

**PROPOSAL 27**

**5 AAC 21.372. Tutka Bay Lagoon Salmon Hatchery Management Plan.**

Eliminate the Halibut Cove Lagoon Special Harvest Area, as follows:

Amend to modify the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery Management Plan to delete the Halibut Cove Subdistrict Special Harvest Area (SHA) and its geographic coordinates out of this plan for commercial enhancement and cost recovery.

[HALIBUT COVE LAGOON SPECIAL HARVEST AREA: THE MARINE WATERS OF HALIBUT COVE SUBDISTRICT EAST OF 151°11.90'W LONG, INCLUDING ALL MARINE WATERS OF HALIBUT COVE LAGOON]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The SHA used for cost recovery commercial hatchery uses in Halibut Cove Lagoon is in Park waters fully allocated by statutory park uses.

Coastal lagoons rank among the most productive ecosystems on earth. Halibut Cove Lagoon is a rare geologic formation located in a legislatively designated scenic state park *"where major values are in their geologic faunal and floral characteristics... for public enjoyment... consistent with...natural values."* AS 41.21.990. This lagoon is known as a nursery and reproductive area for preferred very valuable species like spot shrimp and crab.

Halibut Cove Lagoon (HCL), at 544 acres has a maximum depth of 230 feet, and is located south side of Kachemak Bay from Homer. The outlet to HCL is a narrow and shallow channel that experiences slow flushing and only minimal turnover not conducive to magnitude salmon rearing of a monoculture. Access in and out of the lagoon with commercial fishing vessels is tide dependent and can be problematic.\* The limited small experimental releases of commercial hatchery salmon ceased in 1992. Requests for further remote releases have been denied by Park authorities because of the above reasons and to protect the park's nearby significant stock from straying.

Consistent with park statutes, depending on food web interactions, chinook salmon using Dingell Johnson sport fish funds, have been stocked for recreational users for 40 years, annually averaging 95,000 smolt. For reference, this is less than .0007% of the commercial releases at the Tutka Lagoon Hatchery. However, interactions with other species will occur in productive nursery habitat even with these small releases. These chinook are intercepted by commercial harvesters.

\*2013 ADFG LCI Finfish Annual Management Plan

**PROPOSED BY:** Nancy Hillstrand (EF-F19-094)

\*\*\*\*\*