

PROPOSAL 30

5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.

Create a youth-only sport fishery in the Naknek River drainage, as follows:

We recommend the second Sunday of each month beginning in June and ending in September be designated youth-only fishery on the Naknek River, similar to the ADF&G youth only fisheries already in existence in the Southcentral region. No commercial guiding or fishing for persons 16 and older within the designated youth fishery areas is permitted.

Naknek River Area from the ADF&G counting tower to the entrance of Smelt Creek will be designated a youth sport fishery and will occur the second Sunday of each month beginning in June and ending in September. During the four designated youth fishing days, a person 16 years of age or older may not sport fish. Guiding within these boundaries is not permitted.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like the board to consider a Youth-Only Fishery on the Naknek River. Over the past 30 years we have seen the number of local residents, specifically families, out enjoying the river less and less. The increase in the number of guides and the competitive nature of the fishery has discouraged families from coming out and enjoying a casual day of fishing in their own backyard. Very few school students go out on the river for salmon and trout, due to a combination of angler pressure and low salmon runs. We propose that four days be designated to families and youth only fishing throughout the summer. A person 16 years or older may not sportfish. No adults are permitted to fish unless they are assisting youth. There will be no guided fishing in the areas designated for youth only fishery. Youth only fisheries have already been successfully implemented in other areas throughout the state experiencing an increase in commercial and recreational pressure, such as Knik Arm drainage, Resurrection Bay drainage, Tanana River Area to name a few. It is our hope that in response to the increasing pressure on the Naknek River, a youth only fishery be implemented to allow equally opportunity and access to the resource. We believe creating a space for youth to connect to the river will foster future stewardship of our natural resources.

PROPOSED BY: Patricia Edel

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