

PROPOSAL 214 – 5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan. Close commercial fishing within one mile of the Little Susitna River when more than half of Northern District streams with king salmon escapement goals are closed to sport harvest of king salmon or when the Little Susitna River sport fishery is restricted by emergency order, as follows:

Amend the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan by adding the following provisions:

(12) if more than half of the Northern District streams with king salmon escapement goals are closed to king salmon sport harvest; the commissioner shall close by emergency order, the Northern District commercial set net fishery until the first regular period after June 24.

(13) if the Little Susitna River sport fishery is restricted by emergency order: the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, commercial fishing 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? The purpose of this plan is to ensure an adequate escapement of king salmon into the Northern District drainages and to provide management guidelines to the department. The department shall manage the Northern District king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon over the entire run as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions.

During times of king salmon shortages in 2013, 2014, and 2015 the Matanuska Sustina Borough Fish & Wildlife Commission discovered the above preamble language within the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan did not adequately address how ADF&G shall manage the commercial fishery at times when: #1. More than half of the Northern District streams with ADF&G established king salmon escapement goals were closed to king salmon sport harvest for the entire year, yet the Northern District commercial fishery was allowed to continue harvesting king salmon bound for all drainages, and all emergency restrictions to the Northern District king salmon fishery were removed whenever bait fishing was allowed in the Deshka River. #2. the Little Susitna River sport fishery was restricted by emergency regulation but the commercial fishery was allowed to continue harvesting king salmon within a mile of the Little Susitna River confluence with Knik Arm. When the Little Susitna River sport fishery is restricted, why does the commercial fishery retain a liberal harvest opportunity on the same stock that the management plan stipulates be managed primarily for sport and guided sport uses?

PROPOSED BY: Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (EF-F16-035)
