

PROPOSAL 220

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.

Prohibit retention of rainbow trout and the use of bait in the Lake Creek drainage, as follows:

Yentna unit 4 lake creek drainage

Designate the entire Lake Creek drainage as catch and release for Rainbow trout, no retention allowed.

Restrict the use of bait to 1/2 mile above the confluence of Lake Creek and the Yentna River. All areas above the marker 1/2 mile above the confluence would incorporate the same regulations for trout that currently exist 1/4 mile above the outlet of Bulchitna Lake. Allowing the use of bait to the area below the marker during the time frame allowed for the use of bait, would minimize any negative impacts to the commercial lodges and guide services which rely heavily on the use of bait to catch Silver salmon.

On the other hand, the chance to land a trophy Rainbow Trout would be an incentive for many sport anglers. With most Taxidermists utilizing molds and photographs and measurements of trophy fish to reproduce an exact replica of the fish without having to kill the fish to do so. I believe instituting these changes would enhance the number and size of Rainbow trout and protect the resource for future generations. It would also be a positive step for the commercial lodges and guide services, and air taxi operators, if trophy trout were readily available, without incurring the huge expense of a trip to Bristol Bay or western Alaska.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To make Lake Creek a designated trophy fishery for Rainbow trout similar to what's been done on the Taluchulitna river. I've been a property owner on Bulchitna Lake since 1987, and the last several years have noticed a severe decline in the number and size of Rainbow trout. Although the waters 1/4 mile above Bulchitna lake are designated catch and release for rainbow trout, the lower Two miles of the river below Bulchitna lake allow for retention of trout. This area receives a lot of pressure due to ease of access, and with the restrictions imposed on the King Salmon fishery, and inconsistent runs of Sockeye and Silver salmon, there is more of a tendency to retain rainbow trout. With the expense involved of getting there via air, or hiring a guide, people want to take something home to justify the expense. During the period July 13 thru August 15 bait is allowed and this contributes to high mortality rates for Rainbow trout even when released, as trout have a tendency to swallow the bait.

PROPOSED BY: Jim Wagner

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