

PROPOSAL 222 - 5 AAC 61.120. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 5 of the Susitna River Drainage Area. Prohibit fishing for king, sockeye, and coho salmon in the Larson Creek drainage, as follows:

Larson Creek drainage

The Larson Creek drainage, including all waters within a 1/4 –mile radius of its confluence with the Talkeetna River:

Closed to king, coho and sockeye salmon fishing [Closed to king salmon fishing.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the Larson Creek drainage include sockeye and coho salmon to the area closed to king salmon fishing which is the ¼ mile radius of its confluence with the Talkeetna River. This area has been discovered and grown in popularity as a sockeye and coho fishing hole. The increased fishing pressure, harvest and catch and release mortality is not sustainable and jeopardizes meeting Larson Lake sockeye escapement goal. This is a staging area, as all confluences are, and the salmon should be protected. A quarter mile protection zone still leaves anglers a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon. With global warming the smaller streams have warmer water temperatures that are sometimes above the lethal temperature for salmon to survive. Salmon tend to stag in the confluences longer waiting for cooler temperatures and are more likely to be caught. The warmer water temperature also increases the mortality from catch and lease because of the added stress on the salmon in addition to the lack of oxygen the warmer water creates. Coho are extremely susceptible to catch and release mortality. The 1993 ADF&G report on the “Mortality of coho salmon caught and released using sport tackle in the Little Susitna, Alaska-ADF&G documented a 69% mortality on coho salmon in the lower 10 to 15 miles, of fresh water systems. This lower section is where salmon are the most stressed and the majority of catch and release occurs. The lower section of fresh water systems is the highest for catch and release mortality because the salmon’s body is undergoing chemical changes to acclimate from salt water to fresh water. The Susitna drainage is very susceptible to warmer water and the negative impacts on adult and juvenile salmon. With the prediction of a continuing global warming trend it would be prudent for ADF&G to restrict more confluences to ensure escapements into spawning streams and lakes. There are many examples where the confluences were left opened to fishing too long and the systems either took a long time to recover or don’t recover at all.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-163)
