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Submitted for public comment

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My name is Mathew Fagnani, and I am a 40-year Alaskan resident living in Alaska and have summer property in Kenai. I would like to make comments on two issues; the dip net fishery and the fish regulations on the Kenai river.

I have been following your actions at the 2017 board of fish meetings and am shocked and appalled by the apparent overrun by the Board of Fish (BOF) to reverse 40 years of scientific-based fisheries management. It would appear that the BOF came to this meeting with a mandate or a preconceived opinion slanted towards prioritizing commercial fish over sport anglers. Unfortunately, your actions here have seriously jeopardized not only the famous Kenai king salmon, but also unraveled years of hard work and collaboration to sustain healthy fish returns on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers. Does either side really win, if we catch the last king salmon?

In regards to dip netting:

I have been a dip netter since the program started. I enjoy dipping from a free floating boat. Yes, it can get crazy but, all in all, it's a fun fishery enjoyed by my three-generation family here in Alaska. And, it's where we and 30,000 other Alaskans get most of our subsistence fish. It is my request that you leave this fishery alone. It's working fine. The problem is not enough fish getting into the Kenai.

Dip netting the last two years has produced dismal results. I went 2 or 3 times last year and landed less than a dozen fish. In my opinion it's because the commercial nets and boats were out for emergency openers. In past years, dip netters time our trips to avoid commercial fish openers. If you look back you will see that last year's daily salmon escapement was hovering at under 15K fish daily. F&G authorized many emergency openers which resulted in not enough red salmon entering the river and made it almost impossible to catch fish. The escapement levels may have reached its goal by the end of the season, but it dribbled into the river making difficult or almost impossible to catch a fish.

And by the way, for every day I go dip netting, I drop about \$300 in gas, food, license, clothing, and lodging. The economic impact to the Kenai, Kasilof, Homer and Anchorage economy is huge. With 30,000 licensed personal use anglers, that has to add up. In fact, I am sure when tallied as a comparison to the economic impact of the commercial fleet on local economies, sport fishing has to come out on top.

Regarding F/G changes to fish regulations:

By expanding the commercial fishing times/day's on both the Kenai and Kasilof rivers the BOF threatens to add additional harm to the already struggling King salmon returns. It is well documented that set netter are very effective at catching fish and their king salmon by-catch can be up to 300 kings per week. That in itself should be motivation enough for a Board of Fish to keep the set net regulation the same as last year, or to reduced their fishing times further. This is not an issues of sport fish over commercial, it about the preservation of a river system and the species that live it.

It is important to me that when I purchase an annual fishing license, I know that I am able to fish and catch my limit. To do that the Board of Fish must allow enough fish into the South Central river system to give residents the opportunity to catch a fish.

Thank you.

Matthew Fagnani, 907-337-4700

