

PROPOSAL 213 – 5 AAC 21.358. Northern District Salmon Management Plan. Close commercial fishing within one mile of Little Susitna River when the Little Susitna River sport fishery is restricted to no bait, as follows:

Amend section (d) of the Northern District Salmon Management Plan by adding a new provision:

(3) when the Little Susitna River sport fishery is closed to use of bait, commercial fishing shall be closed within one mile of the Little Susitna River confluence with Knik Arm.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Although the Northern District Salmon Management specifies that:

The Department shall also manage the chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho salmon, to provide sport and guided sport fishermen a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon resources over the entire run, as measured by the frequency of in river restrictions,

the Little Susitna River sport fishery is restricted to artificial lures only from October 1 - August 5 as a conservation measure to ensure adequate escapement of king salmon, coho salmon, and in river species. At the same time commercial fishing is allowed to within 500 yards of the Little Susitna River confluence with Knik Arm. While the sport fishery is restricted by a bait closure for most of the season, the commercial fishery enjoys a more liberal harvest opportunity than exists around the confluences of most other significant Upper Cook Inlet salmon streams. This occurs despite the fact that ADF&G only manages for abundance of king salmon and coho salmon in the Little Susitna River, with no established goals for other salmon species, and with annual sockeye salmon weir counts of less than 1,600 sockeye per year in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Liberal commercial fishing near the Little Susitna River confluence with Knik Arm should not cause or contribute to restriction of the sport king salmon and sport coho salmon fisheries, which according to management plans, are to be managed to provide sport and guided sport fishermen a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon resources. Liberal commercial harvest opportunity near the Little Susitna River confluence should also not contribute to depressed Little Susitna River sockeye salmon escapements. .

PROPOSED BY: Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (EF-F16-034)
