

Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use (8 proposals)

PROPOSAL 234

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Create a personal use salmon fishery on the Susitna River, as follows:

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

(h) In the Susitna River, salmon may be taken by dip net only as follows:

(1) from July 10th through August 15th, Wednesday 6:00 am to 11:00 pm, Saturday 6:00 am to 11:00 pm, and Sunday 6:00 am to 11:00 pm

(2) from a boat or from shore between ADF&G regulatory marker located 1 mile downstream from Susitna Station to Bell Island/Alexander Creek cutoff ADF&G regulatory marker.

(3) the annual limit is as specified in 5 AAC 77.525, except that no king salmon may be retained and any king salmon caught must be returned to the water unharmed. Northern pike caught must be retained.

(4) a permit holder for this fishery shall report to the department as specified in permit conditions, the department may alter, time, area, species retained and limits based on salmon abundance.

(5) When the department projects that both sockeye and coho abundance will be above the midpoint of all 4 escapement goals: Larson, Judd, Chelatna Lake and Deshka River the commissioner may extend, by emergency order, the personal use fishery through August 31st

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Provide Alaskan residents an opportunity to harvest chum, sockeye, coho, and pink salmon in the Susitna River. Residents of the Mat-Su Valley would like the option of a PU fishery on the Susitna River and not having to travel hundreds of miles away to the Kenai or Copper Rivers. The most recent ADFG abundance estimates indicate there are inriver fish to harvest. Recent abundance and harvest of these stocks indicate to us there is a harvestable surplus of salmon inriver and a limited PU fishery is warranted. If there is not a harvestable surplus of salmon in river then the BOF needs to shift the allocations slightly and direct the commercial fishery to share in the harvest (or lack of harvest) with other users and uses.

PROPOSED BY: Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F19-040)

PROPOSAL 235

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Create a lower Susitna River personal use dip net fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 77.540(h) (new section).

(h) In the Susitna River, salmon may be taken by dip net only as follows:

(1) from July 10 through August 31, seven days per week, from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm;

(2) the annual limit is as specified in 5 AAC 77.525, except that no king salmon larger than 28 inches may be retained;

(3) from a boat or shore, in those waters from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the confluence of the Susitna and Yentna Rivers downstream to at the power line crossing the Susitna River.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Open a personal use fishery in the lower Susitna River.

ADF&G has in-river data showing multiple salmon species returning to the Susitna River, implying that additional access is necessary. The opening dates can avoid the returning king salmon in June. Any king netted in July-August will most likely be a small jack.

The valley population has expanded to 150% over the census taken in 2000. The fishing populations harvesting from the few local personal use fisheries available in the Valley puts burdens on these small fisheries, as well as the Kenai River and other Cook Inlet fisheries.

The lower Susitna River has relatively easy access for a personal use fishery downstream of the confluence of the Yentna and Susitna Rivers. There is a gravel bar suitable for landing an airplane and for fishing from shore near the Susitna-Yentna confluence.

A side effect of this fishery in the Valley will be fewer vehicles driving the Seward Highway, which was designated as a Safety Corridor in May, 2006. Safety Corridors have been identified as having higher than average incidences of crashes causing serious injuries and fatalities.

PROPOSED BY: Kristine Ogonowski (EF-F19-059)

PROPOSAL 236

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Create a Susitna River personal use dip net fishery, as follows:

(h) In the Susitna River, salmon may be taken by dip net as follows:

(1) from July 10 through August 10, only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 8 am to 8 pm daily.

(2) the annual limit is specified in 5 AAC 77.525, except that king salmon 28 inches and greater in length may not be retained, and any king salmon caught 28 inches or greater in length must be returned to the water immediately. — All northern pike caught may be retained without limit, but northern pike may not be returned to the water alive.

(3) from a boat or from shore downstream of an ADF&G regulatory marker on the northwest bank of the Yentna River/Susitna River confluence to an ADF&G regulatory marker located upstream of Alexander Creek Cut Off Channels/Bell Island on the West Bank and an ADF&G regulatory marker located downstream of the Susitna Station side-channel on the East Bank.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Adopt a Susitna River personal use dip net fishery.

Many Alaska residents of Northern Cook Inlet would have easier access to this fishery than driving hundreds of miles to participate in Kenai and Kasilof River personal use fisheries, or driving to the out-of-region Copper River personal use fishery. Currently Alaska residents fishing the Susitna River drainage are allowed to harvest a much lower percentage of surplus salmon compared to Kenai, Kasilof, and Copper River inriver salmon harvesters.

The large Susitna River floodplain would allow this fishery to occur with minimal environmental impact. The Susitna River personal use dip net fishery would spread personal use fishermen over more area and lessen impacts/crowding on Kenai, Kasilof, and Copper River personal use areas. Northern Cook Inlet should enjoy economic benefit — similar to local economic benefits provided by Kenai, Kasilof, and Copper River personal use fisheries.

More Alaskan residents reside in Northern Cook Inlet (Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley) than in any similar-sized area of Alaska, so it is appropriate to provide this personal use fishery here. A July 10 start, ensures most migrating king salmon have already passed, with remaining king salmon predominately males under 28 inches in length. Allowing harvest of all salmon (except king salmon 28 inches or greater in length), spreads harvest impact over 5 species, while easing identification (by size) of king salmon to be released. Closing the fishery after August 10 would focus harvest during a period of pink, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon abundance. 8 am — 8 pm provides 12 hours of fishing and 12 hours of unmolested salmon passage per day, without encouraging Susitna River boat traffic during hours of lower visibility. This Alaska resident opportunity, to put food on the table, would be 4 days/48 hours per week.

PROPOSED BY: Frede Stier (HQ-F19-088)

PROPOSAL 237

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Create a Susitna River personal use dip net fishery, as follows:

(h) In the Susitna River, salmon may be taken by dip net as follows:

(1) from July 14 until EO closure date of the Northern District set net fishery, 7 days per week from 10 am to 5 pm daily.

(2) the annual limit is specified in 5 AAC 77.525.

(3) from boat or shore downstream of the northwest bank of the Susitna River/Yentna River confluence to Susitna River terminus at Cook Inlet.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Consider adopting a conservative 7-day per week Susitna River personal use dip net fishery.

The fishery would provide an opportunity for Alaska residents, living in the Susitna Valley, to harvest a reasonable amount of salmon for personal consumption throughout the year. A 7-day per week fishery would allow effort and harvest to be spread out over every day of the week. Such a fishery could be restricted by hours when fishing was allowed to remain conservative. A conservative participant level would also be maintained by access to the proposed fishing area —

primary access is by boat or airplane, as there is no road access. Note: Even though this fishery is entirely within Game Management Unit 16B (a subsistence hunting area) this fishery is proposed as a personal use fishery, rather than a subsistence fishery, in recognition of the Susitna River salmon resource providing reasonable harvest opportunity for other Upper Cook Inlet user groups. Salmon abundances and conservation measures would be shared in common with other users.

Restricting legal fishing time to 7 hours per day/49 hours per week would allow significantly more daily hours when salmon could migrate through the fishing area unmolested. Since harvest would be allowed 7 days per week — some harvest opportunity would be available on most, if not all, days when large pulses of salmon were migrating through the harvest area. Legal fishing hours can be structured to encourage safer boating and easier enforcement during daylight hours, while also providing additional daylight hours after fishery closure that would be available to transport the inevitable broken down boats and their passengers back to homesites/campsites along the river system or to Dëshka Landing. A 7 -hour-per-day fishing option would likely encourage more conservative daily fishery participation over multi-day or campout-along-the-river participation. A late season-ending date allows harvest/consumption by residents hunting moose within this popular subsistence hunting area.

A conservative Susitna River personal use fishery could be configured in any number of ways, this proposal provides additional points for Board and public consideration.

PROPOSED BY: Richard Sanderlin (HQ-F19-089)

PROPOSAL 238

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Create a personal use dip net fishery in Unit 1 of the Susitna River Drainage, as follows:

The dipnetting area would be approximately 1/2-mile upstream of the Yenta to a department marker, from the confluence of the Yentna/Susitna river, downstream to a department marker approximately at the Northern most portion of Bell Island. The time frame would be 4 consecutives, 3 day weekends, starting from the 2nd weekend in July. The hours would be from 6:00AM-11:00PM. No retention of King salmon would be allowed. All Pike taken must not be returned to the water. Bag limit would be consistent with other south-Central dipnetting fisheries and use the same permit; 25 per head of household, 10 for each additional household member. The total household catch would be combined with other South Central dipnet fisheries to not exceed those household limits.

*****Since this is a new fishery it is suggested that reporting be weekly or bi-weekly, as per the subsistence fishery in the area. It would be somewhat safe to assume that attendance would be somewhat low the first year and to the fact that it is accessible by boat or plane only. This proposal is intended to increase opportunity, take some pressure off the Kenai/Kasilof dipnet fisheries and we welcome changes, if need be, to accomplish that.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We are proposing to create a personal use dipnet fishery for the Yentna/Susitna river drainage, situated in the Northern district.

Per ADF&G abundance estimates, on average, 360,000 sockeye, 200,000 coho and 800,000 chum salmon migrate through this section annually.

Since the Definition of a sustainable escapement goal, is per ADF&G, “a level of escapement that is known to provide for sustained yield over a 5-10-year period”. As such, “an SEG will be determined by the department and will be stated as a range that takes into account data uncertainty; the department will seek to maintain escapements within the bounds of the SEG”. From 5 AAC 39.222 (f)

That said, the SEG, set by the department, for Sockeye are as follows: Chelatna Lake is 20,000-45,000, Judd Lake is 15,000-40,000 and Larson Lake is 15,000-35,000. The 10 year average, per ADF&G is: Chelatna Lake-46,400, Judd Lake-40,600, Larson Lake-30,100 (rounded off to the nearest 100) FMR 18-10 Shields and Frothingham/Appendix A-12

PROPOSED BY: South Central Alaska Dipnetters Association (EF-F19-120)

PROPOSAL 239

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Establish a personal use gillnet pike fishery in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, as follows:

Subsistence pike/personal use pike: Subsistence nets to be used 15-20 feet in length in all pike lakes or suspected lakes. No limits, ALL fish must be kept.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to see a change that would increase the usage of northern pike to be included as both personal use and or subsistence. This can be accomplished with subsistence nets in lakes in the Mat-Su valley.

The change in the regulation will help keep the number of large fish to a minimum and allow opportunities for pan sized trout. If nothing is changed, pike number will continue to increase and expand and deplete other species of fish to include king salmon. Other solutions in pike lakes: expanded use of rotenone in Mat-Su pike lakes.

PROPOSED BY: Brent Lannen (EF-F19-005)

PROPOSAL 240

5 AAC 77.5xx. New section.

Create a personal use northern pike gillnet fishery in the Susitna River drainage, as follows:

New Section 5 AAC 77.54x Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Northern Pike Fishery Management Plan. (a) In the Susitna River drainage Units 1-6 during times when salmon are not present and northern pike are prevalent, northern pike may be taken with set gillnet. (1) no annual limit (2) The department will develop permit conditions, reporting requirements, areas, time, and net size on an as needed basis to provide an opportunity to harvest pike for consumption and invasive species control.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Pike are an invasive species and the department should facilitate the public in helping reduce pike numbers.

PROPOSED BY: Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F19-041)

PROPOSAL 241

5 AAC 77.xxx. New section.

Establish provisions for the personal use of aquatic plants in the Anchorage-Matsu-Kenai Nonsubsistence Area, as follows:

5 AAC 77.528 is created and reads:

5 AAC 77.528. Personal Use Aquatic Plant Fishery. Aquatic plants may be harvested by hand for personal use at any time and there are no bag or possession limits except that:

(a) within the Anchorage Nonsubsistence Area defined in 5 AAC 99.015(3), there are no harvest limits, except that along the shoreline adjacent to the Kenai Peninsula road system, the daily harvest and possession limit is 10 pounds wet weight of aquatic plants, with no limits to the harvest of aquatic plants that have been naturally dislodged from the substrate;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations for the personal use harvest of aquatic plants, (5 AAC 77.001(c)) require that aquatic plants may only be harvested according to the provisions laid out in Chapter 77. There are no provisions in Chapter 77 for the harvest of aquatic plants in Cook Inlet. Current regulations in Chapter 37 allow harvest for non-commercial use outside of non-subsistence areas in Cook Inlet with a daily harvest and possession limit of 10 pounds per day, but prohibit (due to lack of provisions allowing it) personal use harvesting of aquatic plants within the Anchorage non-subsistence area described in 5 AAC 99.015(a)(3). The towns of Kenai, Soldotna, Seward and Homer are located in this area. Currently, many local residents do not realize that there is no provision for the personal use harvest of aquatic plants. There is currently a significant harvest of personal use kelp on various species for garden compost and other household uses.

This proposal seeks to provide the regulatory provisions necessary to harvest aquatic plants for personal use, and to provide limited opportunities for the harvest of aquatic plants within the non-subsistence area in the Cook Inlet area.

PROPOSED BY: Eliza Eller (HQ-F19-007)
