

**PROPOSAL 209 – 5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.**

Repeal the *Northern District King Salmon Management Plan*, as follows:

**Repeal 5AAC 21.366 Northern District King Salmon Management Plan in its entirety.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Northern District King Salmon Management Plan was drafted in 1986 in response to a projected return of Northern District king salmon so large that the sport fishery did not have the ability to harvest all the surplus king salmon using the regulations in place at the time. It is the only Upper Cook Inlet commercial fishery targeting early run king salmon, and the purpose of the plan is:

“The purpose of this management 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.”

For the past 5 years, as evidenced by the department closing or severely restricting sport king salmon harvest in all Northern District drainages where the sport fishery targets wild king salmon, the plan provisions allowing targeted commercial openings to harvest surplus king salmon no longer fit the stated purpose of the plan. It simply does not make sense to allow extra harvest by a small special interest group (only 40 - 60 registered Northern District permit holders) at the expense of all other Alaskans and visitors who would like to harvest a few king salmon, but have been shouldering more severe conservation restrictions and total harvest closures. Having already gone 4 years or more with sport king salmon harvests closed by emergency order starting in May on 13 of the 17 Northern Management Area streams with established king salmon spawning escapement goals, and emergency restrictions on the remaining 4 streams with king salmon escapement goals as well, it is long past time to remove the commercial opportunity to target Northern District king salmon before June 24 at a time when few other salmon are available for harvest. This would more closely align the Northern District commercial season with most other

commercial fisheries in Upper Cook Inlet. Northern District commercial fishermen could still participate in the sport and subsistence king salmon fisheries, and would still be able to harvest Northern District king salmon after June 24.

**PROPOSED BY:** Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-057)  
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**PROPOSAL 210 – 5 AAC 21.358. Northern District Salmon Management Plan.** Repeal and readopt management plan to fully utilize surplus salmon stocks based on the abundance of salmon returning to the Northern District, as follows:

**(Repeal and Readopt)**

**5 AAC 21.358. 5 AAC 21.358. Northern District Salmon Management Plan**

(a) The purposes of this management plan are to provide the department direction for management of Northern District of upper Cook Inlet salmon stocks. The department shall manage these chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks utilizing fishing time in 5 AAC 21.320(a)(1).

(b) The department shall manage the Northern District commercial salmon fisheries based on the abundance of sockeye salmon counted through the weirs on Larson, Chelatna, and Judd Lakes or other salmon abundance indices as the department deems appropriate.

(c) From July 20 through August 6, if the department's assessment of abundance indicates that restrictions are necessary to achieve the escapement goal, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Northern District and immediately reopen a season during which the number of set gillnets that may be used is limited to the following options selected at the discretion of the commissioner, except that from July 31 through August 6, the commissioner may allow the use of two set gillnets in that portion of the General District south of the Susitna River:

- (1) three set gillnets that are not more than 105 fathoms in aggregate length;
- (2) two set gillnets that are not more than 70 fathoms in aggregate length;
- (3) one set gillnet that is not more than 35 fathoms in length.

(d) In addition to the provisions specified in (b) and (c) of this section, the department shall manage the Northern District commercial salmon fisheries under the following constraints:

- (1) additional fishing periods, other than the weekly fishing periods described in 5 AAC 21.320(a)(1), may not be provided when coho salmon are expected to be the most abundant species harvested during that period; additional fishing periods may not be provided based on the abundance of Northern District coho salmon;

(2) after August 15, the department shall limit the harvest of coho salmon in the Northern District by limiting commercial fishing time to the weekly fishing periods described in 5 AAC 21.320(a)(1).

(e) The department shall, to the extent practicable, conduct habitat assessments on a schedule that conforms to the board's triennial meeting cycle. If the assessments demonstrate a net loss of riparian habitat caused by noncommercial fishermen, the department is requested to report those findings to the board and submit proposals to the board for appropriate modification of this management plan.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The board, ADF&G and sport fishing enthusiasts have continued to interpret the "minimize" language in this and other plans as if each year it is necessary to again restrict the commercial harvest of all coho stocks as if it were a half life determination to get to zero. This was never the intent of this language, rather minimize was meant to indicate that the commercial fishery would not be given additional fishing periods targeting coho but that their catch during regular periods was not only permissible but expected. The departments own studies indicate that the Northern District commercial harvest of all stocks is extremely small and that the stocks of coho they are trying to protect Susitna and Little Susitna Rivers are through the Central District by August 1 and the Northern District a few days later. The Board has put punitive restrictions on the Northern District which benefit no one. What this continued myopic view has lead to large unharvested surpluses in many of the streams that are against the Alaska Constitution mandating that surplus renewable resources be made available to the public. The Alaska Supreme Court just weighed in on this subject stating that the salmon stocks in Cook Inlet had to be managed for escapement goals and sustained yield and that the Boards plans were nothing more than guidelines which should be ignored inseason by the department.

Unharvested surplus salmon describes those salmon in excess of escapement needs that are not harvested by commercial, sport or personal use fisheries. UCI has some of the largest wild, native salmon returns in Alaska. ADF&G does not enumerate the return of all stocks but based on the actual harvest and research data, the 2014 returns of all UCI salmon stocks could be estimated at around 30,000,000 fish. After escapement needs (7,000,000), there were approximately 23,000,000 salmon available for harvest. Of the 23 million salmon available for harvest, only around 4.5 million were utilized.

These abundant salmon stocks should be available for harvest; however, the effects of current BOF and ADF&G management plans and policies result in over 80% of these stocks going unharvested. In 2014, about 88% of the Chinook, 19% of the sockeyes, 84% of the coho, 96% of the pinks and 87% of the chums were in excess of all harvests or escapement needs and not utilized.

Unharvested surplus salmon also cause much more variability in returns. These erratic returns are more difficult to predict, more difficult to manage to achieve escapement goals and, as ADF&G reports assert, are not sustainable (SP 07-17, FMS 14-06).

Fisheries management needs to be focused on fully utilizing these abundant renewable resources with the understanding that allocation and daily management decisions have direct economic consequences to the welfare of the state.

The unharvested surplus stocks represent millions of lost tax revenue dollars to the State Treasury, tens of millions of dollars in lost economic benefit to the regional economies, loss of food products and by-products, and lost jobs. These same non-utilized salmon represent an opportunity for growth and diversification in local, regional and state economies.

The commercial sector is the only user group that has the capacity or the ability to harvest and monetize these surplus stocks, has over a 100 year history of doing so and all stocks remained healthy during this timeframe.

**PROPOSED BY:** Earl Young (HQ-F16-109)

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**PROPOSAL 211 – 5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management.** Close the Northern District commercial set gillnet fishery until the first regular period after June 24, if the Susitna River sport fishery is restricted by emergency order, as follows:

Adjust the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan by adding:

**(12) if the Susitna River drainage King salmon sport fishery is restricted by emergency order, the commissioner shall close by emergency order, the Northern District commercial set net fishery until the first regular period after June 24.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The King Salmon sport fishery in the Susitna drainage has been highly restricted in the sport fishery due to low forecasts and returns. Based on King Salmon escapement surveys area wide, additional conservation measures outside of the sport fishery, are needed to ensure the perpetual sustainability of this run.

The Susitna Drainage contains 3 King Salmon stocks of concern- two of them sport fishing is no longer allowed, and the other harvest is prohibited.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ben Allen (EF-F16-115)

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**PROPOSAL 212 – 5 AAC 21.310. Fishing seasons.** Close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Northern District on August 15, as follows:

Amend the Northern District season to read:

(b) salmon may only be taken as follows:

(1) Northern District: from June 25 until [CLOSED BY EMERGENCY ORDER] **August**

**15;**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Northern District commercial fishing season should be more aligned with the Central District

Eastside. A season that runs through August 15 provides plenty of opportunity to harvest Northern District salmon stocks, identified in management plans, to be managed primarily for commercial uses. A season through August 15 would still allow a substantial Northern District commercial coho salmon harvest, but would be more consistent with intent language contained at in the Northern District Salmon Management Plan:

“(a) The purposes of this management plan are to minimize the harvest of coho salmon bound for the Northern District of Upper Cook Inlet and to provide the department direction for management of salmon stocks. The department shall manage the chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks primarily for commercial uses to provide commercial fisherman with an economic yield from the harvest of these salmon resources based on abundance. 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 fisherman a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon resources over the entire run, as measured by frequency of inriver restrictions, or as specified in this section and other regulations.” Consistent with the Eastside Central District set net seasons, a Northern District season through

August 15 would allow harvest of commercial stocks through the heart of the Northern District runs. Closing after August 15, would better minimize coho salmon harvest with less economic impact on harvests of primary commercial species.

If the Board is concerned about reasonable yields for ALL Upper Cook Inlet user groups, wouldn't it be more consistent with Upper Cook Inlet management plans and seasons to pass more salmon of all species into Northern District waters for harvest, rather than running Northern commercial harvests into September and taking a high proportion of coho?

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Outdoor Council (EF-F16-105)  
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**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)

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**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 es-capement 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)  
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**PROPOSAL 215 – 5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.** Close commercial fishing within one mile of the Little Susitna River, if the Little Susitna River king salmon sport fishery is restricted to harvest less than 7 days per week and artificial lures by emergency order, as follows:

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

**(13) if the Little Susitna River sport fishery is restricted to harvest less than 7 days a week and artificial lures 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 Little Susitna River King Salmon sport fishery is bearing the greatest burden of conservation during times of low abundance. During times of low abundance, King Salmon are being harvested within a mile radius of the Little Susitna River at the same time the Little Susitna River King salmon sport fishery has been under emergency order restriction.

Harvest in the Little Susitna River Sport fishery has been dramatically reduced since 2009. Opportunity and chance of catching and harvesting a King Salmon has been seriously altered. Significant efforts have been made in river in the sport fishery to reduce harvest under emergency order, by restricting harvest at least 3 days/week (4 days prior to 2016), mandating single hooks, reducing the annual limit 60% (only 2 fish), and increasing the weir boundary three more holes down the river to protect staging fish.

The one mile radius of the Little Susitna River's at its confluence with Knik Arm, is a major staging area, for King Salmon migrating up the Little Susitna River. Highest King Salmon abundance within the one mile radius of the Little Susitna River occurs in the first 3 weeks of June. Scientific studies on the Kenai Peninsula suggest King salmon behavior at the confluence in this one mile radius zone, would be to swim back and forth increasing susceptibility to commercial harvest in a set net.

With in season weir monitoring and Little Susitna King Salmon behavior, the Department of Fish and Game cannot accurately assess run strength until the third or fourth week June, depending on river conditions and King salmon behavior.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ben Allen (EF-F16-118)

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*(Proposal 216 was submitted by two proposers. The proposal and justification were the same and are listed below, along with the proposers.)*

**PROPOSAL 216 – 5 AAC 5AAC 21.350. Closed waters.** Close waters within one-statute mile of the Little Susitna River to commercial fishing, as follows:

amend closed waters as follows:

(c) Northern District

(1) within one statute mile of the terminus of the following salmon streams:

- (A) Swanson Creek
- (B) Bishop Creek
- (C) Three-mile Creek
- (D) Chuit River
- (E) Nikolai Creek
- (F) McArthur River

**(G) Little Susitna River**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Little Susitna River sport fishery is without doubt one of the most heavily used and economically important coho salmon / king salmon sport fisheries draining into the Northern District of Upper Cook Inlet, yet sport fishing opportunities and the economic benefit from those opportunities must be restricted, in part, because of liberal commercial set net harvest area near the river terminus.

Other Northern District streams, of significantly less sport and economic importance than the Little Susitna River, have one statute mile closed waters around their terminus', and within the Northern District Salmon Management Plan direction is given 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 inriver restrictions, or as specified in this section and other regulations."

It should be noted:

#1 The use of bait is closed by regulation in the Little Susitna River sport fishery from October 1 through August 5, and this greatly reduces participation in the sport fishery, reduces sport harvest, and retards economic impact from the sport fishery.



#2 ADF&G manages the Little Susitna River for king salmon and coho salmon abundance, and both species are noted in management plans to be managed primarily for sport and guided sport users.

#3 Even with a salmon counting weir in Little Susitna River, the department has no Little Susitna River spawning escapement goal for any salmon species other than king and coho.

#4 Little Susitna River is located further up Cook Inlet, so salmon bound for the Little Susitna River must already swim past more commercial nets than all the other Central District and Northern District streams which have one mile closed waters around their terminus’.

#5 Management of Little Susitna salmon stocks is primarily paid for with funds collected from the sale of sport fishing licenses, king salmon stamps, and federal matching moneys collected from taxes on fishing tackle, outboard motors, and fuel. In times of state economic down turn it is fiscally important to maintain or grow this stream of funding.

Therefore, to better follow Northern District Salmon Management Plan direction, to more equally share the conservation burden of Little Susitna king salmon and coho salmon stocks, and consistent with closed waters around other Northern District streams, Susitna Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee requests that the board establish a one statute mile closed waters around the terminus of Little Susitna River .

**PROPOSED BY:** Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee & (EF-F16-056)  
Alaska Sport Fishing Association (HQ-F16-002)  
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**PROPOSAL 217 – 5 AAC 21.358. Northern District Salmon Management Plan.** Remove the Eastern Subdistrict of the Northern District from commercial set gillnet restrictions that apply July 20–August 6, as follows:

5 AAC 21.358 Northern District Salmon Management Plan

(c) From July 20 through August 6, if the department's assessment of abundance indicates that restrictions are necessary to achieve the escapement goal, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the commercial set gillnet fishery in **the General District of** the Northern District and immediately reopen a season during which the number of set gillnets that may be used is limited to the following options selected at the discretion of the commissioner, except that from July 31 through August 6, the commissioner may allow the use of two set gillnets in that portion of the General District south of the Susitna River:

- (1) three set gillnets that are not more than 105 fathoms in aggregate length;
- (2) two set gillnets that are not more than 70 fathoms in aggregate length;
- (3) one set gillnet that is not more than 35 fathoms in length.

**Other solutions considered:**

1) Break down the GSI data further by each Northern District statistical area and de-couple specific statistical areas that catch a minority of Susitna sockeye stock. There are data reported in *Genetic Stock Identification of Upper Cook Inlet Sockeye Salmon Harvest, 2010* (Barclay, Habicht, Tobias, Willette. pp 12-13), showing that statistical areas 247-41, 247-42, and 247-43 in the General District (all three adjacent, and to the northeast of the mouth of the Susitna River) also harvest a minimal percentage of Susitna sockeye, as low as 3% of their annual catch. However, I only found these data reported for 2010.

2) Repeal subsection (c) of the NDSMP completely, based on the GSI data that show the very small percentage of Susitna drainage sockeye stocks harvested by all Northern District commercial fishermen (Total Harvest, Table 1).

3) Change the language of subsection (c) to give the commissioner more specific direction regarding the use of options (1), (2), and (3), so that option (2) may be a more realistic possibility - seeing as how it has never been used. This specific direction may come from specific conditions being met at the three weirs (JCL) the year before, or some averaging or combinations of several years past. And/or, it may need to involve specific direction from "other salmon abundance indices" as stated in the preamble to the NDSMP.

### **What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?**

**Background:** The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) manages the Northern District commercial set gillnet fishery primarily through provisions found in 5 AAC 21.358, Northern District Salmon Management Plan (NDSMP). The preamble of this plan states that the department shall manage the chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks primarily for commercial uses while at the same time minimizing the harvest of Northern District coho salmon. Furthermore, the plan states that the department shall manage the Northern District commercial sockeye salmon fisheries based on the abundance of sockeye salmon counted through the weirs on Larson, Chelatna, and Judd lakes (in the Susitna River drainage), or other salmon abundance indices as the department deems appropriate.

Currently, the entire Northern District setnet fishery, both the Eastern Sub-district and the General (western) Sub-district (AKA General District) (Figure 1), with all of their many distinct statistical areas, are generally both lumped together for most management actions. In other words, if the department needs to close or restrict one statistical area in the Northern District for conservation purposes, the regulations are such that the restriction or closure will be enforced for the entire Northern District set gillnet fishery.

(Point for clarification: Set gillnetting is the only commercial salmon fishery allowed in the Northern District. There is no drift gillnet fishery in the Northern District.)

**The Issue and Proposal:** In 2008, Susitna River sockeye salmon were classified as a stock of yield concern. As a result of this designation, the Board adopted the Susitna River Sockeye Salmon Action Plan that contained restrictive provisions to commercial fisheries to conserve this stock. These actions were later placed into subsection (c) of the NDSMP (5AAC 21.358 (c)). Every year since the adoption of subsection (c), the entire Northern District has been subject to gear

restrictions from July 20th to August 6th, which is the peak of the sockeye salmon run. Here is the current version of subsection (c).

From July 20 through August 6, if the department's assessment of abundance indicates that restrictions are necessary to achieve the escapement goal, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Northern District and immediately reopen a season during which the number of set gillnets that may be used is limited to the following options selected at the discretion of the commissioner, except that from July 31 through August 6, the commissioner may allow the use of two set gillnets in that portion of the General District south of the Susitna River:

- (1) three set gillnets that are not more than 105 fathoms in aggregate length;
- (2) two set gillnets that are not more than 70 fathoms in aggregate length;
- (3) one set gillnet that is not more than 35 fathoms in length.

Since the adoption of this plan, the most restrictive option (3), the one-net-per-permit restriction, has been implemented every season. This 2/3 gear reduction occurs during the peak of the sockeye salmon run, negatively impacting the economic viability of the fishery for all Northern District fishermen.

Based on Genetic Stock Identification (GSI) data from sockeye salmon harvests in the Northern District which show the very low percentages of Susitna River sockeye harvested in the Eastern Sub-district (Table 1), this proposal seeks to provide ADF&G with more flexibility in their management of the Northern District setnet fishery by allowing them to de-couple the Eastern Sub-district from the General Sub-district for management actions, specifically with regard to 5AAC 21.358 (c).

**Supporting Information and Data:**

Table 1. GSI estimate of the number of Susitna River sockeye commercially harvested in the Eastern Sub-district of the Northern District, 2006-2013.

Year	Eastern Sub-district				General Sub-district				Total Susitna Run
	SusYen/J CL	Total Harvest	%	Harvest Rate	SusYen/J CL	Total Harvest	%	Harvest Rate	
2006	1,716	9,305	18%	0.40%	ND	3,159	30%	-	476,723
2007	1,260	9,222	14%	0.20%	ND	8,265	30%	-	595,276
2008	3,612	16,652	22%	0.80%	3,044	9,578	32%	0.70%	462,179
2009	1,139	18,057	6%	0.30%	5,866	22,595	26%	1.80%	332,279
2010	1,219	15,051	8%	0.40%	4,981	25,126	20%	1.60%	311,265
2011	696	9,945	7%	0.10%	10,610	25,515	42%	1.90%	548,799
2012	1,399	10,765	13%	0.40%	2,035	11,815	17%	0.60%	327,150
2013	1,205	11,037	11%	0.30%	5,526	12,386	45%	1.30%	426,647
Averages	1,531	12,504	12%	0.36%	5,344	14,805	30%	1.32%	435,040

The Susitna River is at the head of the General (western) Sub-district, entering Cook Inlet in its north-western corner. The Eastern Sub-district is on the other side of the inlet and is not geographically aligned with the Susitna river. This has long led Eastern sub-district fisherman to believe that they catch a minority of Susitna fish. GSI data of the commercial sockeye salmon harvest from 2006-2013 (Table 1) confirm this.

From 2006 to 2013 the average annual harvest of Susitna River sockeye salmon in the Eastern Sub-district of the Northern District was approximately 1,500 fish, representing only 12% of the Eastern Sub-district's total harvest. This means 88% of the fish caught in the Eastern Sub-district are bound for streams other than the Susitna - the system upon which the entire Northern District is currently being managed.

The same GSI data show that in the General Sub-district the average annual harvest of Susitna sockeye was approximately 5,300 fish – about 3.5 times the harvest of the Eastern Sub-district. However, within the NDSMP, restrictive actions to conserve Susitna River sockeye salmon lump the Eastern Sub-district together with the General Sub-district.

Additionally, and perhaps more pertinent, the GSI data show that on average, the Eastern Sub-district's total catch of Susitna River sockeye represents only 0.36% of the Susitna River's annual sockeye return (see Harvest Rate, Table 1).

**Conclusion:** Based on these GSI data, there should be allowance within the NDSMP for ADF&G to manage the Eastern and General sub-districts independently from each other, specifically with regard to subsection (c) of the plan. Since its adoption, this regulation has been used each season to require the Eastern Sub-district to be restricted to fishing with only 1 net/permit from July 20th through Aug 6th, which is the peak of the sockeye salmon run. The reason for this restriction is to conserve Susitna River sockeye salmon. However, as just noted, the GSI data in Table 1 show that the Eastern Sub-district harvests a statistically small number of sockeye salmon bound for the Susitna River, both as measured against Eastern Sub-district total harvests, or as the Harvest Rate of the total Susitna run.

The data are clear: The majority of the sockeye harvested by Eastern Sub-district fishermen are bound for other systems (88%) and the impact of the Eastern Sub-district on the Susitna sockeye run is miniscule (0.36%).

Therefore, Eastern Sub-district fishermen should not be held to the restrictions outlined in subsection (c) to conserve a stock of which they harvest only a very small portion.

This is why I am proposing that with regard to subsection (c), the Eastern Sub-district should be de-coupled from the General Sub-district, removing this restriction and allowing these fishermen to simply continue to fish their two, regularly scheduled 12-hr periods per week with a full complement of gear.

**PROPOSED BY:** Trevor E. Rollman (HQ-F16-081)

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**PROPOSAL 218 – 5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.** Allow a holder of more than one Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission set gillnet limited entry permit to fish with one set gillnet per permit held in the Northern District, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 21.366 (5) to read “No CFEC permit holder may operate more than one set gillnet **per permit** at a time.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** When the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan was adopted in November 1985, it contained language limiting the number of nets a person could operate in that fishery to one set net per permit. At that time, a person could only own and operate one SOH4 permit. In 2011, the Board of Fisheries allowed for a Cook Inlet set netter to own and operate two set gillnet permits (SOH4), making the current language in 5 AAC 21.366 (5) confusing and inconsistent with the intent of the regulation allowing a person to own and operate two set gillnet permits.

The current language in 5AAC 21.366 (5) states that “No CFEC permit holder may operate more than one set gill net at a time.”

This proposal is a bookkeeping measure to eliminate confusion in wording in the management plan, make the current language consistent with the original intent of the gear restriction, and make the two regulations consistent.

**PROPOSED BY:** Northern District Set Netters of Cook Inlet (EF-F16-114)  
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**PROPOSAL 219 - 5 AAC 61.114. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Allow a unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention fishery on resident species when waters of Montana Creek are closed to fishing for king salmon, as follows:

Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area. (1) and (10)

The solutions proposed would be to amend 5 AAC 61.114 in such a matter as to open that portion of Montana Creek upstream of the Alaska Railroad bridge upstream to the ADFG marker located one-half mile upstream of the Parks Highway to fishing for resident species during those days now closed to all fishing. Regulations currently in place upstream of the marker include catch and release of rainbow trout and Arctic grayling and methods and means are limited to only one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure. No retention (catch and release only) of rainbow trout and Arctic grayling and the unbaited, single-hook artificial lure provisions would govern fishing in the now closed waters if this proposal were to be adopted. In addition it should be made clear that a person may not sport fish for king salmon in these waters except when the waters are specifically open to sport fishing for king salmon. That portion of Montana Creek downstream of the Alaska Railroad bridge and including all flowing waters within a one-half mile radius of its confluence with the Susitna River would remain closed as currently described in regulation. This proposal is

not meant to change any aspect of the regulations within the times and areas currently open to fishing for king salmon.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Montana Creek from an ADFG marker located one-half mile above the Parks Highway downstream and including all flowing waters within one-half mile radius of its confluence with the Susitna River is closed to all fishing except when open to fishing for king salmon from mid-June through July 13. In 2016 this closure consists of a total of 17 days. Within the area described, the opportunity to fish for resident species and the conservation of king salmon can be accomplished during this time period in most of the area described in regulation. It is not meant to change any aspect of the regulations within the times and areas currently open to fishing for king salmon.

**PROPOSED BY:** Joe Mathis/ Montana Creek Campground (HQ-F16-039)  
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**PROPOSAL 220 - 5 AAC 61.120. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 5 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Establish sport fishery closure times in the Larsen Creek drainage, as follows:

**Larsen Creek including all waters within a ¼ mile radius of its confluence with the Talkeetna River closed to fishing from 11:00 pm to 6:00 am from July 1 to August 15.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Establish a more organized fishery at the confluence of Larsen Creek and the Talkeetna River. Susitna River drainage sockeye salmon are currently designated as a Stock of Yield Concern. Larsen Creek is one of three indicator/ index lakes used to assess sockeye production in the Susitna Valley. ~Larsen Lake is the only monitored and index lake used by ADF&G to assess the sockeye production and spawning success on the main stream of the Susitna River. It has barely made escapement goals in the last 5 years and has had to be closed twice during that time due to low escapement numbers early on.

The area where people fish is a concentrated area at the confluence of the Talkeetna River and Larsen creek. Access into the mouth of Larson creek and the Talkeetna river confluence can be crowded with people wading shoulder to shoulder in the creek making fish passage difficult.

Rod and reel fishermen who would normally fish till 11:00 pm then sleep at the creek and fish at 1:00 am will be less likely to spend the night. Guides will still arrive at 6: 00 am to bring their clients through. This may intensify fishing during that period of the day, but it would allow a reprieve during the night for escapement.

**PROPOSED BY:** Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (EF-F16-033)  
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**PROPOSAL 221 - 5 AAC 61.114. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 61.116. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 3 of the Susitna River Drainage Area., 5 AAC 61.120. Special provisions for the**

**seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 5 of the Susitna River Drainage Area., and 5 AAC 61.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 6 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Prohibit harvest of king salmon in units 2, 3, 5, and 6, except Willow Creek, as follows:

Change general season of all streams currently (by regulation, not EO) open to king salmon harvest in units 2, 3, 5 and 6 to catch and release only, except Willow Creek which should remain open to harvest of marked hatchery produced chinook. Harvest of 1 chinook salmon per day and two per year is allowed on Sunday and Monday of the last two weekends of the season (these weekend only fisheries have changing dates) allowing for a small amount of harvest by regulation. This will also allow managers to monitor progress of the chinook run to ensure conservation.

When in-season monitoring shows a harvestable surplus open these streams to more liberal harvest regulations by emergency order, and allow catch and release fishing midweek after the 3rd weekend in June (by allowing catch and release fishing, not only is the high quality experience provided by recent emergency orders maintained, but poaching can be reduced by having more conservation minded eyes on the river, it would also allow fishing for trout and other species).

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Susitna River Chinook Salmon.

Recent low performance of chinook salmon returns to the Susitna River drainage has prompted emergency orders closing units 2, 3, 5 and 6 to harvest of chinook salmon. This has created excellent opportunities for different user groups to have outstanding opportunity for a mostly uncrowded sport fishing experience. The Parks Highway streams have become a world class catch and release fishery for those who prefer a quieter fishing experience. By codifying these changes in regulation it will bring stability to this sector of fishermen, and allow for better trip planning, better planning for local businesses and guides to meet the needs of this user group.

If nothing changes, managers will have to continue to use emergency orders to close the fishery to harvest, and fishing opportunities will be lost by all user groups.

Other solutions:

Closing the Susitna Drainage to fishing: This would allow no fishing and is undesirable.

Closing units 2, 3, 5, and 6 to harvest: This would allow no consumptive uses of the fishery, even though some systems have harvestable surpluses, and hatchery produced fish.

**PROPOSED BY:** Patrick McCormick (EF-F16-124)

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**PROPOSAL 222 - 5 AAC 61.120. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 5 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Prohibit fishing for king, sockeye, and coho salmon in the Larson Creek drainage, as follows:

Larson Creek drainage

The Larson Creek drainage, including all waters within a 1/4 –mile radius of its confluence with the Talkeetna River:

**Closed to king, coho and sockeye salmon fishing** [Closed to king salmon fishing.]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** In the Larson Creek drainage include sockeye and coho salmon to the area closed to king salmon fishing which is the ¼ mile radius of its confluence with the Talkeetna River. This area has been discovered and grown in popularity as a sockeye and coho fishing hole. The increased fishing pressure, harvest and catch and release mortality is not sustainable and jeopardizes meeting Larson Lake sockeye escapement goal. This is a staging area, as all confluences are, and the salmon should be protected. A quarter mile protection zone still leaves anglers a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon. With global warming the smaller streams have warmer water temperatures that are sometimes above the lethal temperature for salmon to survive. Salmon tend to stag in the confluences longer waiting for cooler temperatures and are more likely to be caught. The warmer water temperature also increases the mortality from catch and lease because of the added stress on the salmon in addition to the lack of oxygen the warmer water creates. Coho are extremely susceptible to catch and release mortality. The 1993 ADF&G report on the “Mortality of coho salmon caught and released using sport tackle in the Little Susitna, Alaska-ADF&G documented a 69% mortality on coho salmon in the lower 10 to 15 miles, of fresh water systems. This lower section is where salmon are the most stressed and the majority of catch and release occurs. The lower section of fresh water systems is the highest for catch and release mortality because the salmon’s body is undergoing chemical changes to acclimate from salt water to fresh water. The Susitna drainage is very susceptible to warmer water and the negative impacts on adult and juvenile salmon. With the prediction of a continuing global warming trend it would be prudent for ADF&G to restrict more confluences to ensure escapements into spawning streams and lakes. There are many examples where the confluences were left opened to fishing too long and the systems either took a long time to recover or don’t recover at all.

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-163)  
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**PROPOSAL 223 - 5 AAC 61.114. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Prohibit king salmon fishing in Unit 2 if no retention is allowed, as follows:

**All King Salmon fishing will be closed in the Parks Highway Streams Of Unit 2 of the Susitna River any time retention of King Salmon is not allowed.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The issue I would like the board to address is that the retention of King Salmon has been denied on the Parks Highway streams in unit two of the Susitna river, yet, catch and release has been allowed. If nothing is done this tactic will increase the period of time until the run is restored and retention allowed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Paul Warta (EF-F16-088)  
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**PROPOSAL 224 - 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.** Restrict hours and dates open to fishing on Jim Creek, as follows:

Amend Jim Creek drainage fishing season as follows:

Daily limits are the same as shown under general season and limits on page 43, except that from **July 20 - December 31, fishing is only open from 5 a.m. until 10 p.m. daily, and from August 10 - December 31,** [THE SECOND SATURDAY IN AUGUST (AUGUST 13) THROUGH DECEMBER 31,] sport fishing for any species is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Inadequate escapement opportunity for salmon migrating up the Jim Creek system throughout the coho and sockeye salmon runs should be addressed. Even though the Board adopted regulations that closed two days to all fishing in the Jim Creek drainage later in August, the coho salmon spawning escapement goal was, once again, not attained in 2014. In 2015 the McRoberts Creek / Jim Creek goal was attained, but only after a sport fishing season closing emergency order was issued. Although sockeye salmon provide an important component of sport harvest, the Department has no established sockeye salmon spawning escapement goal.

The Jim Creek system is an extremely productive salmon producer, that provides a 7 - day per week sport salmon fishery until the August reduction to a 5-day per week fishery. Participation and harvests are amongst the highest in the Knik Arm Management Unit. In light of recent low spawning escapements of coho (and possibly sockeye) salmon, it appears a more precautionary management approach may be appropriate in order to ensure adequate spawning escapements of both coho and sockeye salmon. It would be advantageous to consider more precautionary management that also maintains the 7-day per week sport fishing opportunity during the earlier portion of the season.

Although a member of the public expressed his concerns of declining Jim Creek salmon returns to the Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee, neither he nor the advisory committee developed a proposal to submit before the submittal deadline. This proposal provides an opportunity for the public and the advisory committee to consider and develop an acceptable precautionary management option(s) that better ensures sustainability of highly valued Jim Creek salmon runs.

Reducing fishing hours would create a more orderly fishery, while providing a daily opportunity for salmon to migrate unmolested through the shallow Jim Creek flats. Perhaps better options may also be developed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Andy Couch (EF-F16-080)  
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**PROPOSAL 225 - 5 AAC 60.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the know Arm Drainages Area.** Reduce the bag limits for salmon, other than king salmon, and prohibit releasing coho salmon, as follows:

**5 AAC 60.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area**

(2) salmon, other than king salmon,

(A) 16 inches or greater in length may be taken from January 1 - December 31; bag and possession limit is **two** [THREE] fish, of which no more than **one** [TWO] per day and one [TWO] in possession may be coho salmon; if retention of coho salmon is allowed under this chapter, **all coho salmon must be retained and there will be no catch and release fishing for coho salmon;** [A COHO SALMON 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH THAT IS REMOVED FROM THE WATER MUST BE RETAINED AND BECOMES PART OF THE BAG LIMIT OF THE PERSON ORIGINALLY HOOKING IT; A PERSON MAY NOT

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Little Susitna coho salmon escapement of 10,100 to 17,700 has exceeded the goal in 14 of 25 years by an average of 14,000 coho and only achieved the goal in 7 years. This system can not be managed with restrictions in the commercial fishery to pour more and more coho into this stream to achieve the escapement goal. It is obvious that the commercial restrictions are unnecessary and unwarranted in well over half of the years wasting hundreds of thousands of coho as well as sockeye, pink and chum salmon. In only 5 of 25 years of data was the goal not achieved, missing the lower end by an average of only 3,300 coho. This system is basically unmanaged and this needs to change. By reducing the bag limit back to one until the run is assessed and then liberalizing the goal to two or three coho and allowing for a more liberal harvest in the commercial fisheries all stocks will benefit without undue hardships being applied to any one group. Since the catch and release mortality is 70 percent catch and release should be illegal as it is really wanton waste. When you consider the fact that the Little Susitna is and index of other coho stocks, most with much less of an inriver exploitation the amount of overescapement, lost harvest and reduced production is staggering. A companion proposal has been submitted under commercial regulations.

**PROPOSED BY:** Earl Young

(HQ-F16-106)

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**PROPOSAL 226 - 5 AAC 61.114. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Create a bag limit of one hatchery king salmon in the Susitna River drainage, as follows:

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

**(12) In the Susitna drainage, allow the retention of 1 hatchery produced King salmon greater than 20 inches per day. Hatchery produced King Salmon are part of the seasonal and daily bag and possession. Hatchery produced King salmon are to be tagged immediately upon retention.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Inadequate opportunity to harvest King Salmon in the Susitna drainage. The road accessible east side streams in Unit 2 have been closed to King Salmon harvest by emergency restriction consistently since 2009.

Adult hatchery produced King Salmon are present in fishable numbers in the east side streams within Unit 2.

There is a reasonable opportunity to catch a hatchery produced King salmon, that is missing an adipose fin within Unit 2. I have personally witnessed several get caught. I even witnessed at least 10 get caught in one day.

Hatchery produced King salmon should only be present for the purposes of adding additional harvest opportunity.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ben Allen (EF-F16-116)  
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**PROPOSAL 227 - 5 AAC 61.114. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Allow harvest of hatchery king salmon when emergency orders restrict the sport fishery, as follows:

Add the following to the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan:

**Continue to allow the retention of adult hatchery fin clipped King Salmon in unit 2 of the Susitna drainage on years of low abundance when emergency order restrictions are implemented on the sport fishery.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Adult hatchery King salmon present in Willow and Little Willow Creek, have not been allowed to be harvested under emergency order restrictions, issued throughout the last decade. Hatchery King salmon should be managed differently than wild stocks. I have observed several fin clipped Kings caught below the Parks Highway bridge on both Willow and Little Willow Creek. Additionally, I have heard of fin clipped fish caught at other Parks Highway streams.

Allowing harvest of hatchery fin clipped King salmon would have a minimal impact on wild stocks and provide an additional opportunity for Alaskans and tourists to harvest fish, in a region where harvest has been seriously restricted.

This is the same protocol that is successfully practiced throughout the Northwestern United States.

**PROPOSED BY:** Amber Allen (EF-F16-121)  
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**PROPOSAL 228 - 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.** Increase the hours open to fishing in Fish Creek, as follows:

Amend hours in both general and youth only fishery to read:

Fishing is allowed only on Saturday and Sundays and only between hours of (6 A.M. and 6 P.M.) to **5 A.M. and 10 P.M.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** According to the last few years of Alaska Department of Fish and Game weir escapements, Fish Creek coho salmon are abundant enough to allow a few more hours of daily fishing time. The area where sport salmon fishing is allowed on Fish Creek is extremely short, and the salmon fishery is only open two days per week, so there is plenty of time for salmon to swim through the area when fishing is closed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Julie Busch (EF-F16-086)

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**PROPOSAL 229 - 5 AAC 61.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 6 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.** Reduce the maximum legal size for rainbow trout in Byers Creek from 20 to 16 inches, as follows:

The solution we propose to the current regulation allowing individuals to keep one Rainbow Trout over 20 inches during the times in which it is permitted is to: reduce the authorized size to no longer than 16 inches, while still maintaining a 2 fish per day limit.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** We would like to address the issue of Rainbow Trout that are of maturity to reproduce, i.e. 16 inches or longer, being kept on Byers Creek. If changes are not made to the current regulations set in place, depletion of a **NATURAL** trout stock will be the consequence. Depletion being defined as: reduction of average size, a decrease in the overall population, as well as having an adverse effect on the genetics of the fishery (if a large fish is kept, the genetics go with it). There is an alternative solution we had considered, but rejected due to the fact it would not be correct. To make the creek catch and release would only infringe on the right to keep a fish if they choose to, something all fisherman have done. However keeping a fish over 16 inches in length is significant because when you remove such a specimen from the population, you are not only taking that fish, but of all its potential offspring, and their potential offspring..and so on.

**PROPOSED BY:** Todd Hallsten, Parker Wallace, Thys Grogan, Austin Gibbs (EF-F16-007)

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**PROPOSAL 230 - 5 AAC 61.XXX. Deshka River King Salmon Management Plan.** Create a Deshka River King Salmon Management Plan, as follows:

Adopt a Deshka River King Salmon Management plan as follows:

**The purpose of this plan is to direct the Department to manage the Deshka River sport king salmon fishery to attain spawning escapements within the SEG range of 13,000 - 28,000 fish, while encouraging adaptive management to attain the escapement objective in a manner which avoids inseason closures and restrictions when possible, and thereby maximizes benefit as much as practical. If the Department's annual Deshka River king salmon outlook calls for a total return of less than 21,000 king salmon, then effective starting May 16, the**

**Department may use, in preferential order, one or more of the following tools to precautionarily increase king salmon escapement through the sport fishery: restrict anglers to use of one single hook only, restrict the fishery to use of artificial lures only, restrict harvest to one bag limit per day (either personal or proxy, but not both), reduce the number of days per week king salmon may be harvested.**

**Once the Department can project a king salmon escapement of 17,000 king salmon past the Deshka River Weir or when 13,000 king salmon have swum past the weir (whichever comes first), the Department may return the fishery to normal fishing regulations the following day.**

**The commissioner may depart from the provisions of the management plan under this section as provided in 5AAC 21.363(e).**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** For 5 consecutive years (starting in 2012) the Deshka River sport king salmon fishery has been managed by preseason emergency orders setting the regulations to be used at the start of each season. From discussions the Commission has scheduled with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game it has come to our attention the Department seems to have no clear plan as to when and what emergency regulations may be appropriate at specific projected king salmon return levels. This creates several additional problems, a significant one of which is for the past 5 years regulations published in the Southcentral Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary have been inconsistent with preseason emergency regulations issued by the Department. Every time this occurs the Department must spend considerable time and money (consequentially) to publicize these changes. We believe sport anglers may be better served with a Deshka River king salmon management plan printed in the regulations book, and clarifying what anglers might expect under specific king salmon outlook and return levels. This is even more appropriate during these times of state financial downturn.

In addition, when the fishery is managed by emergency regulation there is no clear way for the public to weigh in on an ineffective emergency regulation or propose a regulation change, since all emergency orders expire after 90 days. For example for the past two years ADF&G has been implementing emergency Little Susitna River and Susitna River drainage king salmon regulations starting May 1, but since there is no significant king salmon harvest until after May 15, the primary result of implementation on May 1 is to minimize benefit for hardly any, and in some years, zero biological gain.

Another dubious emergency regulation is the reduction in annual king salmon limit from 5 to 2 fish throughout the Susitna River drainage and Little Susitna River combined. On the Deshka River and Little Susitna River, in particular, there is enough angling effort that a reduction in annual bag limit likely has little positive affect on king salmon escapement — especially considering that

many Alaskans simply take up proxy fishing to sidestep a decreased annual limit. In these times of state economic hardship wouldn't it be more cost effective if the Department simply kept the annual limit at 5 king salmon and, thereby, reduced the need for proxy permits and proxy fishing? During times of king salmon shortage, wouldn't king salmon escapements be more positively increased by restricting daily harvest to one bag limit (either personal or proxy, but not both)?

**PROPOSED BY:** Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (EF-F16-032)  
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**PROPOSAL 231 - 5 AAC 61.XXX. Susitna River King Salmon Management Plan.** Create a Susitna River King Salmon Management Plan, as follows:

Develop a Susitna River King Salmon Recovery Plan as follows:

(a) The purpose of this plan is to ensure adequate king salmon spawning escapements into mainstream Susitna River drainage tributary streams upstream of Unit 1 and provide management guidelines for the department. The department shall manage Susitna River king salmon sport harvest as follows:

(b) From May 1 - May 31 the department may allow sport king salmon harvest in all waters of Unit 2 open to king salmon fishing, that did not fail to attain king salmon escapement within the appropriate goal range the previous year.

(c) From May 1 - June 15 the department may allow sport king salmon harvest in all waters of Unit 5 open to king salmon fishing, that did not fail to attain king salmon escapement within the appropriate goal range the previous year.

(d) From May 1 - June 20 the department may allow sport king salmon harvest in all waters of Unit 3 and Unit 6 open to king salmon fishing, that did not fail to attain king salmon escapement within the appropriate goal range the previous year.

(e) each following year that the appropriate king salmon escapement goal(s) are attained for waters in that particular Unit and / or Unit(s) further upstream, the department may incrementally add up to another week of harvest opportunity until the full season of harvest opportunity is restored or an escapement goal is not attained.

(f) after failing to attain a specific king salmon escapement goal range, the department may reduce up to a week of harvest time for that specific water and / or a portion of downstream waters the following year.

(g) the department may identify and use other king salmon abundance indices it deems appropriate.

(h) The Commissioner may depart from the provisions of the recovery plan under this section as provided in 5AAC 21.363

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** All Unit 2, Unit 3, Unit 5, and Unit 6 waters of the Susitna River drainage, sport king salmon harvest has been closed for a period of 4 -5 years. Even though most waters are open to catch and release king salmon fishing, and even though some Unit 2 streams have been attaining escapement goals, the department has not developed any plan on when or how to determine if king salmon stocks have recovered enough to once again allow some harvest. This proposal seeks to develop conservative options in which sport king salmon harvest may once again be allowed. The proposed starting seasons under (b), (c), and (d) when king salmon harvest might be allowed are all scheduled early enough in the

season that only limited king salmon harvests would likely occur in each management unit. The public, user groups, advisory committees, and department are all welcome to weigh in with suggestions and options that might be agreeable.

**PROPOSED BY:** Andy Couch (EF-F16-130)

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**PROPOSAL 232 – 5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.** Modify the Fish Creek personal use fishery to accommodate a new Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) range, as follows:

5 AAC 77.540(d)(1) is amended to read:

(d) Salmon may be taken by dip net in Fish Creek only as follows:

(1) the commissioner may open, by emergency order, the personal use dip net fishery in Fish Creek from **July 15** [JULY 10] through July 31, if the department projects that the escapement of sockeye salmon into Fish Creek will be more than **35,000** [50,000] fish; **fishing periods will be daily from 6:00 a.m. to 11 p.m.;**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The department recently recommended lowering the SEG for sockeye salmon from 20,000-70,000 fish to 15,000-45,000 fish. Under current regulations, the dip net fishery may be opened by emergency order between July 10 and July 31 upon a projection of 50,000 fish. This proposal would set a new trigger point to complement the new goal range, change the start date to align with historical run strength levels needed to open the fishery, and change daily fishing times to reflect what has been written into emergency orders in past years to spread harvest over the run.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-155)

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**PROPOSAL 233 – 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.** Extend the area closed to sport fishing downstream of the Little Susitna weir, as follows:

5 AAC 60.122(a)(9) is amended by adding a new subparagraph to read:

(9) in the Little Susitna River drainage,

...

**(M) the waters within approximately 1,500 feet downstream of the Little Susitna weir are closed to sport fishing as indicated by ADF&G regulatory markers.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?**

5 AAC 75.050 designates a 300-foot area around any fish weir as closed to sport fishing in order to provide uninterrupted passage for fish and minimize vulnerability of salmon and potential for

overharvest of fish that can become concentrated prior to passing a weir. Increasing the area closed to sport fishing downstream of the Little Susitna River weir is necessary to protect salmon staging in several pools downstream of the weir.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-147)  
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**PROPOSAL 234 – 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.** Open waters in a closed area on Wasilla Creek within 300 feet of Palmer Fishhook Road to sport fishing, as follows:

5 AAC 60.122(a)(11)(A) is repealed:  
(11) the Wasilla Creek drainage, including Rabbit Sough,  
(A) **repealed** / **2017** [IS CLOSED TO SPORT FISHING WITHIN 300 FEET OF PALMER-FISHHOOK ROAD];

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?**  
King salmon used to hold downstream of the highway in a deep pool that was created over time by perched culverts. The board adopted regulations to protect those salmon from harassment and poaching. Those culverts were replaced and the stream bed returned to a natural state, thereby eliminating the large hole and the holding behavior of king salmon. Fishing opportunity for Dolly Varden char, particularly by children, was lost when the closure went into effect. Repeal of this regulation would result in the area within 300 feet of Palmer Fishhook Road remaining closed to salmon fishing by a separate regulation while allowing opportunity to fish for other species.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-148)  
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**PROPOSAL 235 - 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.** Increase the hours open to fishing on Cottonwood Creek, as follows:

Amend the daily hours where salmon fishing is allowed as follows:  
  
. . . , but fishing is allowed only on Saturdays and Sundays and only between the hours of [6:00 A.M. AND 6 P.M.] **5 a.m. and 10 p.m.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Silver and sockeye salmon stocks in Cottonwood Creek are healthy enough that they can once again support a few more hours fishing time in the sport fishery. The fishery is currently open to salmon fishing only in a small section nearly all of which is intertidal. Longer hours of daily fishing time allow anglers to fish



throughout the day under less crowded fishing conditions. This fishery is currently open only two days per week, so there is adequate time for salmon to migrate upstream into waters closed to salmon fishing.

**PROPOSED BY:** Frede Stier (EF-F16-081)

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**PROPOSAL 236 - 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.** Increase the hours open to fishing in the Wasilla Creek/Rabbit Slough drainage, as follows:

Amend hours in the area below the Alaska Railroad Bridge to read:

. . . , but fishing is allowed only on Saturdays and Sundays and only between the hours of [6 A.M. AND 6 P.M.] **5 a.m. and 10 p.m.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Wasilla Creek / Rabbit Slough drainage coho salmon are abundant enough to allow a few more hours of daily fishing time. The area where sport salmon fishing is allowed is a small portion of the drainage located on the Palmer Hay Flats. The salmon fishery is only open two days per week, so there is plenty of time for salmon to swim through the area when fishing is closed. Having more hours of daily fishing time on the two days per week when the fishery is open allows more participation to occur without crowding other anglers. For people that have other commitments on Saturdays and Sundays this would give more time to participate earlier and later.

**PROPOSED BY:** Paul Warta (EF-F16-087)

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**PROPOSAL 237 – 5 AAC 59.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.** Amend the regulations for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages to allow harvest of salmon, other than king salmon, that are less than 16 inches in length, as follows:

5 AAC 59.120(2) is amended to read:

- (2) salmon, other than king salmon,
  - (B) less than 16 inches in length

- (i) may **be taken** [NOT BE RETAINED OR POSSESSED] in flowing waters and unstocked lakes and ponds **from January 1 – December 31; bag and possession limit of 10 fish;** [NO OPEN SEASON; SALMON OTHER THAN KING SALMON, LESS THAN 16 INCHES THAT ARE CAUGHT MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY;]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The current regulation does not provide a bag or possession limit for sockeye and pink salmon that are less than 16 inches in length. If adopted, in the flowing waters and unstocked lakes and ponds in the Anchorage Bowl Drainage that are open for salmon fishing, the bag and possession limit for sockeye, pink, and chum salmon that are less than 16 inches in length, would be 10 fish. The bag and possession limit for sockeye,

pink, coho, and chum salmon 16 inches or greater would remain at 3 fish, and the bag limit for king salmon would also not be changed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-130)  
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**PROPOSAL 238 – 5 AAC 59.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.** Add Lower Sixmile Lake to the list of stocked lakes, as follows:

5 AAC 59.120(3)(A) is amended to read:

- (3) rainbow/steelhead trout may be taken from January 1 – December 31 in
  - (A) stocked lakes and ponds; bag and possession limit of five fish, of which only one may be 20 inches or greater in length; for the purpose of this subparagraph, “stocked lakes and ponds” include Alder Pond, Airstrip/Willow Pond, Beach Lake, Campbell Point Lake, Cheney Lake, University Lake (Behn or APU Lake), Clunie Lake, Delong Lake, Dishno Lake, Edmunds Lake, Fish Lake, Green Lake, Gwen Lake, Hillberg Lake, Jewell Lake, Lake Otis, Lower Fire Lake, **Lower Sixmile Lake**, Mirror Lake, Otter Lake, Rabbit Lake, Sand Lake, Spring Lake, Taku Campbell Lake, Triangle Lake, Upper Sixmile Lake, and Waldon Lake;

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently, Upper Six Mile Lake is listed in the stocked lakes list but Lower Six Mile Lake is not. Fish are stocked into Upper Sixmile Lake and are able to move freely between the two lakes. Currently these lakes have different regulations even though they are connected by a culverted road crossing that remains passable all year. These lakes should be managed as a single unit. With the proximity of these bodies of water to each other it will also simplify regulations and make enforcement easier.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-133)  
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**PROPOSAL 239 - 5 AAC 59.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.** Create a youth-only fishery on Ship Creek, as follows:

5 AAC 59.120. (14) in the Ship Creek drainage,

**(X) A person 16 years of age or older may not sport fish in the Ship Creek youth fishery zone, established by ADF&G regulatory markers to include a portion of the Ship Creek between the upstream side of the C Street Bridge and upstream to the downstream side restaurant bridge, during designated youth fishery days, which occur from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. on the third Saturday in June.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Establish a youth-only fishery on a section of Ship Creek to allow anglers 15 years of age and younger the ability to fish for king salmon.

**PROPOSED BY:** Dustin D. Slinker (EF-F16-090)

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**PROPOSAL 240 – 5 AAC 59.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.** Close all fishing on a portion of Campbell Creek when that portion is not open to coho salmon fishing, as follows:

5 AAC 59.122(a)(2)(A) is amended by adding a new sub-subparagraph to read:

(2) in the Campbell Creek drainage,

(A) sport fishing is closed from

**(iv) the downstream side of the Lake Otis Parkway Bridge to an ADF&G marker at the forks near Piper Street from October 2 – July 13;**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This section of Campbell Creek has been identified by law enforcement as a section that is heavily utilized by poachers targeting king and sockeye salmon migrating to their spawning grounds. This regulation would decrease poaching and aid law enforcement of unlawful fishing in this area.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-131)

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**PROPOSAL 241 – 5 AAC 59.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.** Extend the area closed to sport fishing on Ship Creek, as follows:

5 AAC 59.122(a)(14) is amended to read:

(14) in the Ship Creek drainage,

...

(F) the waters from the cable 100 feet downstream of the Chugach Power Plant dam upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located **300 feet above the Elmendorf Power Plant Dam** [100 FEET UPSTREAM OF THE CHUGACH POWER PLANT DAM] are closed to sport fishing;

(G) **repealed** / **2017** [FROM ADF&G REGULATORY MARKERS LOCATED 100 FEET UPSTREAM OF THE CHUGACH POWER PLANT DAM TO THE UPSTREAM SIDE OF THE REEVE BOULEVARD BRIDGE,

(i) ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY BE USED;

(ii) RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT MAY NOT BE RETAINED; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT CAUGHT MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AND RETURNED TO THE WATER UNHARMED;

(iii) SPORT FISHING IS CLOSED FROM APRIL 15 — JUNE 14];

(H) **repealed** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ /**2017** [THE WATERS UPSTREAM OF THE UPSTREAM SIDE OF THE REEVE BOULEVARD BRIDGE TO ADF&G REGULATORY MARKERS LOCATED 300 FEET ABOVE THE ELMENDORF POWER PLANT DAM ARE CLOSED TO ALL SPORT FISHING];

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This section of Ship Creek is already closed to salmon fishing, but open to trout (catch-and-release) and Arctic char/Dolly Varden (harvest) fishing. It has been identified by law enforcement as a section that is heavily utilized by salmon poachers. The salmon in this area are critical to the salmon broodstock at William Jack Hernandez Hatchery. This regulation would aid law enforcement staff and assure more fish would be able to make it to the hatchery.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F16-132)

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