

Upper Susitna AC Presentation
Peter B. Mathiesen
02/06/20
664 Words

Susitna Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

Commentary on 2020 Fishing Changes

Hello, my name is Peter Mathiesen owner of Talkeetna Fly Fishing Expeditions. I am here today representing the Susitna Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

First let me say that as Alaskans we appreciate the Board's interest and support in the process where Alaskans are allowed to comment on the condition, management, and regulations of our fisheries.

Members of the board...our AC is at the end of the road, when it comes to fish we are the last stop to fresh water in Cook Inlet. Our fish travel untold distances to get to where they enter Susitna River.

Our local AC is unique with near equal members including two commercial Susitna Set-netters, two fishing guide companies, with the balance being active anglers that participate in sport and subsistence fishing. One of our board's proudest accomplishments as a group, we strive to come to unanimous desions with our recommendations.

We come together to improve our fish populations. We also would like the board to know that our fish stay in our valley. Our two-commercial set netters fish are sold to Willow, Talkeetna and Trapper Creek residents with much of the balance sold to town restraurants where local patrons' and tourist get to sample the best our rivers have to offer creating jobs in our local economy.

After a meeting with the department of Fish & Game Biologist and Fisheries Manger we have been pleased and excited by their findings compiling data in most of the upper streams in the Talkeetna, Susitna and limited data in the Chuitna. They have been instrumental in bringing a sense of stratigy to our streams with hard data and a new model that offers promise to our watershed. Our AC fully supports their efforts and looks forward to their continued management in the coming decade.

On that note, that while we understand the challenges of the fisheries mangers and biologist as a group, we believe that changes in regulations, harvest and fishing techniques must be equally distributed through the user groups...commercial, subsistence and sport fishing.

Our most important proposal
Allocation Proposal #133

The conservation corridor concept is strongly supported by our AC and we hope for its continued success and using the Bristol bay model keeping netters closer to natal streams. We believe that this proposal is in the best interests of all Susitna Drainage users whether commercial, sport or subsistence. Biologists are just beginning to understand that many of our fish travel through corridors of great harvesting pressure and struggle to make it to the last destination at the Su mouth.

We also strongly support all the proposals dealing with changes in Chinook including adding catch and release where appropriate. I can tell you that I personally stand in pools with impressive numbers of kings in the last four years and not being able to at least catch and release for them is a lost opportunity for our guides, our cmmunity and our state.

Anglers that get to fight with a chinook are experiencing the largest freshwater fish of their lives. We also

support the AF&G's regulations keeping the fish in the water and when we've been able to release these magnificent fish, we have seen almost no mortality.

The expansion of chinook catch, and release fishing will have anglers returning home telling an Alaskan story of conservation and successful sustainability. It echoes through their social media and to their families. It will intern bring us anglers that are responsible and care for our resource.

Our AC would also love to see small windows of harvest in special areas possibly through lotteries or set dates as possibilities to harvest king salmon. Again, we look to AF&G staff to direct us to timelines.

Thank you for your time considering our comments.

###