PROPOSAL 90 – 5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan. Remove restrictions on the commercial drift gillnet fishery from July 1–31 and manage the drift gillnet fishery based on inseason salmon abundance, as follows:

5 AAC 21.353(c)-(d) is repealed and readopted to read:

(c) From July 1 through July 31st

Fishing will be allowed with drift gillnets as described in 5 AAC 21.320(b)(1).

The fishing periods set forth in (1) of this subsection may be modified by emergency order.

(d) If additional fishing time is necessary to harvest surplus salmon, it will be allowed in one or more of the following areas based on inseason salmon abundance:

Expanded Kenai Section

Expanded Kasilof Section

Anchor Point Section

Drift Gillnet Area 1

Central District

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal the regulations based on the Susitna Sockeye stock of yield concern and the Susitna Sockeye Salmon Action Plan (SSSAP). This action plan describes certain regulatory restrictions on the Central District Drift Gillnet fishery. The restrictions are found in 5AAC 21.353 (c) and (d). These regulations were based on data that was later proven to have been wrong. Since the data was wrong, the regulations need to be repealed.

In 2008, the BOF designated Susitna sockeye a stock of yield concern due to a chronic inability to meet the Yentna SEG (range 90-160,000) as measured by sonar. In 2009 that sonar system was determined by ADF&G (FMS 09-01) to be grossly underestimating the number of sockeye returning to the Susitna River system. The 2006-09 ADF&G escapement goal review for the Susitna River revealed that for the prior 27 years the Susitna River escapement goal had been met and exceeded. See Table 1 below.

In addition, there are at least 23 genetically different sockeye populations (ADF&G FMS 12-06) within the Susitna watershed. Each unique sockeye population has different characteristics and requirements. For example, some are lake spawners, some are tributary spawners, and some utilize the mainstem, its side channels, sloughs and tributary deltas. These populations are all individually affected by numerous other factors, e.g. run timing, water temperatures, northern pike, parasites, disease, in-stream water levels, beaver dams, culverts and other migration impedances.

The SSSAP makes several assumptions that we now know are incorrect; first, it treats Susitna sockeye as one salmon stock and assumes that all cause and effect relationships are the same. Second, the plan assumes that specific restrictions in time and area allowed for commercial fishing will result in conservation of Susitna bound salmon. This assumption is also wrong. Genetic stock identification (GSI) data from the Anchor Point offshore test fishery (OTF) and the commercial drift harvest shows that there is no distinct temporal or spatial separation of Susitna River sockeye stocks from other sockeye salmon stocks as they migrate through the Central District.

Therefore, all the regulations based on the Susitna Stock of Yield Concern and the SSSAP must be repealed.

This proposal will repeal the restrictive provisions within the Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan in order to: 1) allow for adaptive inseason management; 2) provide a reasonable opportunity to commercially harvest abundant sockeye salmon; and 3) to provide adequate protection to northern bound sockeye salmon and coho salmon.

Table 1 Yentna Escapement Data from ADF&G Data and Reports

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Original Bendix Escapement	DIDSON	DIDSON Adjusted for Fish Wheel	DIDSON Adjusted for	Mid Point of Escapement	Average Goal Exceeded
Year	Number	Equivalent [1]	Selectivity	Mark/Recapture	Goal	Number [2]
1982	113,847	253,982	667,733	523,203	100,000	495,468
1983	104,414	210,105	323,461	432,816	100,000	278,139
1984	149,375	298,383	773,450	614,669	100,000	594,059
1985	107,124	211,806	417,147	436,320	100,000	326,734
1986	92,076	169,048	974,513	348,239	125,000	536,376
1987	66,054	130,040	291,897	267,882	125,000	154,890
1988	52,330	101,854	286,421	209,819	125,000	123,120
1989 [3]	96,269	189,554	491,489	390,481	125,000	315,985
1990	140,290	259,729	682,631	535,042	125,000	483,836
1991	109,632	217,158	347,900	447,345	125,000	272,623
1992	66,074	130,966	463,272	269,790	125,000	241,531
1993	141,694	282,837	593,576	582,644	125,000	463,110
1994	128,032	251,856	413,317	518,823	125,000	341,070
1995	121,220	232,856	416,842	479,683	125,000	323,263
1996	90,660	172,882	308,169	356,137	125,000	207,153
1997	157,822	308,949	379,445	636,435	125,000	382,940
1998	119,623	211,500	445,538	435,690	125,000	315,614
1999	99,029	186,981	280,900	385,181	125,000	208,040
2000	133,094	291,848	409,266	601,207	125,000	380,236
2001	83,532	153,847	376,228	316,925	125,000	221,576
2002	78,591	158,564	479,228	326,642	125,000	277,935
2003	180,813	344,224	609,591	709,101	125,000	534,346
2004	71,281	142,187	347,900	292,905	125,000	195,403
2005	36,921	71,264	131,541	146,804	125,000	14,172
2006	92,051	166,697	390,567	343,396	125,000	241,981
2007	79,901	125,146	206,146	257,801	125,000	106,973
2008	90,146	131,772	252,804	271,450	125,000	137,127
Average	103,774	200,224	435,592	412,460		302,730
		Estimated total sockeye over midpoint of escapement goal				8,173,702

Columns 4 and 5, and most of Column 3, are mathematically derived equivalents.

[1] Actual DIDSON counts used for 2006-2008

[2] Average of column 4 and column 5, minus column 6

[3] 1989 was the Exxon Valdez oil spill year, no drift gillnetting in Cook Inlet

PROPOSED BY: United Cook Inlet Drift Association (HQ-F16-013)

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