PROPOSAL 32

5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for season, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Allow harvest of rainbow trout 20 inches or less in a portion of the Gulkana River, as follows:

You can retain one rainbow/steelhead trout per day and only one in possession 20 inches or less from the tip of the nose to the fork of the tail. This should apply to all flowing waters of the Gulkana River excluding Middle Fork, from Dickey Lake to the confluence with the main-stem, where fishery should remain catch-release only.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently rainbow/steelhead trout fishing is catch-and-release only throughout the entire Gulkana River drainage. I have been guiding on the Gulkana River for 40 years, and especially during the past 10 years, I have observed that rainbow/steelhead trout populations have grown dramatically. This creates problems because rainbow/steelhead trout prey on salmon row and smelt. Since 2015 the Gulkana Hatchery has been unable to obtain sufficient brood stock to meet its egg-take goals. This raises concern about the sustainability of wild salmon stocks in the Gulkana drainage, particularly in smaller streams.

PROPOSED BY: Kirk Wilson (EF-F20-010)

Sport fisheries should be allowed to retain one rainbow or steelhead trout per day, measuring 20 inches or less from the tip of the nose to the fork of the tail. The possession limit should be one. This should apply to all flowing waters of the Gulkana River excluding Middle Fork from Dickey Lake to the confluence with the main-stem, where the fishery should remain catch and release only.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, rainbow/steelhead trout fishing is catch-and-release only throughout the entire Gulkana River drainage. Rainbow/steelhead trout populations have grown dramatically. Since 2015, the Gulkana Hatchery has been unable to obtain sufficient brood-stock to meet its egg-take goals. This raises concern about the sustainability of wild sockeye and Chinook stocks in the Gulkana drainage, particularly in smaller streams. You haven't been able to keep rainbow/steelhead for a long time. If you catch fish even with a fly, if the fish takes the fly deep or good on gill then they will die anyways. Keeping 1 rainbow/steelhead, especially one hooked badly will not hurt the population as they would die anyways. We also feel this will allow for more salmon eggs which will be good for the salmon populations.