

PROPOSAL 173 – 5 AAC 15.350. Closed waters. Reduce waters closed to commercial fishing for salmon in Kujulik, Portage, and Ivanof bays in the Chignik Area, as follows:

5 AAC 15.350 is amended to read:

5 AAC 15.350 Closed Waters. Salmon may not be taken in the following waters:

...

(9) Kujulik Bay: west of a line from 56 32.54' N. lat., 158 01.38' W. long. to 56 34.22' N. lat., 158 03.26' W. long.; and north of a line from 56 32.54' N. lat., 158 01.38' W. long. to 56 35.49' N. lat., 157 59.06' W. long.;

(10) Portage Bay: west of a line from 56 11.34' N. lat., 158 35.23' W. long. to 56 11.10' N. lat., 158 35.54' W. long.;

...

(13) Ivanof Bay: west of a line from 55 50.60' N. lat., 159 30.56' W. long. to 55 53.23' N. lat., 159 31.13' W. long.; and east of a line from 55 52.26' N. lat., 159 28.23' W. long. to 55 54.03' N. lat., 159 29.15' W. long.;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Chignik pink and chum salmon runs are typically underutilized. It is estimated that conservatively an average of two million dollars are lost to the commercial fishery annually because of over escapement and too conservative management. To reduce these losses not only should some weekly fishing occur in Chignik inter-bays, as addressed in a companionship proposal, but several closed water areas in the Chignik Management Areas should be reduced to improve access to harvestable surpluses while still providing adequate sanctuary areas for escapement. It is understood that closed water line adjustments can be made inseason, but too characteristically nothing is done in time to avoid over escapement and fish quality problems with an abundance of water-marked and dark fish harvested that the processor discards (grinds).

The three closed waters areas proposed for size reductions are in bays where in the late 1970's some "creek robing" was occurring. This was when fish quality was not a major issue due to canning and at a time when shallow seines were common. As a consequence, the Department expanded many closed waters areas in the Chignik area. Now due to fish quality concerns, peer pressure, and better education, deeper draft boats and seines, and surveillance, the problem no longer exists. What we have now is an artifact of too much restriction.

Certainly the Department has the tools to move markers inseason, but the record indicates complacency, in part because of weather, aircraft availability, and unwillingness to timely survey and what some characterize as "tunnel vision" on sockeye salmon management. Chignik's pink and chum salmon runs need to be managed proactively, not managed from behind. In line with this, bays where current closed waters warrant an adjustment to improve access to local pink and chum salmon surpluses while still ensuring escapement protection include:

- a. Ivanof Bay (Area 275-40);
- b. Portage Bay (Area 273-84); and
- c. Kujulik Bay (Area 272-50).

PROPOSED BY: Chignik Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(HQ-F15-034)
