

**PROPOSAL 38**

**5 AAC 06.358. Wood River Sockeye Salmon Special Harvest Area Management Plan.**

Repeal provisions to open the Wood River Special Harvest Area when the escapement of sockeye salmon into the Wood River exceeds 1,100,000 fish and the escapement is projected to exceed 1,400,000 fish, as follows:

[(3) WHEN THE ESCAPEMENT OF SOCKEYE SALMON INTO THE WOOD RIVER EXCEEDS 1,100,000 FISH AND THE ESCAPEMENT IS PROJECTED TO EXCEED 1,400,000 FISH;]

[(5) WHEN THE WOOD RIVER SPECIAL HARVEST AREA IS OPEN UNDER (C)(3) OF THIS SECTION, THE WOOD RIVER SPECIAL HARVEST AREA WILL BE ONLY OPEN FOR THE GEAR GROUP THAT IS BEHIND IN THE ALLOCATION SPECIFIED IN 5 AAC 06.367 (B) FOR THE NUSHAGAK DISTRICT.]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Eliminate the opening of Wood River Special Harvest Area to the harvest of surplus sockeye in absence of conservation concerns for Nushagak River sockeye or Nushagak River Coho. Allowing commercial fishing under 5 ACC 06.358 (c)(3) does not follow the intent of the Board of Fish which is, "that salmon harvested in the Nushagak District should be harvested in the fisheries that have historically harvested them, including the methods, means, and locations of those fisheries, using the best biological management techniques and practices." Puts additional harvest pressure on the Muklung River king salmon, places extended closures on Wood River salmon subsistence users, does not follow the Nushagak District Commercial Set and Drift Gillnet Sockeye Salmon Fisheries Allocation Plan.

**PROPOSED BY:** Robert Heyano

(HQ-F18-016)

\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 39**

**5 AAC 06.358. Wood River Sockeye Salmon Special Harvest Area Management Plan.**

Open the Wood River Special Harvest Area to both set and drift gillnet gear after July 17, as follows:

(5) when the Wood River Special Harvest Area is open under (c)(3) of this section, the Wood River Special Harvest Area will be **open to both gear groups regardless to allocation after July 17th when allocation goes away everywhere as in** 5 AAC 06.367(b) for the Nushagak District.

(e) The commercial salmon fishery in the Wood River Special Harvest Area may be opened only during closures of the subsistence salmon fisheries within the Wood River Special Harvest Area.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** (5) when the Wood River Special Harvest Area is open under (c)(3) of this section, the Wood River Special Harvest Area will be [ONLY OPEN FOR THE GEAR GROUP THAT IS BEHIND IN THE ALLOCATION SPECIFIED IN] 5 AAC 06.367(b) for the Nushagak District. (e) The commercial salmon fishery in the Wood River Special Harvest Area may be opened only during closures of the subsistence salmon fisheries within the Wood River Special Harvest Area.

If allocation truly goes away after July 17th then it should go away in the Wood River Special Harvest Area as well.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(HQ-F18-057)

\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 40**

**5 AAC 06.358. Wood River Sockeye Salmon Special Harvest Area Management Plan.**

Establish a drawing system for use of the four furthest downriver set gillnet sites in the Wood River Special Harvest Area, as follows:

We recommend that a lottery system be developed for the first four downriver setnet sites in the Wood River Special Harvest Area. Each setnet permit holder can enter the lottery to fish a tide or opening at one of four setnet sites. If a permit holder is the winner of the lottery, he/she can fish that designated site for that designated tide/opening. This solution would be simple, fair, established well ahead of time and easy to enforce.

Draft language:

5 AAC 06.358 (d) (1) (E) For the first two downriver setnet sites on the east and west sides of the WRSWA, a lottery draw will be held before the area is opened to any commercial setnet fishing. Any Nushagak/Igushik setnet permit holder may enter the lottery. If successful, the permit holder will be assigned one of the four sites and specific opening to fish. If that permit holder declines their designated turn, the option is lost and goes to the next permit holder in the lottery draw.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Under 5 AAC 06.358, the Wood River Special Harvest Area may be opened by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game by emergency order when conditions meet a number of circumstances outlined in sections 1-5. However, fishing sites for setnets are on a first-net-in-the-water basis during these openings. The first two downriver sites on both the east and west sides of the river are extremely productive given the nature of the salmon passage, and catch drops off substantially at sites going upriver. As a result, the vast majority of the harvest is shared by only four permit holders.

Given that the Nushagak/Igushik areas have a significant number of setnetters, many of whom participate in the Wood River Special Harvest Area openings, it makes sense to establish a mechanism for more permit holders to gain value from the Wood River openings in a fair and orderly manner. If this regulation is not adopted, many setnetters will not benefit from the harvest in the Wood River.

Another solution would be to lease these setnet sites similar to how this is done in the main district, but since the WRSWA is opened only intermittently, it seems burdensome to use this option and it does not open up the harvest to more setnetters as the process outlined here does.

**PROPOSED BY:** Paula Cullenberg and Peter Crimp (EF-F18-038)  
\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 41**

**5 AAC 06.361. Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan.**

Reduce fishing time in the Nushagak District commercial salmon fishery when the Nushagak River sport fishery is restricted for king salmon conservation, as follows:

Nush Chinook Option 1

When the Nushagak Chinook run is not meeting minimums and the Sport Fishing user group has in season Emergency Orders for stepping down (example: no bait, catch and release, or closures), then the Commercial fishery must also participate in the conservation effort for protecting the Chinook run. The ComFish Department shall not open the Nushagak district to more than 12 hours time total of commercial drift and set fishing in a 24 hour period when the Department has issued EO's restricting the sport fishing user group. The department can break the 12 hours up into two 6 hour openers or any other combination as long as the open commercial fishing time does not total more than 12 hours in a 24 hour period. Additionally, the Department shall not run two 12 hour openers back to back--meaning there can not be a 12 hour opener starting at 12:00 Noon and ending at Mid-night and then another opener starting at 12:00 Midnight and running to 12:00 Noon. The Drift and Set user group openings do not have to be at the same time periods. However, the total for each group cannot exceed 12 hours each when the Sport Fish EO's are in place. Thus, Drift could be open for 12 straight hours from 1:00 AM to 1:00 PM and Set could be open from 3:00 AM to 9:00 AM and again from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM. The definition of a 24 hour period would start at 12:00 Midnight and end at 11:59 PM on that same day. Once the Sport Fish biologist removes all EO's restricting effort of the Sport Fishing user group in the district the Commercial openings can go back to as directed by the ComFish Biologist with no time restrictions.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The burden of conservation of the Nushagak Chinook Salmon run is 100% on the shoulders of the Sport Fishing industry. There are efforts made by Com Fish with mesh sizing that try to eliminate the by-catch of Chinook when targeting sockeye but there is still a large enough by-catch that it has an impact on the fishery. Sport Fish is not trying to prevent the Com Fish industry from catching sockeye and making a living. The impact on the number of Chinook making it in river is immediately diminished when commercial openers happen. This is not intended by the Com Fisher, but it happens. We need help in preserving the Nushagak Chinook run. When the Chinook run falls below acceptable escapement numbers, the sport fishery is restricted or potentially closed, yet com fish openings remain aggressive. The commercial fishery in the Nushagak district, although targeting sockeye, certainly has a by-catch or interception of Chinook bound for the Nushagak. At low estimates of 3 Chinook intercepted per vessel in a 12 hour opener and 400 vessels in the district we are talking about 1,200 Chinook. Many times the district is open for 23.5 or 24 hour periods thus hitting both tides and intercepting double that amount per day--2,400 Chinook in our example. That equates to 16,800 Chinook harvested via by-catch in one 7 day period. The Board is encouraged to take preventive measures to ensure that the Nushagak Chinook run survives.

**PROPOSED BY:** Brian Kraft

(EF-F18-067)

\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 42**

**5 AAC 06.361. Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan.**

Reduce fishing time in the Nushagak District commercial salmon fishery when the Nushagak River sport fishery is restricted for king salmon conservation, as follows:

Nush Chinook Option #2

When the Sport Fishing user group has had effort reduced by in-season EO's that restrict the group (ex: no bait, catch and release, closures, etc) Com Fish Biologist shall not permit Commercial Fishing, Drift or Set, on two consecutive high tides. Once the EO's are in force and restrictions applied to the Sport Fishing user group and the Com Fishers have fished a high tide, the district shall close to all commercial fishing 4 hours prior to the next published high tide at Clark's Point. The district can reopen 4 hours after that published high tide at Clark's Point.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The burden of conservation of the Nushagak Chinook Salmon run is 100% on the shoulders of the Sport Fishing industry. There are efforts made by Com Fish with mesh sizing that try to eliminate the by-catch of Chinook when targeting sockeye but there is still a large enough by-catch that it has an impact on the fishery. Sport Fish is not trying to prevent the Com Fish industry from catching sockeye and making a living. The impact on the number of Chinook making it in river is immediately diminished when commercial openers happen. This is not intended by the Com Fisher, but it happens. We need help in preserving the Nushagak Chinook run. When the Chinook run falls below acceptable escapement numbers, the sport fishery is restricted or potentially closed, yet com fish openings remain aggressive. The commercial fishery in the Nushagak district, although targeting sockeye, certainly has a by-catch or interception of Chinook bound for the Nushagak. At low estimates of 3 Chinook intercepted per vessel in a 12 hour opener and 400 vessels in the district we are talking about 1,200 Chinook. Many times the district is open for 23.5 or 24 hour periods thus hitting both tides and intercepting double that amount per day--2,400 Chinook in our example. That equates to 16,800 Chinook harvested via by-catch in one 7 day period. The Board is encouraged to take preventive measures to ensure that the Nushagak Chinook run survives.

**PROPOSED BY:** Brian Kraft

(EF-F18-068)

\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 43**

**5 AAC 06.361. Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan**

Establish subdistricts in the Nushagak District, as follows:

In this case of lagging Chinooks and over abundance Sockeye run. My Solution would be to divide Nushagak into two different sections, lower and upper section, just for emergency order fishing periods in the early parts of Sockeye season to take some harvest out of an abundant Sockeye run.

Not knowing the lat/lon numbers, i was thinking maybe the from church south of EKUK to markers at the snake river following the Igushik section boundaries. ADFG can make that decision if they agree with my thought.

There needs to be some kind of tool to take some early Sockeye in the Nushagak system when there is an abundance.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Due to the protection of the Nushagak King salmon. 2017 salmon season found the late run kings lagging to enter the upper Nushagak river into the Portage creek drainage. At the same time millions of Wood river and Nushagak were entering Nushagak commercial fishing district. ADFG waited for oncoming storm to help push those king salmon on their way to their spawning grounds. At the same time those on time sockeye came into the district unharvested into their river of origin, leading to over escapement and loss of income in the fishery.

**PROPOSED BY:** Darryl Pope

(EF-F18-050)

\*\*\*\*\*