

PROPOSAL 135 – 5 AAC 21.200. Fishing districts, subdistricts and sections; 5 AAC 21.310. Fishing seasons; 5 AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan; and 5 AAC 21.365. Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan. Redefine sections and manage the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict with three sections with staggered opening dates, as follows:

Change management of the East Side Setnet Fishery from the current two section system to a three section system with the natural separations of the Kasilof and Kenai river mouth closed areas.

Salamatof and East Forelands section opening July 8th.

North and South Kalifonsky Beach section opening July 1st.

Ninichik and Coho section opening June 20th.

The regulations effected are widespread but current management plans could be rewritten to accommodate this division without changing the majority of their substance.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, the East Side Setnet Fishery is managed by the department essentially in two areas. The "Kasilof Section", made up of the Ninilchik, Coho, and South K-Beach statistical areas ; and the "Kenai and East Forelands Section", made up of the North K-Beach, Salamatof, and East Forelands statistical areas. The dividing line being roughly midway between the mouths of the Kasilof and Kenai Rivers.

These areas are quite separated and both sections include widely separate regions both in geographical location and fishing conditions. I believe that the fishery could be better served by breaking management into the three areas that are naturally separated by the Kasilof and Kenai Rivers as both have a significant closed area around the mouth. This has several apparent advantages and I believe change in this direction is important for the long term sustainability of the fishery.

First and foremost, this would greatly increase the potential flexibility of the department to deal with all of the many issues addressing the complex management of the fishery. Specifically, some of the immediate issues that it could help and the primary effects on the three proposed sections are:

The Northern "Salamatof" Section. Functionally, I propose very little change in the management of this area. The starting date would remain the same and the department would gain the flexibility of having the option of fishing these Northern beaches during some situations, primarily late in the season.

The Middle "Kalifonsky" Section. Currently North and South K-Beach despite being adjoining geographic areas are managed completely separately and in conjunction with areas that have much less similarities than they share with each other. Primary change I propose is a July 1 starting date for this section. If managed jointly it would allow for targeted management allowing the entire K-

Beach the opportunity to participate in its historical harvest of kasilof river stocks early in July. The inequalities in opportunity of adjoining areas and sites currently existing would be addressed. The Southern "Kasilof" Section. Separating out the southern beaches and managing them independently would primarily have the benefit of allowing the department to fish them early in order to not fall behind Kasilof sockeye goals while reducing the potential concerns of Early Run Chinook harvest that exist currently. I propose a June 20th starting date for this area. Much of this area is widely separated from the rest of the fishery and functions in a different way. Managing sites north of the kasilof river in conjunction with ones as far south as the Ninilchik line has a number of drawbacks.

The transition to a three area management system would change the fishery entirely, but these proposed areas make much more sense than the current division and would certainly allow the department and the board greater flexibility in managing this fishery in the future.

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