

Kenai and Kasilof Rivers Motorized Uses (6 proposals)

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)

PROPOSAL 165

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.

Prohibit sport fishing from a motorized vessel on the lower Kenai River on Thursdays in July, as follows:

5 AAC 57.121 would be amended to read:

(a) a person may not sport fish from a boat

(New Section) that has a motor on board on any Thursday in July, except Memorial Day, in that portion of the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to the Sterling Highway Bridge.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? For the month of July, the Kenai River has been classified as an impaired water body due to increased turbidity levels. The

increased turbidity has been significantly associated with increased motorized boat traffic on the river in July.

This proposal seeks to add an additional drift boat only day each week on the Kenai River for both guided and nonguided anglers, occurring each Thursday in July from the mouth of the river upstream to the Sterling Highway bridge. Currently, from the Sterling Highway Bridge downstream to the mouth of the Kenai River, no one may fish on Mondays (except Memorial Day) during May, June, and July from a vessel that has on board no more than one motor that does not exceed 10 horsepower (HP), and it may only be used between the mouth of the Kenai River and ADF&G regulatory makers located at Cunningham Park, and only after fishing from the vessel has ceased for that day; a person may not deploy sport fishing gear from a vessel after a motor has been used to propel that vessel on the same day. In order to provide one more day of “rest” for the Kenai River from the effects of motorized boat wake traffic, this proposal seeks to add one additional day per week that guided or unguided anglers may not fish using a motorized vessel on the Lower Kenai River (downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge) during the month of July. No motor traffic on the river, on Mondays and Thursdays. (This includes boat traffic to the dip net fishery is prohibited.)

PROPOSED BY: Chris Every (HQ-F19-017)

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.

Prohibit sport fishing from a motorized vessel on the lower Kenai River on Thursdays in July, as follows:

5 AAC 57.121 would be amended to read:

(a) a person may not sport fish from a boat

(New Section) that has a motor on board on any Thursday in July, except Memorial Day, in that portion of the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to the Sterling Highway Bridge; No motor traffic (this includes boat traffic to the dip net fishery is prohibited) on the river on Mondays and Thursdays.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? For the month of July, the Kenai River has been classified as an impaired water body due to increased turbidity levels. The increased turbidity has been significantly associated with increased motorized boat traffic on the river in July.

This proposal seeks to add an additional drift boat only day each week on the Kenai River for both guided and nonguided anglers, occurring each Thursday in July from the mouth of the river upstream to the Sterling Highway bridge. Currently, from the Sterling Highway Bridge downstream to the mouth of the Kenai River, no one may fish on Mondays (except Memorial Day) during May, June, and July from a vessel that has on board no more than one motor that does not exceed 10 horsepower (HP), and it may only be used between the mouth of the Kenai River and ADF&G regulatory makers located at Cunningham Park, and only after fishing from the vessel

has ceased for that day; a person may not deploy sport fishing gear from a vessel after a motor has been used to propel that vessel on the same day. In order to provide one more day of “rest” for the Kenai River from the effects of motorized boat wake traffic, this proposal seeks to add one additional day per week that guided or unguided anglers may not fish using a motorized vessel on the Lower Kenai River (downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge) during the month of July. No motor traffic on the river, on Mondays and Thursdays. (This includes boat traffic to the dip net fishery is prohibited.)

PROPOSED BY: Chris Every

(HQ-F19-082)

PROPOSAL 167

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

Allow sport fishing from a vessel with a motor on board but not in use on the Kenai River on Mondays in July, as follows:

(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. The department shall manage the late-run Kenai River king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide the sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon resources over the entire run, as measured by the frequency or inriver restrictions.

(c) In the sport fishery,

(3) that portion of the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake is open to unguided sport fishing from a [NONMOTORIZED VESSEL ON MONDAYS IN JULY; FOR PURPOSES OF THIS PARAGRAPH, A NONMOTORIZED VESSEL IS ONE THAT DOES NOT HAVE A MOTOR ON BOARD.] (REMOVE)

I’m requesting the following changes:

(3) that portion of the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake is open to unguided sport fishing from a **vessel with a motor on board on Mondays in July. However, the use of a motor may not be used while sport fishing. A person may no longer fish from that specific vessel for the day once the motor has been started.** (ADD)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Kenai River Management Plan limits sportfishing from nonmotorized vessels on Mondays (Drift Only Mondays) during the king salmon run on the Kenai River downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake. A non-motorized vessel is described as a vessel that does not have a motor on board.

It should be noted that the regulation allows the use of motorized vessels on Mondays. According to the ADF&G sportfishing regulation booklet it states, "Motors may be used to transport anglers

to shore fishing locations, but anglers may not fish from any vessel that has a motor on board." The dates are set forth every Monday from May 1 to July 31.

There are many vessels that are designed to alternate between motorized and manual power, such as rowing. Vessels that have motors onboard can be removed from the water by tilting them on the transom and not be used while sportfishing allowing the operator to manually control the vessel by rowing.

This regulation has no environmental or biological impact on the Kenai River. It was adapted as a courtesy to sport fisherman allowing them to fish without the crowds of guided vessels on the river.

As a private sport fishing angler this code is restricting my right to fish from my vessel with a motor greater than 10 horsepower on board while manually rowing my boat.

PROPOSED BY: Eric Christian (EF-F19-092)

PROPOSAL 168

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 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Prohibit motorized vessels on the Kenai River, as follows:

Make the Kenai River drift only.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Kenai River is a park. Kings are gone. Guides ferry dipnetters up and down the river. Erosion pollution habitat degradation. King salmon spawning areas are severely impacted. Zero net loss of habitat. Dr. White, 1997? Nothing done since then.

PROPOSED BY: John McCombs (HQ-F19-035)

PROPOSAL 169

5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area.

Prohibit motorized vessels on a section of the Kasilof River January 1—September 15, as follows:

“From Jan 1 to Sep 15 motors will be prohibited from the ADFG regulatory marker located approximately three miles upstream to the start of Silver Salmon Rapids. Only non-motorized boats will be allowed from the Sterling Highway bridge to the head of Silver Salmon Rapids.”

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the last few years, the use of motors on the upper and lower Kasilof River has increased dramatically. Guides on the upper

river are racing downstream in order to complete two sockeye charters in the same day. Residents and guides are launching at the bridge and powering down to the river mouth to dip net. Both groups are motoring through the same narrow channels that the second run Kings are attempting to use for their migration to the spawning grounds. As the Kenai fishery continues to implode, the Kasilof is experiencing pressure far beyond its ability to continue to be managed in a manner to provide a sustainable harvest for both Kings and Sockeye. The benefit to the motorized user group is far outweighed by the deleterious results accrued to the migrating Salmon. As pressure on the Kasilof increases, this situation will only become worse, and the time to address it is before the fishery crashes. Drift boats fishing for Kings are negatively impacted by the power boats, and it is only a matter of time until collisions occur if this situation is not remedied. The Kasilof is too small to allow the use of unrestricted power boats.

PROPOSED BY: Charles McCrone

(HQ-F19-002)
