

**PROPOSAL 172 – 5 AAC 15.357. Chignik Area Salmon Management Plan.** Increase the passage of sockeye salmon above the Chignik River weir to provide additional subsistence fishing opportunity, as follows:

The following draft regulatory language was developed and approved by all five Tribal councils:

5 AAC 15.357. Chignik Area Salmon Management Plan is amended to read:

(b)

(3) from the end of the transition period, described in (2) of this subsection until September 14,

...  
(B) the department shall manage the commercial fishery to allow for the passage of at least 150,000 [50,000] sockeye salmon above the Chignik River weir, in addition to late-run sockeye salmon escapement needs, to provide an in river harvestable surplus above the Chignik River weir in August and September of at least [75,000] 25,000 fish in August and [75,000] [25,000] fish from September 1 through September 15;

Increasing the numbers of late-run sockeye salmon required to be passed through the weir will result in additional late season subsistence harvest opportunity.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** During the past four years, subsistence fishers of Chignik Bay, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Perryville, and Port Heiden have experienced challenges when attempting to harvest late-run sockeye salmon returning to Chignik Lake and its tributaries. Many elders and high harvesting subsistence fishers indicate that sockeye salmon used to be available in the Chignik Lake watershed well into the winter months for as long as they can remember, until the recent four years. Historically, local subsistence fishers depended upon the availability of red fish well into January and February, but recently fishers are unable to locate fish in the traditional subsistence fishing areas of the Chignik Lake watershed as early as December.

The same issue was brought to the board before and action was taken to establish the existing in-river goals. Local subsistence fishers believe that the existing in river escapement goals are no longer satisfying the subsistence needs of residents in all five communities. The current escapement goals and management practices in August require modification in order to provide for traditional subsistence opportunities during the fall and winter months.

According to 5 AAC 15.357 (b)(3)(B), ADF&G managers must allow at least 50,000 sockeye salmon to pass through the Chignik Weir in addition to the late-run sockeye salmon escapement needs. This is to provide an in-river harvestable surplus above the Chignik River weir in August of at least 25,000 fish in August and an additional 25,000 fish from September 1 through September 15. The Chignik Lake late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal for the month of August for spawning purposes, as it is published in the ADF&G escapement objective schedule, is 40,000 to 53,000 sockeye salmon (not including the 50,000 fish for in river subsistence harvestable surplus). During August 2007–2014, the spawning escapement goal (not including the additional 25,000 sockeye salmon passing through the weir for subsistence in August) fell below once, exceeded six times and met twice. While escapement was not met only once during the past eight years, subsistence users are continually unable to harvest their late-run sockeye salmon.

The current escapement goals set for September 1–15 may be the reason that subsistence fishers are unable to get their fish. The ADF&G has only met the escapement goal for September 1–15 twice in the last eight years (2007–2014). During only two of those years were sockeye salmon passed through the weir for escapement needs above the in-river subsistence harvestable surplus goal.

Local subsistence fishers are concerned because the later arriving salmon normally have a commensurate later stream life and are the fish believed to be available to subsistence fishers during the winter months. Not managing the September 1–15 portion of the late sockeye run of the Chignik River to provide for the regulation required passage of subsistence fish is unacceptable. Modification of management practices and goals are necessary to provide for subsistence opportunities of sockeye salmon well into the winter months.

Five tribal councils have joined together to submit this proposal to the board requesting greater opportunity for subsistence fishers during their traditional harvesting months or December-March.

The five Tribal councils submitting this proposal request that the board increase the additional late-run escapement goal for August and September 1–15 to provide opportunity for subsistence fishers. The five Tribal councils recommend adding 50,000 sockeye salmon to the August goal and 50,000 sockeye to the September 1–15 goal above what is currently in regulation (currently there are 25,000 additional fish in August and 25,000 additional fish during Sept. 1–15).

Local community members and active fishers have been informed that the late-run has recently been managed for the lower end of the goal ranges with hopes of protecting feed for juvenile salmon and to therefore increase the size of the late-run. While this effort may scientifically be justifiable, the reduction of the goals and management to minimize late-run escapement has directly impacted or eliminated portions of the late season subsistence fisheries and action is required to provide greater subsistence opportunity. All of the reasons contributing to the decline of the late fall and winter sockeye salmon population may not be known (intercept fisheries, climate change, ocean conditions, etc.), the numbers of sockeye salmon passing through the weir is known and manageable. From 2007–2014, as little as 21,000 late-run sockeye salmon passed through the weir from August 1–September 15 to meet spawning needs not including the 50,000 sockeye salmon required for subsistence opportunity.

**PROPOSED BY:** The federally recognized tribes of Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, Perryville & Port Heiden (EF-C15-131)  
\*\*\*\*\*

**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)  
\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 174 – 5 AAC 15.357. Chignik Area Salmon Management Plan.** In July and August close Chignik Area commercial salmon fisheries between Castle Cape and Kupreanof Peninsula when the Southeastern District Mainland is closed to commercial salmon fishing with set gillnet gear, as follows:

When there is low escapement in the SEDM area and the set netters aren't able to fish, Chignik fishermen are shut down and are not able to harvest salmon from Castle Cape to Kupreanof Peninsula in Area L.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** During the months of July and August if there is insufficient escapement in the SEDM and the set net fishermen are shut

down and cannot fish then the fishermen in Area L, Chignik area should also be shut down so that escapement goals can be met in the SEDM area.

Chignik fishermen are intercepting salmon bound for streams in the SEDM.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jack R. Foster Jr, Amy M. Foster (EF-C15-072)  
\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 2 – 5 AAC 28.540. Possession limits for Chignik Area.** Allow bycatch retention of Pacific cod in the Chignik Area salmon seine fishery, as follows (*This proposal will be heard at the Pacific cod meeting and heard and deliberated on at the Alaska Peninsula / Chignik / Aleutian Islands Finfish meeting.*):

Allow the taking of Pacific cod as a bycatch under a Chignik Area L salmon permit only during the salmon seining operations.

Cod must not be the target species and no more than XX% would be allowed of each delivery.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Bycatch of Pacific cod during the salmon seining season by seiners. The resources is being wasted and has lost potential revenue.

**PROPOSED BY:** Al Anderson (HQ-F15-073)  
\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 175 – 5 AAC 15.3XX. Chignik Pink Salmon Management Plan.** Create a pink salmon management plan in the Chignik Area, as follows:

5 AAC 15.3XX. CHIGNIK PINK SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN. (a)The goal of this plan is to ensure that Chignik’s pink and chum salmon runs are managed to assure timely harvest opportunity and good product quality and to achieve the Department’s biological escapement goals.

(b) The Department shall manage the terminal waters of the 11 Chignik Management Area bays as listed from 24 June through 31 August for local pink and chum salmon. Fishing time will be one 72-hour period per week. However, the commissioner may extend or reduce weekly fishing time by bay or bay aggregate depending on pink and chum salmon run strength and escapement requirements and/or evidence of sockeye salmon targeting when waters outside the bay(s) in the same district are closed. Because in some bays fish tend to leave designated closed water areas on minus tides, the commissioner may close or limit fishing within part or all of those bays to protect escapement when minus tides are slated to occur.

1. Agripina Bay (Area 272-96) all waters west of a line from 57 05.20 N. lat., 156 26.16 W. long. to 57 07.10 N lat., 156 24.58 W. long.;
2. Chighinagak Bay (Area 272-90) all waters north of a line from 56 55.52 N. lat., 156 47.50 W. long. to 56 59.33 N lat., 156 38.01 W. long.;

3. Nakalilok Bay (Area 272-80) all waters north of a line from 56 55.15 N. lat., 156 56.07 W. long. to 56 54.54 N lat., 156 50.53 W. long.;
4. Yantarni Bay (Area 272-72) all waters north of a line from 56 48.26 N. lat., 157 08.25 W. long. to 56 49.17 N lat., 157 05.21 W. long.;
5. Amber Bay (Area 272-70) all waters northwest of a line from 56 46.37 N. lat., 157 24.35 W. long. to 56 48.11 N lat., 157 17.23 W. long.;
6. Kujulik Bay (Area 272-50) all waters west of a line from 56 33.26 N. lat., 157 49.19 W. long. to 56 36.30 N lat., 157 40.45 W. long.;
7. Kuiukta Bay (Area 273-80) all waters north of a line from 56 01.11 N. lat., 158 38.28 W. long. to 56 02.15 N lat., 158 35.13 W. long.;
8. Fishrack Bay (Area 273-72) all waters north of a line from 55 59.27 N. lat., 158 46.50 W. long. to 55 59.21 N lat., 158 43.37 W. long.;
9. Ivan Bay (Area 273-72) all waters north of a line from 55 58.00 N. lat., 158 53.08 W. long. to 55 59.14 N lat., 158 48.12 W. long.;
10. Humpback Bay (Area 275-50) all waters north of a line from 55 49.52 N. lat., 159 24.29 W. long. to 55 49.56 N lat., 159 22.12 W. long.; and north of a line from 55 50.13 N. lat., 159 21.36 W. long. to 55 51.24 N lat., 159 18.57 W. long.;
11. Ivanof Bay (Area 275-40) all waters north of a line from 55 47.36 N. lat., 159 30.05 W. long. to 55 47.42 N lat., 159 26.16 W. long.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** While sockeye salmon are well managed in the Chignik Management Area (CMA), other species could use major attention. In the CMA, excluding the Chignik River system, the Department identifies 161 pink salmon spawning streams and 137 with chum salmon runs. For a variety of reasons the pink and chum returns to these streams are typically well underutilized/underexploited. A recent analysis by Chignik Regional Aquaculture Association estimates that conservatively, an average of two million dollars is being lost to the commercial fishery annually because of escapement excesses. Needed is discrete management of Chignik pink and chum salmon. Firmly believed is that Chignik pink and chum salmon management plan can be implemented by weekly bay fisheries from late June through August without compromising conservation or impacting management of other species.

We recognize that the Department has the ability to provide timely fishing opportunity on Chignik's healthy pink and chum salmon stocks. However, having that ability and effecting such has been problematic. The current standard is that near full escapement must be documented via aerial surveys first before an intra-bay fishery could be called. Another is that it has become rather standard policy that the fleet and/or industry must request a specific bay or bay aggregate fishery for such to be "considered." The problem is that this does not work for a multitude of reasons. Weather, aircraft availability, and willingness to survey typically result in flights and subsequent opening occurring too late, if at all, to ensure reasonable marketability of ensuing harvests and prevention of excessive escapements. Expecting the fleet and/or industry to prospect the CMA and then "plead" for a fishery opening is ineffective and not proactive fisheries management.

Excessive pink and chum escapements obviously provide no benefit, and unfortunately, as previously identified, this has become the Chignik norm. Requested is proactive not reactive

pink and chum salmon management. In accordance, we respectfully ask that the Board authorize directed weekly pink and chum salmon fisheries in selected Chignik bays when our local stocks begin entering in late June. This is important for both Chignik fishermen and our only Chignik-based processor, Trident Seafoods. No longer should economic and biological losses occur because of Chignik pink and chum salmon fisheries opening too late, over escapement, and water-marked and dark fish being harvested and then ground-up at the processing plant because of no market value.

Some would profess that status quo pink and chum management works. It does not for the multitude of reasons detailed previously. Others would say that a standard weekly opening would likely cause escapement shortfalls. That too is short on foundation. If fish abundance is low, fleet effort will be minimal even with 3 day/week openings. Four days of non-fishing per week combined with closed waters areas should provide ample escapement. Certainly weekly fishing time can be reduced or even suspended and closed waters areas increased by emergency order if an escapement issue occurs.

**PROPOSED BY:** Chignik Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F15-035)

\*\*\*\*\*