

**PROPOSAL 168 – 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.**  
Remove restrictions to the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Subdistrict commercial set gillnet fishery in July and August, as follows:

Repeal 5 AAC 21.359 (e) and (f)

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Delete provisions (e) and (f) from the Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.

The current provisions in 5 AAC 21.359(e) and (f), which were adopted in 2014, have essentially created an optimal escapement goal (OEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon bore disproportionately by the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery. For example, the current management plan places the entire burden of conservation for this stock in August solely on the set gillnet fishery.

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon is 15,000–30,000 fish. The current management plan states that from July 1 through July 30, both the commercial fishery and the inriver sport fishery are managed to the same objectives. Specifically, if the Kenai River king salmon inriver run exceeds 22,500 fish, both fisheries are prosecuted without restrictions; however, if the inriver run is projected to be less than 22,500 fish, restrictions to both fisheries are required. Beginning August 1, however, the inriver sport fishery for king salmon closes and the management target for king salmon switches from achieving a projected inriver run of 22,500 fish to achieving a projected escapement of 16,500 to 22,500 fish. The restrictions triggered by being below a projected escapement of 22,500 fish falls exclusively on the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery. To change a management target from a projected inriver run to a projected escapement objective, and then to have that higher burden of conservation fall completely on one user group, is highly unusual and even draconian in nature.

The late-run of Kenai River king salmon has never failed to meet its minimum escapement objective since enumeration began in 1986. Furthermore, the upper end of the escapement goal has been exceeded in 15 of 28 years. This proposal simply advocates for the department to do what they have already shown they will, that is, use their emergency order authority to adjust harvest rates of the sport and commercial fisheries on Kenai River late-run king salmon in order to meet the SEG for this stock. Mandated restrictions on the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery in order to achieve the mid-point of the SEG for Kenai River king salmon puts management of the sockeye salmon fishery in jeopardy. In the past 10 years (2006-2015), the Kenai River sockeye salmon inriver goal has been exceeded 7 times, while the Kasilof River sockeye salmon BEG has been exceeded 9 times. This proposal seeks some balance in managing these two very important stocks of fish. Why is managing to the mid-point of the escapement goal for king salmon more important than not exceeding the upper end of sockeye salmon management objectives? This proposal seeks to provide ADF&G with more flexibility to allow for the harvest of surplus sockeye salmon while still achieving the SEG for late-run Kenai River king salmon.

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(EF-F16-103)

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