

PROPOSAL 58

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

Close sport fishing for king salmon in a portion of the Naknek River drainage, as follows:

5 AAC 67.022(d)(11).

King salmon fishing is closed on the Naknek River from “Painter Bob’s Cabin” upstream to the ADF&G marker at “Trefon’s Cabin” near the mouth of Naknek Lake and on all major creek tributaries draining into the Naknek River, including Big Creek, King Salmon Creek, and Pauls Creek. (These are all areas where king salmon actively spawn). In these closed areas, king salmon may not be targeted at all, and if they are accidentally hooked while targeting other species, must NOT be removed from the water and will be released immediately.

Naknek River Drainage:

-Naknek River main stem

King Salmon: Closed year round to all king salmon fishing from Painter Bob’s Cabin” upstream to the ADF&G marker at “Trefon’s Cabin” near the mouth of Naknek Lake.

-Big Creek – upstream of its confluence with the Naknek River to its headwaters.

King Salmon: Closed year round to all king salmon fishing

-King Salmon Creek – upstream from the ADF&G markers at the confluence of the Naknek River to its headwaters

King Salmon: Closed year round to all king salmon fishing

-Pauls Creek - upstream of its confluence with the Naknek River to its headwaters.

King Salmon: Closed year round to all king salmon fishing

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Over the years the Naknek River has seen a drastic increase in the number of guided sport fisherman. At the same time, we have seen a notable decrease in the numbers of king salmon in our river. Recognizing this decrease, ADF&G has already closed fishing of king salmon in certain areas, including the mouth of King Salmon Creek to the King Salmon Creek Bridge, and the mouth of Pauls Creek up past the Pauls Creek Bridge. However, this does not stop anglers from fishing the remaining portions of the tributaries king salmon actively spawn.

Currently the upper Naknek River, above the first ADF&G marker located half mile upstream above Rapids Camp, is open to catch and release king fishing. These areas are fished very hard, and it takes a significant toll on the kings when they are most vulnerable. Even catch and release fishing while kings are near or at their spawning stage results in high mortality rates. Anglers end up removing the fish from the water to release them, which is in violation of the law, either because of the difficulty of releasing one of these big powerful fish, or to take pictures. This can easily result in the death of the fish. We are not able to enforce catch and release king fishing and evidence of this is shown on numerous lodge social media sites, web sites, brochures, tv shows and promotional material.

It can be argued that the Naknek River is no longer a premier destination for king fishing, as it once was. Once king salmon reach the spawning grounds, the point at which they are most exhausted from their long journey home and therefor the most vulnerable, they should be left alone to spawn, and ensure a viable fishery in future years

What will happen if nothing is done? If nothing is done we risk the health of the world famous Naknek River king run. Future generations will not be able to enjoy our salmon for which the area is world famous for. The Naknek River will cease to be a premier destination for sport fishermen. Local subsistence users who depend on king salmon for an important food source may also suffer. IF THESE CHANGES ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE A DECLINE IN OUR OVERALL KING SALMON RETURNS. The added pressure of sport fishermen catching king salmon on their spawning grounds will in no way help the future of the Naknek River's once great king run.

PROPOSED BY: Naknek/Kvichak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F18-086)

PROPOSAL 59

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

Close waters to king salmon sport fishing in a section of the Naknek River drainage, as follows:

I would suggest a full closure for all king salmon fishing at the following locations/times:

Close the Naknek River to all king fishing from “Painter Bob’s Cabin” upstream to the ADF&G marker at “Trefon’s Cabin” near the mouth of Naknek Lake at all times.

Close the area of the Naknek main channel within ¼ mile of the projected mouth of Big Creek to king fishing after July 15. Even buoys (similar to King Salmon Creek) may not suffice. I believe Kings actively spawn in the Naknek River itself in the area between Crystal Creek Lodge and the outlet of the “Slide” or “Bluff” hole. I witnessed people back bouncing with spin and glows at this location in mid to late July and pulling red kings out by the dozens, while traditional back-trolling with wiggle warts or quick fish was much less effective. That tells me many kings are preparing to spawn there in the Naknek and not moving up stream from that location.

Continue the closure of the area adjacent to King Salmon Creek via buoys.

Ensure the area in and adjacent to Paul’s Creek is closed.

Obviously king salmon fishing should be closed within all tributaries to the Naknek River.

In these closed areas, king salmon may not be targeted at all, and if they are accidentally hooked while targeting other species, they must NOT be removed from the water and shall be released immediately.

I’d recommend decreasing the Naknek specific king salmon bag limit to 2 kings annually, at least for Alaska non-residents.

Although it would be difficult to enforce, a limit to ‘rods in the water’ per day per lodge would help the pressure, as well.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I have been guiding/fishing on the Naknek since 2001. I realize this is a relatively short time, but over that time, I’ve noticed a significant increase in sport fishing pressure on every level. Regarding the king salmon species, I’ve seen the number of large fish decrease and the runs become more volatile over the years. The longest tenured local fishermen who respect the fishery the most tend to stick to the traditional locations and techniques, but more and more people are pursuing the kings closer to their spawning areas and the addition of more and more inexperienced guides/lodges and do-it-yourself outfitters has exacerbated this situation. I believe commercial fishing is the main threat to the future of our king run, but commercial fishing coupled with irresponsible and excessive sport fishing is a nail in their coffin. Assuming this board does not deal with the commercial side, I believe the addition

of sport fishing regulations to control the location, harvest and volume of sport fishing “rods in the water” would help delay the further decline of the fishery.

IF NOTHING IS DONE WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE A DECLINE IN OUR OVERALL KING SALMON RETURNS. Like the Kenai, Susitna and many other Alaskan rivers, the Naknek River will cease to be a premier destination for sport fishermen. Local subsistence users who depend on king salmon for an important food source may also suffer.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Kirsch

(EF-F18-016)

PROPOSAL 60

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

Create a rod limit for nonresident anglers sport fishing for salmon on a portion of the Naknek River, as follows:

Sockeye Salmon and Silver Salmon limits

In all waters upstream from ADF&G regulatory marker located 1/2 mile upstream of Rapids Camp, including all waters within 1/4 mile of all lake inlet and outlet streams:

8 rod limit per day at any one time for salmon (sockeye and silver salmon) for commercial business entity: Lodges, Transporters, Boat Rentals, and fishing clubs. LLC's are considered one business entity. Rod Limit allocations are non transferable or salable. Applies to non residents only

These restrictions apply upstream from ADF&G markers located 1/2 mile above Rapids Camp to ADF&G markers at Trefon's Cabin at the outlet of Naknek Lake including all waters within 1/4 mile of all lake inlet and outlet streams:

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The level of effort on the Naknek River between the ADF&G marker above Rapids Camp and the ADF&G marker at Trefon's Cabin above Lake Camp has increased so dramatically in the last 10 years that the quality of experience for which this river was once famous has been lost. Fishing for Sockeye and Silver Salmon, has been reduced to a "combat fishery."

1. Conflicts among users are so great that local residents find it almost impossible to find a decent location to fish with their families (including kids) due to overcrowding and lack of ethics. This excessive pressure is primarily from high volume lodge operations nearly all of which are owned and operated by people who do not live in Alaska, let alone the area.
2. The quality of experience which the Naknek River was once famous for has been lost. This in an allocation of opportunity which needs to be addressed.
3. There is no spatial distribution of effort due to the sheer volume of nonresident clients utilizing large scale lodge operations.
4. The proposed regulatory changes are not arbitrary. They are based on historical knowledge of the Naknek River sport fishery by not only conservation orientated guides, but also by local residents who have had enough of loss of opportunity and abuse the fishery resource.

What would happen if nothing is changed? The quality of experience will continue to diminish for all user groups. Conflicts among users will continue to increase.

What are other solutions you considered? Time and area closures for guided, transported, boat and equipment rental commercial entities – i.e. limit days of operation. *This is not necessary if recommended proposals which would regulate the scale of effort are adopted.*

PROPOSED BY: Naknek/Kvichak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F18-090)

PROPOSAL 61

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

Prohibit blocking access to sport fishing locations in the Naknek River, as follows:

5 AAC 67.022 (d) (XXX).

-Naknek River Main Stem

The staking out or marking of areas along the Naknek River using boats, guides or lodge employees or other individuals, ice chests, buckets, fishing gear, etc for the purpose of holding a fishing hole or zone for fishermen not yet present is not allowed.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like to address the issue of so called “pilot” boats being used to hold or stake out fishing zones or holes until fishermen or clients arrive. It has become common in recent years during the peak fishing times, most notably during the height of the red salmon run, to see a boat or multiple boats from a given lodge with just the driver holding a prime fishing spot on the bank of the river until another boat or boats from the lodge can bring the groups of clients up to fish. This prevents other fishermen from getting to these sought-after fishing locations first. They also lay out 5 gallon buckets and ice chests to make the impression that somebody is fishing there. In doing this, one or two boat drivers from a lodge can hold down and entire section of river bank until clients arrive.

What will happen if nothing is done? If nothing is done quality of experience for all anglers, both guided and local residents, will continue to suffer. Access to prime fishing zones will be greatly restricted.

PROPOSED BY: Naknek/Kvichak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F18-085)
