%) were in "unrestricted" areas of the river that are normally open to sport fishing (Appendix B5; Reimer 2013). Sport fishing regulations for Kenai River Chinook Salmon above Slikok Creek also become more liberal from July 15-July 31, allowing the use of bait and removal of a protective slot limit. At this time, we believe protections for these fish can be better addressed through a different mechanism than a time and area closure. We have submitted a separate proposal to extend early-run regulations upstream of the Slikok Creek sanctuary area for the entire month of July to promote resource conservation while providing for fishery participation and opportunity.

References:

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PROPOSED BY: U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region (HQ-F16-014)

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PROPOSAL 156 – 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Replace slot limit for Kenai River king salmon with maximum size limit to prohibit retention of king salmon greater than 42 inches in length, as follows:

Change to "Lower Kenai River Mainstem and Skilak Lake" seasons and bag limits for King salmon; **Kenai River area open to King salmon fishing January 1 – July 31: 1 per day, 1 in possession, must be less than 42 inches in length.**

[KENAI RIVER MOUTH UPSTREAM TO 300 YARDS BELO SLIKOK CREEK:
JANUARY 1 – JUNE 30: 1 PER DAY, 1 IN POSSESSION, MUST BE LESS THAN 42 INCHES IN LENGTH OR LONGER THAN 55 INCHES.
JULY 1 – JULY 31: 1 PER DAY, 1 IN POSSESSION.

300 YARDS BELOW SLIKOK CREEK UPSTREAM TO SKILAK LAKE:
JANUARY 1 – JULY 14: 1 PER DAY, 1 IN POSSESSION, MUST BE LESS THAN 42 INCHES IN LENGTH OR LONGER THAN 55 INCHES.
JULY 15 – JULY 31: 1 PER DAY, 1 IN POSSESSION.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Kenai River has long been known throughout the world for its large trophy size Chinook salmon. In recent years we have witnessed a dramatic decrease in the size of these fish. In the Kenai river it is required that all trophy Chinook over 55in in length be sealed within 3 days of harvest. Records have been kept since 2003, and prior to 2008 there was an average of 6 of these trophy fish sealed each year, however since 2007 there has only been 1 fish over 55in in length registered and that was in 2009.

This size decrease has been noted in many Chinook stocks throughout Alaskan waters and there are varying theories on why this is happening, however, fisheries scientists agree that this phenomena can be exacerbated in intense sport fisheries where selective harvest of the largest fish occurs. Neala Warren Kendall, of the University of Washington, wrote in a 2011 paper on Alaskan Pacific salmon fisheries, "I quantified and compared commercial and recreational fishery selection on Chinook salmon. I discovered that the selection by the recreational fishery, which consistently caught larger fish, but not the commercial fishery which overall caught smaller fish, has been consistent with the size trends towards smaller fish over time." She goes on to say, "Selective harvest on wild fish populations has been associated with shifts towards smaller fish, younger age distributions, and decreased age and size maturation and is linked to changes including decreased fecundity, increased sexual dimorphism, lowered reproductive rates, loss of yield, increased variability in abundance and even fishery collapses. **Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of older, larger fish for stock stability and sustainability.**"

The 2013 AYK Chinook Salmon Research Action Plan, agrees with these assumptions about Fishing Induced Evolution (FIE), or as we know it selective harvest. It states, "declines in Chinook salmon abundance, increasingly male-biased sex ratios, decreased size of spawners, declines in size at age and declines in the return of the largest age classes are consistent with expected patterns that would result from selected harvest of the largest individuals."

The Kenai river has one of the most intense sport fisheries on Chinook salmon in the world and the trophy size fish it produces are renowned, however, the fishery relies on selective harvest practices to produce these results. Recent returns clearly illustrate that this practice is not sustainable and unless we change our management approach of continuing to target our largest fish we will fail this valuable resource and continue to face challenges in both abundance and declines in the returns of our largest age classes. Many anglers seeking trophy size kings no longer recognize the Kenai as a trophy Chinook river.

We believe that if we change our management philosophy and protect our largest fish from harvest we can give ourselves the best chance to reverse this trend and propagate a better fishery than we have today. By incorporating a harvest restriction on keeping any fish over 42 in. in length we will protect almost all of our 1.5 age class and over 50% of our 1.4 age class for production purposes while still providing for a vibrant sport fishery. If mortality on these larger fish is limited to "catch and release" levels, then this portion of the return will be provided additional protection for spawning. Additionally, by being returned to the river they will provide additional angling opportunity for other anglers to catch a "trophy size" Kenai king. We understand more clearly now that we don't have to kill these larger fish to enjoy catching one, having a mount made or provide for photo opportunities. This type of conservation measure is widely accepted, throughout the world, as a favorable approach towards sustainability of our fishery resources for future generations to enjoy. Future demand on our fishery resources is certain to increase over time so it is incumbent on us to protect and provide sustainability for these resources in the best way we can as regulators looking out for their well-being. This management change would provide that protection along with balanced fishing and harvest opportunities.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition (HQ-F16-005)

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PROPOSAL 157 – 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Modify the annual limit of king salmon from the Kenai River to two fish, only one taken prior to July 1, as follows:

Change to "Lower Kenai River Mainstem and Skilak Lake" seasons and bag limits for King salmon; **Of these 5 total king salmon no more than 2 may be taken from the Kenai River and only 1 may be taken from the Kenai River prior to July 1.**

[OF THESE 5 TOTAL KING SALMON NO MORE THAN 2 MAY BE TAKEN FROM THE KENAI RIVER]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In recent years we have seen a troubling pattern of near record low returns of early run (ER) Kenai River Chinook salmon to the Kenai River. We believe that a good portion of our Kenai River ER decline can be linked to in-river harvest patterns, fishing on middle river mainstem spawning fish throughout the entire King salmon season, insufficient spawning area protections and multiple years of over-harvest of the population due to biased high sonar counts. We are also concerned that the procedure in place that counts all Chinook harvest after July 1st against the Late Run has resulted in less Early Run escapement than reported.

The ER mainstem component of Kings have always been available for harvest longer than any other subspecies of Kenai River Kings because of their early run timing and lack of spawning area protections.

Please remember that these fish have only been fished on like this for about 35 -40 years, which is a relatively short time in the scheme of things, but long enough to have altered their ASL characteristics. The 2012 Yukon study identifies this as**, FIE (Fishing Induced Evolution) whereby you see changes in the genetic component resulting in declines in Chinook abundance, increasingly male-biased sex ratios, decreased size of spawners and declines in the return of the oldest age classes. They go on to say that these can be the results of selective fishing. They also say that, "If size –and age-at-maturity are highly heritable, then the effects of selection would result in a propensity of stocks to propagate more small young mature fish in subsequent generations. This mechanism could cause a long-term decline in returns per spawner."**

They conclude by saying**, "efforts to counteract declines would likely require reductions in size selectivity of gear and exploitation rates, and that improvements would be slow to materialize, requiring multiple generations under the new selection regime."**

Even though the ER does not have any Cook Inlet commercial fishing occurring during its run timing into the Kenai River it has suffered more drastically in its age / sex composition over time than the Late Run. We believe this was largely a factor of in-river over-harvest. Over time, the data illustrates that we now have only about a 20 – 25% female component and our largest age class of 1.4 fish has fallen to less than 10% of the run where the 1986 – 2013 mean 1.4 average was 42% of the run.

Research tells us that if we implement a more conservative management scheme we can reverse these trends and rebound these stocks but it will take multiple generations to do so (20 – 30 years). This proposal seeks to lower the exploitation rates on ER fish by implementing a one fish bag limit prior to July 1st. This is just one of a suite of proposals our organization is putting forth to provide conservation measures to help in the recovery of our Kenai River Chinook salmon stocks and help us achieve long term sustainability for these stocks.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition (HQ-F16-006)

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<u>PROPOSAL 158</u>- 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Modify the annual limit of two king salmon for the Kenai River to include only one large fish, as follows:

I recommend the reasonable and logical solution of implimenting an "over/under" annual bag limit for both early and late run kenai kings. Keep the bag limit at two per person annually, but only allow the possible harvest of ONE large chinook. Many anglers wish to harvest KR chinook for food fish and an over/under limit would allow for that. For example; anglers who harvest a 50 pounder and then days later harvest a 18 pounder have still provided for their table, but just as

importantly, they have achieved several worthy goals. First, as mentioned above, they have possibly allowed a larger fish to reach the spawning beds but they have also spread the harvest across a broader range of age classes (thus stregnthening the dynamics of the run) and potentially removing and NOT encouraging smaller fish to perpetuate the run. Precedent for this type of "over/under" management approach is already present in numerous fisheries. It is used in the relatively healthy Nushagak River king salmon sport fishery but not the struggling Kenai River king salmon sport fishery, which I find highly ironic. What legnth of fish would be allowed/protected is could be discussed and decided by The Board after the fact, once the proposal is adopted.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? An annual bag limit on Kenai kings that has not been changed for decades, despite suffering through what ADF&G calls a "period of low abundance" recently as well as trends whereas the legendary big fish of the Kenai River, specifically five ocean seven year old chinook, continue to decline. While managers may contend that they are not totally sure of the reasons for the decline of the big fish, one common sense fact remains: right now, every big fish that reaches the spawning beds improves our odds of this "big fish" resource rebounding.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Brush (EF-F16-062)
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PROPOSAL 159 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai river Drainage Area. and 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area. Extend the time that the slot limit for Kenai River king salmon is in effect, as follows:

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area

(a) Unless otherwise specified in 5 AAC 57.121 - 5 AAC 57.123 or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060 , the following are the general seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means that apply to sport fishing for finfish in the Kenai River Drainage Area:

(1) salmon may be landed only with the aid of a landing net or by hand;

(2) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, as follows:

(A) may be taken only from January 1 - July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, with a bag and possession limit of one fish, as follows:

(i) from January 1 - June 30, from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, and from July 1 - July **31** [14], from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of the Slikok Creek upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, only king salmon that are less than 42 inches in length or 55 inches or greater in length may be retained;

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

Unless otherwise specified by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060 , the following are the special provisions and localized exceptions to the general seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means set out in 5 AAC 57.120 and 5 AAC 75 for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area:

(1) sport fishing gear restrictions:

(A) from January 1 - June 30, in the Kenai River, and from July 1 - July **31** [14], in the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Early-run Chinook Salmon that transit through lower Kenai River sport fisheries prior to July 1 are subject to management under conservative regulations which include a protective slot limit and no-bait restrictions. These conservative regulations continue through July 14 upstream of Slikok Creek but revert to general late-run regulations from July 15–July 31 which eliminates the slot limit and allows the use of bait. However, many early-run Chinook Salmon are still in unrestricted areas of the main-stem Kenai River after July 15. Changes to the regulations are necessary to prevent adverse effects to the composition and run-timing of this group of early-run Chinook Salmon.

Chinook Salmon abundance in the Kenai River and throughout Alaska has been decreasing since around 2007. Some stocks are also exhibiting declining trends in size and age, including Kenai River Chinook Salmon that spawn on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, either in tributary streams (Funny River escapement analyzed by Boersma and Gates 2016) or the main-stem Kenai River (late-run commercial harvest analyzed in Lewis et al. 2015). Several mechanisms have been identified as potential drivers of these trends (e.g., size-selective harvest, competitive interactions, and changing environmental conditions), but the evidence is not conclusive for a specific cause (Lewis et al. 2015).

Conservative regulations have been adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) to protect early-run Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River, including a protective slot limit and the use of single, unbaited hooks. Recent research by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Department; Reimer 2013) indicates a considerable number of early-run Chinook Salmon may not receive the full protections intended by these regulations. For example, a large proportion of early-run main-stem spawning fish located above Slikok Creek after July 15 in 2010-2013 (range 29% to 71%) were in "unrestricted" areas of the river that are normally open to sport fishing (Appendix B5 in Reimer 2013). Sport fishing regulations for Kenai River Chinook Salmon from July 15-July 31 allow the use of bait and do not have a protective slot limit. Different harvest opportunities and likely different harvest rates for these fish could lead to changes in composition and shifts in run timing for early-run Chinook Salmon. This proposal seeks to conserve the unique large size early-run king salmon in the Kenai River as identified in the State of Alaska's Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Conservation Management Plan (5 AAC 56.070) by extending the protective slot limit and no-bait restrictions for most early-run Chinook Salmon throughout their residency in the main-stem Kenai River.

The Department reported that disproportionate harvest for early-run king salmon occurred in the past, mainly early in the season during years of restrictions to the fishery (McKinley et al. 2002). Harvest rates were disproportionately higher in May and early June compared to later in June in years when the fishery was restricted to catch-and-release or trophy fishing (McKinley et al. 2002; Figure 24). McKinley et al. (2002) recognized that disproportionate harvest of early-run Chinook Salmon in May or June could have biological impacts such as shifts in run-timing and thus recommended managing the in-river Chinook Salmon sport fishery to avoid disproportionately harvesting either early or late arriving fish.

The effect of this proposal will be to extend early-run regulations through July 31 upstream of the Slikok Creek closure area, including a protective slot limit and single hook/no bait restrictions. This would reduce the harvest of both early- and late-run Chinook Salmon by an unknown amount and likely reduce the harvest fish between 42 and 55 inches by an unknown amount.

One of the principles of the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Policy is that "*salmon escapement should be managed in a manner to maintain genetic and phenotypic characteristics of the stock by assuring appropriate geographic and temporal distribution of spawners as well as consideration of range, sex ratio, and other population attributes.*" This principle is consistent with tenets of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's policy on Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health (601 FW 3) which directs the Service to maintain biological integrity on national wildlife refuges, defined as "*Biotic composition, structure, and functioning at genetic, organism, and community levels comparable with historic conditions…*" Managing the main-stem Kenai River below Skilak Lake to avoid differential harvest of Chinook Salmon will address the needs of both policies and both agencies, and promotes conservation of the overall Kenai River Chinook Salmon stock complex. Maintaining life history diversity and biocomplexity is important not only for the long-term sustainability of the overall stock, but also for the overall sustainability of the fisheries that exploit the stock (Hilborn et al. 2003).

This proposal promotes resource conservation by extending protections for early-run Chinook Salmon during their freshwater residency in the main-stem Kenai River above Slikok Creek while providing for fishery participation and opportunity. A separate time-and-area closure proposal has been submitted to provide protections for Chinook Salmon on their spawning grounds below Skilak Lake.

References:

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PROPOSED BY: U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region (HQ-F16-015)

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PROPOSAL 160 - 5 AAC 57.121. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Prohibit the use of bait in the late-run Kenai river king salmon fishery until escapement goals have been met, as follows:

Kenai River – Lower Kenai River Mainstem and Skilak Lake

Change; under METHODS AND MEANS

Gear restrictions:

- From the mouth of the Kenai River to ADF&G regulatory marker at Skilak Lake:
- January 1 – **July 31** [June 30]
- Only one unbaited, single-hook lure is allowed

Delete; The rest of this section dealing with bait and unbaited requirements through July 31.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The use of bait should be prohibited in the "Late Run" Kenai River Chinook fishery until the "Department" has determined escapement goals will be met. Historically the run has started with bait and if restrictions are needed bait is prohibited later in the season (although in recent years bait has been prohibited at the beginning of the late run season). The last time the season started with bait on July 1 was in 2011.

By starting the season with bait and restricting later on the harvest is disproportionably directed toward the early segment of the "Late Run" as they are vulnerable to harvest for a longer period of time. The most important justification to start the season with "no bait" is to protect "Early Run" stocks that are still moving through the lower part of the drainage in early July and are vulnerable to harvest.

Bait is already prohibited at the beginning of the "Early Run" which has been totally closed to fishing in recent years. Starting the late run with bait places additional impact on these stocks that are at historical low levels and is not a sound fishery management practice. Even if early run stocks recover and bait is allowed during the season by Emergency Order, the late run should begin without the use of bait to reduce harvest at the end of the early run. Additionally, starting the season without bait and liberalizing if warranted would provide consistency in regulation along

with predictability to local anglers, businesses and the guide industry. It is far less disruptive when an ongoing fishery is liberalized compared to when it is restricted.

The intent of this proposal is to remove mandatory dates to go to bait, during the King salmon season, and allow the department the flexibility to liberalize to bait based on scientific evaluation of run strength and run timing.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition (HQ-F16-024)
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PROPOSAL 161 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Start the Kenai River king salmon sport fisheries as unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention, as follows:

I recommend a "step up" management philosophy whereas the sport fishery starts with a very conservative single-hook, no bait Catch and Release fishery that (1) provides opportunity but (2) ensures maximum sustainability. According to ADF&G data, specifically the 1991 Terry Bendock study on Hook and Release Mortality, the LR Kenai King survival rate was 94.1%,. Bear in mind that this study was conducted with multiple hooks, bait, and increased handling times (stress) thus it is fair to say that present H&R survival rates would be considerably better, although there is no hard data to support this claim. Still, the translation is that hook and release fishing, which is presently very underutilized by ADF&G, is a highly effective management tool that maximizes opportunity yet minimizes harvest. For this reason, STARTING our sport fishery with this conservative management should be a given. Then, step up, with "harvest" allowed if/when the run shapes up well. Then, should the resource allow it, "bait" could be added, increasing opportunity more.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The issue I would like the BOF to address is ADF&G's lack of a Kenai river king salmon management plan "step up" policy that puts conservation and sustainability of the resource at the forefront yet still allows for some reasonable amount of sport fish opportunity when possible. Presently, backwards logic during the Late Run is utilized: the KR late run sport fishery opens with full harvest, on a fishery that we do not know run stregnth. Nobody knows if it is going to make escapement, yet harvest is allowed. thus, hundreds if not thousands of LR kings are taken BEFORE before managers can assess the health of the return. consequently, the sport fishery is often stepped-down abruptly or even suddenly closed, creating for one a very unpredictable fishery but more importantly, creating a scenario where jeopardizing the sustainability of the run becomes more probable since reaching the escapement goal after the fact becomes difficult or impossible. Basically, we can't go back and UN-kill what has already been killed. While I fully understand the Politics of the Sport vs. Commercial fisheries and the implications of restricting/liberalizing one particular fishery, the health of the Kenai King runs most be put as Priority ONE or declines will continue.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Brush (EF-F16-059)
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PROPOSAL 162 - 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Establish an Optimum Escapement Goal for Kenai River late-run king salmon, as follows:

Establish an Optimum Escapement Goal (OEG) of 15,000 – 40,000. The corresponding change in management plan language would be:

(b) The department shall manage the late run of Kenai River king salmon to achieve **an optimal** [A SUSTAINABLE] escapement goal of 15,000 – **40,000** [30,000] king salmon…

Higher in-river runs produce tremendous sport fishery benefits with no significant impact on future production or yield for escapements up to 40,000. The proposed upper goal of 40,000 includes the historical average escapement and maintains high production and yield according the Department's recent escapement goal analysis. Returns from all historical escapements below 40,000 exceeded replacement and produced substantial yields. There was no significant correlation with returns for escapements between 22,500 and 40,000.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Kings are designated primarily for sport fish use and sport fisheries are optimum at when kings are abundant. However, the top end of the new SEG for Kenai late-run king salmon (15,000 - 30,000) is less than the historical average escapement (37,000). Management to reduce in-river runs of Kenai kings at higher run sizes would inappropriately reduce sport fishery opportunity. When escapements are projected to exceed the upper end of the SEG but still fall within the range of historical average, no management action in addition to the normal fishing regulatory regime should be taken to further reduce the escapement.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai River Sportfishing Association (HQ-F16-071)
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PROPOSAL 163 - 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Prohibit bait on runs less than 22,000 and eliminate 12-hour fishing period restriction, as follows:

5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan

…

(c) In the sport fishery,

(1) if the sustainable escapement goal is projected to be exceeded, the commissioner may, by emergency order, **open the fishery to the use of bait, and** extend the sport fishing season up to seven days during the first week of August;

…

(e) From July 1 through July 31, if the projected inriver run of late-run king salmon is less than 22,500 fish, in order to achieve the sustainable escapement goal and provide reasonable harvest opportunity, the commissioner may, by emergency order, establish fishing seasons as follows:

(1) in the Kenai River sport fishery,

[(A) THE USE OF BAIT IS PROHIBITED; OR]

(A)[(B)] the [USE OF BAIT AND] retention of king salmon **is** [ARE] prohibited, and only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure, as described in 5 AAC 57.121(1)(J), may be used when sport fishing for king salmon;

(2) [IN THE KENAI RIVER PERSONAL USE FISHERY, IF THE USE OF BAIT OR RETENTION OF KING SALMON IS PROHIBITED IN THE KENAI RIVER SPORT FISHERY UNDER (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION,] the retention of king salmon is prohibited in the personal use fishery;

(3) in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishery, notwithstanding the provisions of 5 AAC 21.360(c)(1)(B), (2)(B), and (3)(B), based on the abundance of sockeye salmon returning to the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers,

(A) if the **retention of king salmon** [USE OF BAIT] is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery under (1)(A) of this subsection, commercial fishing periods are open for no more than 36 hours per week, with a 36-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday, during which the number of set gillnets operated may also be restricted to either

(i) three set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth or two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter; or

(ii) two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth or one set gillnet that is not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter; or

[(B) IF THE USE OF BAIT AND THE RETENTION OF KING SALMON ARE PROHIBITED IN THE KENAI RIVER SPORT FISHERY UNDER (L)(B) OF THIS SUBSECTION, COMMERCIAL FISHING PERIODS ARE OPEN FOR NO MORE THAN 12 HOURS PER WEEK, WITH A 36-HOUR CONTINUOUS CLOSURE PER WEEK BEGINNING BETWEEN 7:00 P.M. THURSDAY AND 7:00 A.M. FRIDAY.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, the Kenai Late Run King plan allows for the use of bait in the inriver sport fishery anytime the inriver run of King Salmon is above 22,500, or the midpoint of the escapement goal. Any time bait is not allowed, severe restrictions are placed on other fisheries out of interest for parity. This proposal seeks to establish no bait as the "normal" setting for the inriver fishery, allowing for bait to be used as a liberalization when runs are expected to exceed escapement. It also seeks to eliminate the 12 hour restrictions placed on the setnet fishery, as 12 hours is not practical for managing escapements into 2 rivers over 80 miles of beach.

We feel this change will help ensure adequate passage of Kenai Late Run Kings into the Kenai River, and will make Kenai Late Run Sport regulations consistent with Kenai Early Run sport regulations by allowing the use of bait when escapements are projected to be exceeded. It will also help to ensure adequate opportunity in the sport, personal use, and commercial fisheries while giving ADFG the flexibility to make yield tradeoff decisions in our mixed-stock fisheries.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (HQ-F16-077)

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PROPOSAL 164 - 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Repeals and readopts the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan*, as follows:

(REPEAL AND READOPT *5* AAC 21.359)

5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run Mainstem King Salmon Management Plan

(a) The purposes of this management plan are to ensure an adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River system and to provide management guidelines to the department.

(b) The department shall manage the late run Mainstem stock of Kenai River king salmon to achieve a sustainable escapement goal of 12,000-27,000 king salmon beginning June 23 as described in this section.

(c) In the sport fishery, not withstanding 5 AAC 57.120-5AAC 57.123

(1) from June 23 through July 31 only that portion of the Kenai River downstream of the river mile 14 sonar counter is open for King salmon fishing;

(2) from June 23 through July 31, a person may not use more than one single hook in the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake;

(3) that portion of the Kenai River downstream from the river mile 14 sonar counter is open to unguided sport fishing from nonmotorized vessel on Mondays in July; for purposes of this paragraph, a nonmotorized vessel is one that does not have a motor on board.

(d) If the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than 12,000 king salmon, the department shall

(1) close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Cape Douglas to the taking of king salmon;

(2) close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula Shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River; and

(3) close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District.

(e) The provisions of this section do not apply to provisions of the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan contained in 5 AAC 21.365(f) that pertain to the Kasilof Special Harvest Area.

(f) The department will, to the extent practicable, conduct habitat assessments on a schedule that conforms to the Board of Fisheries (board) triennial meeting cycle. If the assessments demonstrate a net loss of riparian habitat caused by noncommercial fishermen, the department is requested to report those findings to the board and submit proposals to the board for appropriate modifications of this plan.

(g) The commissioner may department from provisions of the management plan under this section as provided in 5 AAC 21.363(e)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 1988 when the first management plan for Kenai River Late-run Kings was made the Department did not have the genetics technology they have now. July first was erroneously set as the demarcation of early and late-run king salmon (McKinley 2013). We now know that setting the escapement goals based on run timing was incorrect and that the goals should have been set based on biology (Reimer 2016) as Tributary (prior to June 22) and Mainstem (after June 22). Because of this error the Tributary stocks have been getting shorted by the counting of 20 to 30 percent of the escapement actually being of mainstem origin. In addition McKinley found that over 50 percent of the harvest from July 1 to July 15 above the Soldotna Bridge is actually Tributary stocks which are erroneously subtracted from the mainstem escapement. This means that the escapement of tributary bound stocks is much reduced from what the Department has been reporting. Because of this and the prosecution of the fishery, tributary stocks bound for Beaver Creek, Soldotna Creek, Slikok Creek and Juneau Creek are gone or going to extinction from overharvest**.**

Additionally the Department found that the sonar counts from 1986 to 2011 (26 years) were not correct and recreated them using a Bayesian model of unknown performance. In 2012 ADF&G began counting with DIDSON sonar which was supposed to be the solution, but by 2013 a CIP was submitted to replace DIDSON with AIERS because of insurmountable problems with the DIDSON counts (Swanton 2013). This CIP included funding for 2 years of SSART (mark/Recap) which was supposed to assess this new counting technology, reports of this study were to be completed by the spring of 2014 and 2015. Reports from the in-river gillnetting, in-river creel and SSART projects mention the bias and errors associated with these programs as well as the statewide harvest survey which are used with the mixture model to determine a daily sonar count. When the escapement from the weirs operated by FWS and the age/sex composition are compared to the sonar count at either location, river mile 8.6 or 14 it is quite obvious that the sonar counts are well below the estimates produced by the weirs, mark/recapture or by the SSART method. The same is true when you compare the age/sex composition from the weirs to the numbers produced from the netting program. While we are still waiting for the Assessment Reports from the 1.8 million dollar CIP from 2013 which are already 1-2 years late, we are left with fisheries with many restrictions which are not necessary or productive. The department has been counting the first 7 days of the late-run as early-run stocks, misallocating the upriver harvest to the late run when much of it is really early run stocks. In addition the netting program is biased and does not catch anything near a representative sample of age 1.1 or 1.2 age Chinook. And by underestimating the number of small fish in the escapement they are overestimating the number of older age fish by a significant but unknown proportion. Additionally when the department did the run reconstruction they added an additional 3000 fish to the upper and lower escapement goal which is unnecessary, allocative, and outside of their discretion. These fish should be taken off the escapement goal as unnecessary. Because of all of these unsolved problems the department has allowed the fisheries harvesting late-run mainstem stocks to be over restricted and placed the early-run tributary stocks in jeopardy. Additionally when the department did the run reconstruction they failed to utilize the in-river genetics which could significantly alter the escapement goals of both tributary and mainstem stocks.

Many other restrictions were put in place in the commercial fishery which are unwarranted and lead to excessive over-escapements which ADF&G seems unable to address either

with a proposal or in-season actions. In 2014 the BOF put in place 29 mesh restrictions which the department advised against. After the meeting ADF&G sent a letter to the journal publishing this "study", why they didn't do something more reasonable prior to its use and publication is odd at best. The Bethe study which first suggested this ridiculous 29 mesh restriction failed to mention that the 29 mesh nets in his study caught significantly more kings than the 45 mesh nets. This is nothing but a veiled reallocation from offshore nets to the beach nets near the river where most kings are likely caught. To institute a projection of 22,500 king salmon in-river run or else restrictions are possible is again ridiculous. In 2015 ADF&G managed on a forecast which was 50 percent in error which caused them to put in place restrictions which were unnecessary for all users all the way until July 25. Even though the projection from July 1 on was for an in-river run much in excess of 22,500. Of course on August 1 they again went off the reservation and put in restrictions which caused yet another Unconstutional and unsustainable over-escapement. The department is unable to function with such complexities and the plan needs to be simplified. The fish must come first which means that the escapement goals are all that should be important, not just for kings but for sockeye too.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Ducker (HQ-F16-112)

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PROPOSAL 165 - 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Decrease the trigger for management actions on Kenai River late-run king salmon from 22,500 to 16,500, as follows:

I would like to see (f) be deleted from the plan, but I don't think this will happen, therefore:

To err on the side of conservation, I would like the 22,500 number of projected king salmon escapement lowered to 16,500 in this regulation (f).

The regulation would read something like this:

(f) From August 1 through August 15, if the projected escapement of king salmon into the Kenai River is at least **15,000, but less than 16,500** [16,500, but less than 22,500], notwithstanding ...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan (KRLRKSMP) the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) is 15,000-30,000 king salmon. The mid point of the SEG is 22,500 king salmon. From August 1 through August 15 if the projected escapement of king salmon into the Kenai River is less than 22,500, the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery can fish no more than 36 hours.

22,500 kings is far to liberal. There is no biological reason or data, that can justify for this number. 22,500 puts unnecessary restrictions on the ESSN fishery. In the Kenai-East Forelands sections, where in some years up to 25% of their harvest can occur in August, the current regulation is very devastating.

If 15,000 is the minimum goal, and the minimum escapement goal is projected, why are there any time restrictions put on the set net fleet?

PROPOSED BY: Gary L. Hollier (EF-F16-015)
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PROPOSAL 166 - 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. Modify season dates and area for Kenai River late-run king salmon management, as follows:

Add to Kenai River – Lower Kenai River Mainstem and Skilak Lake

King Salmon

- **Kenai River mouth upstream to RM 13.8 (Sonar Site)**

  July 1 – July 7: 1 per day , 1 in possession

Change:

Kenai River mouth upstream to 300 yards below Slikok Creek:

- **July 8 – July 31: 1 per day, 1 in possession**

[JULY 1 – JULY31: 1 PER DAY, 1 IN POSSESSION]

300 yards below Slikok Creek upstream to Skilak Lake:

- **January 1 – June 30** [JANUARY 1 – JULY 14]

- **July 8 – July 14** [JANUARY 1 – JULY 14)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current season dates and area for the Kenai king late run (LR) provide inadequate protection for late returning early run (ER) fish , which are still present when the LR opens on July 1.We propose limiting the Chinook fishery to downstream from the sonar counter at RM 13.8 from July 1 through July 7. This proposal would also offer some protection for early returning LR kings, as well as main stem spawners that spawn above the new king counter at mile 13.8.

Pass through king fisheries have successfully occurred on nearly all of the Kenai Peninsula king rivers for the past 30 plus years. The Anchor, Deep Creek, and Ninilchik Rivers are only open on select weekends for the lower (approximate) two miles. The Kasilof River is closed above the bridge, at mile (approximate) eight. The Kenai River, which receives the most intense pressure of all king rivers in Alaska, is open on regular years up to the outlet of Skilak Lake, about fifty miles upriver. Almost all spawning of main stem kings occurs in the lower fifty miles.

Telemetry data shows that in some years, up to 40-50% or the ER main stem spawners are still below the Soldotna bridge on July 1. Most of these fish move above the Soldotna bridge by July 10, so this would provide a measure of protection to these main stem ER spawners, who are the most noticeable missing component of our recent ER king escapements. Essentially, all kings above the king counter at mile 13.8 on July 1 are ER fish. Fishing above the counter on July 1 makes no sense, especially when looking at all of the conservation measures that we have seen with the ER over the past several years.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition (HQ-F16-010)

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PROPOSAL 167 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Close the Kenai River personal use fishery when the late-run king salmon sport fishery is closed, as follows:

The personal use dip net fishery in the Kenai River is paired with the LR king salmon sport fishery. If the LR king salmon sport fishery in the Kenai River is completely closed then the personal Use dip net fishery in the Kenai River is completely closed.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Dip netters should have paired restrictions with the sport fishery for LR king salmon in the Kenai River. The mortality for king salmon tangled in the gill net of a PU dip net and then released has not been determined. Using the precautionary principle, if the LR king salmon sport fishery in the Kenai River is completely closed then the PU dip net fishery is completely closed.

PROPOSED BY: Steve Vanek (EF-F16-083)

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PROPOSAL 168 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Remove restrictions to the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Subdistrict commercial set gillnet fishery in July and August, as follows:

Repeal 5 AAC 21.359 (e) and (f)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Delete provisions (e) and (f) from the Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.

The current provisions in 5 AAC 21.359(e) and (f), which were adopted in 2014, have essentially created an optimal escapement goal (OEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon bore disproportionately by the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery. For example, the current management plan places the entire burden of conservation for this stock in August solely on the set gillnet fishery.

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon is 15,000–30,000 fish. The current management plan states that from July 1 through July 30, both the commercial fishery and the inriver sport fishery are managed to the same objectives. Specifically, if the Kenai

River king salmon inriver run exceeds 22,500 fish, both fisheries are prosecuted without restrictions; however, if the inriver run is projected to be less than 22,500 fish, restrictions to both fisheries are required. Beginning August 1, however, the inriver sport fishery for king salmon closes and the management target for king salmon switches from achieving a projected inriver run of 22,500 fish to achieving a projected escapement of 16,500 to 22,500 fish. The restrictions triggered by being below a projected escapement of 22,500 fish falls exclusively on the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery. To change a management target from a projected inriver run to a projected escapement objective, and then to have that higher burden of conservation fall completely on one user group, is highly unusual and even draconian in nature.

The late-run of Kenai River king salmon has never failed to meet its minimum escapement objective since enumeration began in 1986. Furthermore, the upper end of the escapement goal has been exceeded in 15 of 28 years. This proposal simply advocates for the department to do what they have already shown they will, that is, use their emergency order authority to adjust harvest rates of the sport and commercial fisheries on Kenai River late-run king salmon in order to meet the SEG for this stock. Mandated restrictions on the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery in order to achieve the mid-point of the SEG for Kenai River king salmon puts management of the sockeye salmon fishery in jeopardy. In the past 10 years (2006-2015), the Kenai River sockeye salmon inriver goal has been exceeded 7 times, while the Kasilof River sockeye salmon BEG has been exceeded 9 times. This proposal seeks some balance in managing these two very important stocks of fish. Why is managing to the mid-point of the escapement goal for king salmon more important than not exceeding the upper end of sockeye salmon management objectives? This proposal seeks to provide ADF&G with more flexibility to allow for the harvest of surplus sockeye salmon while still achieving the SEG for late-run Kenai River king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Joel Doner (EF-F16-103)

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PROPOSAL 169 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Remove restrictions to the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Subdistrict commercial set gillnet fishery in July and August, as follows:

5 AAC 21.359
(e) [DELETE]
(f) [DELETE]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current Late Run Kenai River King Salmon Plan does not work. The restrictions in place are to static and will not allow any flexibility to managers. The question of pairing is not fundamentally possible in a fisheries with

so many different moving parts. SOKI is committed in modifying the language to address glaring inequities.We especially challenge the restriction to mesh size. The ADF&G has challenged the study that board members accepted as being valid science and the author continues to submit bad science that is bias and contrived.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Shadura, spokesperson for South K-Beach Independent Fishermen's Association (SOKI) (EF-F16-172)

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PROPOSAL 170 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Reconsider "paired" restrictions to the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Subdistrict commercial set gillnet fishery, as follows:

The Board should reconsider the "parity" issue to encourage: in-river reduced hours to one-third of time available per week, harvest by age in proportion to the run, harvest age 1.1 and 1.2 king salmon under 30 inches in length in the same proportion as ESSN fishery (50% of harvest), and forego all sockeye salmon fishing opportunity when the ESSN hours are restricted when going to no bait, and fairly compensated the commercial fisheries time on lost benefit and yield recruitment declines and offset the reallocation of sockeye salmon during the month of July with a comparable commercial fishery that is presently unavailable in order to be allocatively neutral.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Provisions within the Kenai late-run king salmon management under the premise of parity unduly restricts the commercial fisheries and severely contains the ability and duties of the department to manage for established sockeye salmon escapement goals within the UCI mixed socks fisheries.

However, in-river directed sport fisheries are normally managed with bait and no bait provisions.

Disrupting two major sockeye salmon plans that already contained conservation and development and coupled to a parity based provisions plan – that exceeds the minimum spawning goal on a king salmon stock in a directed fishery. An indiscriminate application of fisheries management of state fishery resources. And, inconsistent with the policy for the management of mixed-stock fisheries over the sustained yields of sockeye salmon stocks with defined BEG and SEG escapement goal ranges.

PROPOSED BY: Brandie Ware (HQ-F16-095)

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PROPOSAL 171 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Remove the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Kasilof Section from "paired" restrictions in the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan*, as follows:

Amend (h) to include the Kasilof Section within the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan and KRSHA.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The inability of the Department to manage and distribute escapements evenly within the Kasilof river sockeye salmon escapement goal. The Kasilof Section should not be coupled to 21.359 plan as the incidental harvest of Kenai bound late-run king salmon is minimal. The genetic harvest data in the Kasilof Section supports the minimal harvest levels per opening, per net CPUE in-season, by CPUE on age composition stratified in July and before July 8th, and after July 31.

268 - 283 permits operate in the Kasilof Section and the Kenai Section 164 permits. The net ratio is 1.71:1 and harvest ratio is 1:7 with the CPUE per net harvest levels in July. For example in July when comparing both Kasilof Section to Kenai Section the Kasilof Section harvests less than one-fourth that of Kenai Section average per opening: 67 vs. 309. In addition, significant numbers of 1.1 (12 – 14 inches in length) male king salmon within the Kasilof Section harvest that are not counted by sonar. During the entire opened fishing season from June 22nd through August 10th 2015 fishing with 28 days, the average per net harvest of Kenai river late-run king salmon was only 1.4 kings per net per entire "season" with 1.1 jacks adjusted for.

In all likelihood, the Kasilof Section harvest level on Kenai late-run king salmon for ages 1.2 or above is comparable or less than the Lower Sport Marine king salmon fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Jeff Goodman (HQ-F16-098)

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PROPOSAL 172 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Remove "paired" restrictions in the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Subdistrict commercial set gillnet fishery, as follows:

Paired restrictions are not necessary in times of abundance. In times of shortage, managers can make in-season adjustments. We have many capable biologists on staff.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Eliminate paired restrictions (ESSN and In-River fishery). The only similarity in these fisheries is the mutual antagonism which paired restrictions have only enhanced. This in 2014 was a board-generated allocation proposal.

PROPOSED BY: John McCombs (HQ-F16-086)

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PROPOSAL 173 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Decrease the projected inriver run goal of late-run king salmon to 19,000 fish and remove the Upper Subdistrict commercial set gillnet fishery from "paired" restrictions, as follows:

(c) amend From July 1 through July 31, if the projected inriver run of late-run king salmon is less than 19,000 [22,000], in order to achieve the sustainable escapement goal and provide reasonable harvest opportunity, the commissioner may, by emergency order, **under AS 16.05.060 use this authority to achieve established salmon escapement goals described and directed under (j).** Delete [establishing fishing seasons as follows]; delete : (e) (3) (A), (e) (3) (A) (i), (ii); (e) (B).

(f) repeal (delete)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Difficulty in the management of large runs of sockeye salmon due to inability of ADFG to distribute escapements evenly within the SEG and BEG sockeye salmon ranges established by the Department and Board. Yield / Recruitment - lost harvest and future lost benefit on Kasilof sockeye salmon and Kenai River late-run sockeye estimated at over 5 million sockeye salmon within the last five years.

The 2014 (2015 in-season) Kenai late run chinook projected inriver goal of 22,500 from July 1 – July 31 does not "benefit Cook Inlet fisheries." The 7500 chinook 'allocation' above the minimum goal was subjectively written that impeded commercial fisheries management. The projected mid-point of the Kenai River late-run king salmon changed from July 20th to July 28th while the directed in-river sport fishery closes July 31. However, the mid-point on Kenai late-run sockeye salmon is July 23rd and July 14th for Kasilof River sockeye salmon escapements.

Kenai late-run Chinook salmon SEG goal of 15,000 – 30,000 included 3,000 fish above the 90% MSY range of 12,000 – 27,000 in the escapement goal review (run reconstruction / Fleischman and McKinley 2013). Yet, 'sustained yield is maximized between 15,000 – 19,000 spawners'. Escapement of 15,000 represent returns (R) of 50,060 with Sustained Yield (SY) of 35,060. Escapement of 19,000 represents return (R) of 55,670 with Sustained Yield (SY) of 36,670, "Conservation" includes the 'full utilization' of salmon harvest levels and incorporates 90% MSY rule under escapement goals. Overfishing (OF) definitional standards – less than 80% MSY (9,600 escapements) produces 29,000 Sustained Yields (SY) with median returns of 38,000.

Furthermore, from August 1 through August 15th when the minimum goal of 15,000 been met – instead, a capricious spawning goal of 22,000 now in effect with closure times on the commercial eastside sockeye salmon fishery if between 16,500 – 22,000 is estimated by July 31 even when the directed inriver sport fishery normally is ended. There is no other escapement goal within the state that operates this way. In fact, by default directs commercial fishery managers to manage for an escapement goal of 22,000 instead of in-river goal during the month of July. Instead, Chinook goals elsewhere are stated by the Department as "achieved when the minimum goal is met within the escapement goal range (SEG, BEG, or SET)."

PROPOSED BY: Jeff Beaudoin (HQ-F16-104)

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(Proposal 174 was submitted by two proposers. The proposal and justification for each proposer is listed below.)

<u>PROPOSAL 174</u> – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Remove provisions (e)(3)(A)(i) and (ii) that restrict the number and/or depth of commercial set gillnets fished by a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission limited entry permit holder in the Upper Subdistrict if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery, as follows:

(A) If the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery under (1)(A) of this section, commercial fishing periods are open for no more than 36 hours per week, with a

36-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday, [, DURING WHICH THE NUMBER OF SET GILLNETS OPERATED MAY ALSO BE RESTRICTED TO EITHER

(i) THREE SET GILLNETS THAT ARE EACH NOT MORE THAN 35 FATHOMS IN LENGTH AND 29 MESH IN DEPTH OR TWO SET GILLNETS THAT ARE NOT MORE THAN 35 FATHOMS IN LENGTH AND 45 MESHES IN DEPTH; SET GILLNETS USED THAT ARENOT MORE THAN 29 MESHES IN DEPTH MUST BE IDENTIFIED AT THE END OF THE GILLNET WITH AN ATTACHED BLUE BUOY THAT IS NOT LESS THAN NINE AND ONE HALF INCHES IN DIAMETER; OR

(ii) TWO SET GILLNETS THAT ARE EACH NOT MORE 35 FATHOMS IN LENGTH AND 29 MESHES IN DEPTH OR ONE SET GILLNET THAT IS NOT MORE THAN 35 FATHOMS IN LENGTH AND 45 MESHES IN DEPTH; SET GILLNETS USED THAT ARENOT MORE THAN 29 MESHES IN DEPTH MUST BE IDENTIFIED AT THE END OF THE GILLNET WITH AN ATTACHED BLUE BUOY THAT IS NOT LESS THAN NINE AND ONE HALF INCHES IN DIAMETER]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Eliminate (i) and (ii) in 21.359(e)(3)(A). These restrictions were implemented using seriously flawed data as evidenced in the Department of Fish and Game's response to the Kintama conclusions. In the State of Alaska's Article titled "Oversimplification of complex harvest modeling issues outlined in Welch *et al.* (2014), the conclusions of Kintama “"paints an unrealistic picture of how simply changing gillnet dimensions would translate into a viable management approach to preserve or increase sockeye salmon harvests while minimizing catch of Chinook salmon”". It is worth noting that prior to these restrictions the department never, in the history of enumerating Chinook salmon on the Kenai River, has failed to achieve the minimum escapement goal. Manage with time and area restrictions instead.

PROPOSED BY: Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-042)

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What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The 29 meshes in depth provisions oversimplify problems associated with estimating changes in chinook and sockeye salmon harvests. Simply put a subjective, misleading and contentious experiment with significant costs association. It was rejected four times prior by the BOF.

29 mesh depth presented numerous unintended consequences that arise from unrealistic “solutions.”

After the 2014 Board meeting ADFG published a response that did not support the 29 mesh restrictions and “committed to providing the best information possible to the Alaska Board of Fisheries as they deliberate regulatory changes.”

PROPOSED BY: Jeff Beaudoin (HQ-F16-102)
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PROPOSAL 175 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Clarify the length and depth of set gillnets that may be used in the Upper Subdistrict commercial salmon fishery, if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery, as follows:

A change of wording along the following lines.

5 AAC 21.359 (e)(3)(A)

(i) [THREE SET GILLNETS THAT ARE EACH NOT MORE THAN 35 FATHOMS IN LENGTH] **up to four set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length with more than 105 fathoms in the aggregate and 29 meshes in depth or two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length** and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter; or ...
Alternatively as some have thought the above confusing

(i) [THREE SET GILLNETS THAT ARE EACH NOT MORE THAN 35 FATHOMS IN LENGTH AND] **a full complement of gear with a maximum** 29 meshes in depth or two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth;...
Both are functionally the exact same as "a full complement of gear" is described elsewhere

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? When the King Salmon Conservation Plan was introduced at the 2014 BOF meeting, I believe it was the original intent of the regulation in question to allow for fishing a full complement of 29 mesh deep nets during the first tier of "step-downs". This is generally three 35 fathom gillnets as listed. However, there are provisions elsewhere in the regulations for breaking your gear group into “shorter nets”.
5 AAC 21.331

(d) A set gillnet may not be longer than 35 fathoms in length… …A person may not operate more than four set gillnets with more than 105 fathoms of set gillnet in the aggregate…

There are fishermen in the Cook Inlet East Side set net fishery that utilize this option to fish four “short” nets rather than three 35 fathom nets. In the case where the king salmon management plan is instituted in this fashion, as was done in 2014, they were forced to take a further 25% gear reduction even when fishing “shallow” 29 mesh deep nets and fish only three of their “short” nets. This was pretty clearly unintended when the board action was taken and is merely the result of poor wording of the RC/proposal that produced the new regulation and a reluctance to tamper with it further. It appears unavoidable that in the further step-downs of the plan (the ones that actually reduce the number of nets) “short” net users will take a larger restriction than those who fish standard 35 fathom nets and I am willing to accept this being a consequence of choosing to break your gear up this way, but in the initial tier that exists solely to incentivize fishing shallow nets for king salmon conservation it seems appropriate that they be able to fish a full complement of gear like everyone else when making the sacrifice of fishing 29 mesh deep nets.

PROPOSED BY: Joseph Person (EF-F16-075)
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PROPOSAL 176 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Allow commercial set gillnet fishing periods in the Kenai and Kasilof sections to be managed separately, with regard to "paired" restrictions, if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 21.359 (e) (3) (A) if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery under (1) (A) of this subsection, commercial fishing periods **in the Kenai and Kasilof sections may be managed independently based on abundance and** are open for no more than 36 hours per week **within each section,** with a 36-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday, during which the number of set gillnets operated may also be restricted to either

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? 5 AAC 21.363 Upper Cook Inlet Management Plan (a) (3) in adopting the specific management plans described in (2) of the subsection the board will consider: (a) (3) (C) the various needs and demands of the user groups of the salmon resources of upper Cook Inlet: We have attempted several times in three years to get this slight requested modification in place. This would be a major improvement and an opportunity for maintaining a economically viable ESSN fishery in times of hourly restrictions. A modified plan that will maximize true abundance while still remaining in a very restrictive management plan. The current regulation does nothing for managing 49.85 statute miles of beach in a productive manner.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Shadura, spokesperson for South K-Beach Independent Fishermen's Association (SOKI) (EF-F16-168)

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PROPOSAL 177 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. Allow commercial fishing periods in the Kasilof and Kenai/East Forelands sections to be opened separately, with regard to "paired" restrictions, if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery, as follows:

> A) If the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery under (1)(A) of this section, commercial fishing periods are open for no more than 36 hours per week in the combined Kenai/East Foreland Section or separately in the Kasilof Section, with a 36 hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday, during which the number of set gillnets operated may also be restricted to either (i), or (ii)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Decouple The Kenai/East Foreland Section from the Kasilof Section in regards to 36 hour limit for fishing under 5 AAC 21.359. Allow each section to be managed independently so that when one section is open it does not count towards the other section's 36 hour limit. In order to manage to existing escapement objectives in both the Kenai and Kasilof rivers, ADFG should have more flexibility to fish the 36 hours independently in each section. There are approximately 35 miles of beach in the Kasilof Section and 25 miles of beach in the Kenai/E. Foreland sections. Localized concentrations of fish in the 60 miles of beach can occur, but if one section of beach is opened to harvest this abundance,

the hours used count toward the 36 hour allotment for the entire beach. Allowing ADF&G to independently use the 36 hours in each beach will make meeting the objective of maximizing sockeye salmon harvest more effective, and thus, more efficient

PROPOSED BY: Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-047)
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PROPOSAL 178 - 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. Increase the number of days only non-motorized vessels may fish on the lower Kenai River, as follows:

An extra day of fishing from an non-motorized boat from January 1 to December 31. An example is Monday and Thursdays will be non-motorized boats only fishing on the Kenai River.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The issue is overcrowding on the lower Kenai River from Skilak to the mouth and the poor quality of the fishing experience to lots of people. This will also cut down on the erosion along the banks of the river.

PROPOSED BY: Tom Corr (EF-F16-113)
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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 (HQ-F16-004)

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PROPOSAL 180 – 5 AAC 57.180. Riparian Habitat Fishery Management Plan for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Establish two Kenai River riparian habitat areas equal to approximately nine-tenths of a mile that will be closed to fishing from shore within 10 feet of the waterline from July 1 – August 15, as follows:

5 AAC 57.180(d) is amended by adding new paragraphs to read:

(26) on the north bank of the Kenai River, between ADF&G regulatory markers located at river mile 13.3 and river mile 14.0;

(27) on the north bank of the Kenai River, between ADF&G regulatory markers located at river mile 13.0 and river mile 13.2.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Management authority of these state-owned parcels of land along the Kenai River was assigned to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to implement the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council's objective to restore, enhance, and rehabilitate natural resources injured by the oil spill. The parcels are also subject to a third-party conservation easement. The warranty deed and conservation easement include restrictive

covenants that prohibit public access, including sport fishing, along the Kenai River shoreline of this parcel. This proposal would implement warranty deed and conservation easement restrictions for the parcels through regulation rather than by annual issuance of an emergency order.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-142)
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PROPOSAL 181 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annul, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. and 5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Only non-motorized vessels may be used when fishing on the Kenai River, as follows:

Make Kenai River drift boat only. Supposedly the whole river is a park.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Habitat report shows habitat loss. No action has been taken since 1997 zero net loss of habitat Dr. White. Guides, dipnetters, and in-river traffic all remain unlimited. Why? No kings.

PROPOSED BY: John McCombs (HQ-F16-089)
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PROPOSAL 182 - 5 AAC 57.140. Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area. Prohibit all guiding from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., as follows:

I recommend applying the hourly limitations to all guided fishing. Hence, guides would be limited to the hours of 6:00 am to 6:00 pm regardless of whether the fishing takes place from a guide vessel or on the bank. I suggest a regulation stating: All guided fishing shall be limited to the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Local residents and unguided non-guided anglers would then have a fair chance to access the sockeye salmon fishery before 6:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Commercial fishing guides are blocking access to the sockeye fishery for local residents and non-guided anglers. The sockeye fishery is primarily a bank fishery and excessive numbers of fishing guides are occupying all fishing spots in the Kenai Middle Section of the River from as early as 4:00 am until 10:00 pm. The 6:00 am to 6:00 pm limitation of 5 AAC 57140(c) only applies to fishing from guide vessels. Further, some guides actually use non-fishing personnel to hold spots while they bring up new clients. This prevents local residents and non-guided anglers from having a chance to access the fishery during reasonable hours..

PROPOSED BY: Ted Wellman (EF-F16-021)
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PROPOSAL 183 - 5 AAC 57.140. Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area. Allow guided anglers to fish on Mondays in August, as follows:

Allow guided anglers to fish from a guide boat on the Kenai River on Mondays in August.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Guided anglers were restricted to no fishing on Mondays years ago, during a conservation concern for Coho salmon this conservation concern does not exist anymore and should be overturned, an additional 4 days of guided angler fishing will not put this stock in jeopardy.

PROPOSED BY: Mel Erickson (EF-F16-129)
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PROPOSAL 184 - 5 AAC 57.140. Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area. Relax guiding restrictions when king salmon fishing is closed by emergency order, as follows:

If King salmon fishing is closed on the Kenai River, Regulations & restrictions intended for King salmon fishing are not in effect. & 1. allow fishing from a guide vessel on sunday's

2. Allow guided & non- guided fishing on mondays in a power boat, 3. allow fishing from 6pm to 6am for guided anglers, 4 allow 5 anglers in a guide vessel.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? when King salmon fishing has been closed on the Kenai River, many rules that are intended only for conservation and social reasons have remained in effect, Many anglers want to fish for other species but cannot do it because of the king salmon rules in place when king fishing is open, Anglers would like to fish for trout, pinks silvers, reds on sundays, mondays, and between 6pm & 6am

PROPOSED BY: Mel Erickson (EF-F16-132)
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PROPOSAL 185 - 5 AAC 57.140. Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area. Modify language referencing fishing from guide boats on the Kenai River to include all guided fishing, as follows:

In the regulations referencing SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA GUIDING REGULATIONS under the heading KENAI RIVER change the language to; **FISHING GUIDES ON THE KENAI RIVER. [**FISHING FROM GUIDE BOATS ON THE KENAI RIVER**].**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The intent of the current regulation was to limit guiding to 6:00am to 6:00pm Tuesday–Saturday so that private anglers could enjoy some time on the river where they wouldn't have to compete with guide activity. During the predominant King fishery of the 1990s and early 2000s the guide industry built up to around 400 guides and the volume of activity, crowding and competition for fishing spots became too much for many private anglers and they left the King fishery figuring they would be satisfied with fishing for Sockeye and Silvers.

Since the collapse of the King fishery after around 2011, the guide industry shifted its efforts towards Sockeye and Silvers. This was an understandable business adjustment but it has had unintended consequences on private anglers once again. When this adjustment occurred the guides soon realized that they could fish 24/7 with their clients for Sockeye since it was a bank fishery and they were no longer restricted under the "Guides fishing from a boat" requirement.

Now it has reached the point where private fishermen are now being displaced from the Sockeye fishery just like they were from the King fishery. It is common practice now for many guides to homestead the best Sockeye fishing locations all day long and well into the evening hours shuttling groups of clients in and out throughout the day. People wanting to fish after work or with their families in the evening are having increased difficulty trying to find a suitable place to fish because of the increasing guided effort in the Sockeye fishery.

I fully appreciate the guide's needs to adapt to changes in the fisheries for their financial wellbeing, but I would ask that their time of guiding efforts be limited to 6am - 6pm so that private fishermen can have a time of the day where they don't have to compete with the guides and they can once again find the level of enjoyment they once knew in the Sockeye sport fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Douglas Wilson (HQ-F16-058)
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