

October 18-20 Fisheries Work Meeting Petition/Comments

Objective- Unit 2 East Side Susitna King Salmon, Susitna Sockeye Salmon, Fish Creek Sockeye Salmon & Jim Creek Coho Salmon

Alaska Fisheries Board:

My name is Ben Allen, I live in the Matanuska Valley year around. It is here in the Matanuska Valley, where I spend all of my time and money, even when I am not fishing. I earn most of my income as a fishing guide in the Matanuska Valley. I own and operate Millers Riverboat Service with my wife Amber. Northern district salmon stocks are very important to me; they are why I live here.

I am concerned with the sustainability and future of all Northern district salmon stocks, especially East Side Susitna King Salmon, Susitna Sockeye, Fish Creek Sockeye, & Jim Creek Coho. I am asking the Board to consider 3 things.

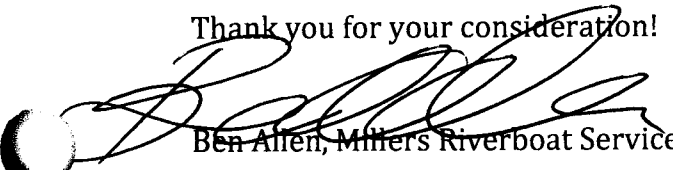
1. Designate East Side Susitna streams, that are not making goals, stocks of yield concern. These fisheries have been highly restricted to sport harvest and have seen little gains since harvest restrictions have been implemented. In addition to being a keystone species in these river ecosystems, King Salmon are very important to the local community. The local tourism economy has seriously suffered as a result of low returns and harvest restrictions.

More attention needs to be directed at monitoring and learning more about these fisheries to ensure long-term sustainability and increased opportunity.

2. Designate Jim Creek Coho a stock of yield concern. This fishery is one of the most popular sport fisheries in our community. Jim Creek dramatically missed the goal in 2016, in addition to missing goals in previous years. This downturn has occurred with increased sport fishing restrictions. Increased monitoring and funds are justified for ensuring a more sustainable fishery.

3. Do not decrease escapement goals on Fish Creek Sockeye and any Susitna Sockeye runs. This action would not be based on science and perpetual sustainability, but from a harvest based agenda. If the trend is low numbers in a relatively small sample size, lowering the target does not solve the problem. A lower in river escapement standard is simply unacceptable for a public resource that is predominately harvested commercially. Matanuska Valley residents would like to see more sockeye return to our region, not a lower standard.

Thank you for your consideration!


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