

PROPOSAL 164

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

Prohibit motorized vessels on the Kenai River from Skilak Lake to the Soldotna Bridge May 1 – August 31, as follows:

Under the Method and Means header in the Lower Kenai sport regulations;

Amend "Drift Only Mondays - from downstream of Skilak Lake" to read:

Power will not be allowed, DOWNSTREAM of the Soldotna Bridge over the Kenai River, from May 1st until August 31st, for all types of fish. Only drift boats are allowed from Skilak Lake to the Soldotna Bridge from May 1st until August 31st.

Power boats will be allowed downstream of the Soldotna River Bridge to the Warren Ames Bridge during open fishing seasons, 7 days a week. Only drift boats will be allowed between Skilak Lake and the Soldotna River Bridge from May 1st until August 31st.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The turbidity levels on the Kenai River are getting worse by the year. In the 50+ years of driving along the Kenai River I have noticed huge changes in the clarity of the river. It has been really bad the last 15 years. This affects the food available to fry, fry mortality, food and camouflage from predators like birds, trout and others. There has been mass erosion and bank destabilization since I started fishing in the mid 70's. The undeniable result is smaller, less healthy juvenile salmon of all types leaving the river. With studies showing the increase in turbidity in the Kenai, it is time to get ahead of the problem and make the tough decisions to stop the bank erosion caused by power boating and the continual wake pounding along the shoreline. All salmon species are showing signs of huge declines. This is an in river problem that must be addressed aggressively, along with possibly too much competition for food in the ocean.

PROPOSED BY: Mark & Elbridge Walker

(EF-F19-121)
