

PROPOSAL 49

5 AAC 24.370. Prince William Sound Management and Enhancement Allocation Plan.

Reduce harvest of sockeye salmon in the directed chum salmon fishery prior to July 18 in the Armin F. Koernig Hatchery Terminal and Special Harvest Areas, as follows:

(e)(2)(A)(B)

Even if Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) chooses to change the production back to late time pink salmon there will be early chum salmon returning for several years.

Option 1: Instruct Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG) and PWSAC to follow the regulation and eliminate the common property seine fishery prior to July 18 and have the fishery return to a cost recover fishery like it was prior to 2004.

Option 2: Develop a management plan for this fishery that meaningfully addresses sockeye interception using the management tools available of time and area. This is a terminal harvest enhanced salmon fishery and at no time should it be open 144 hours a week. Three short openers per week would be adequate to harvest the small chum salmon return at this site. The Armin F. Koernig (AFK) Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) district is too large an area. The AFK Special Harvest Area (SHA) district is more than adequate to conduct this fishery. Moving the fishery inside the SHA should help the residents of Chenega Bay at the same time as well.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Interception of fully allocated sockeye salmon in the early chum salmon remote release fishery at AFK Hatchery in Southwest District, and the problems associated with the interception including: low sockeye escapement at Coghill River; reallocation of fully allocated stocks; and reduced time and area by the net and drift fleet due to weak wild stock escapement.

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(e) The department shall manage the PWS commercial salmon fisheries as follows

(2) Southwestern District:

(A) the district is closed to salmon fishing before July 18;

(B) on or after July 18, based on the strength of pink salmon stocks, purse seine fishing periods may be opened by emergency order;

When the regulation clearly states that the PWS Southwest District is closed before July 18, why is there a fishery that is in obvious violation of that regulation? This has been in effect since 1991(?). The regulation was developed to protect early run timed enhanced and wild salmon stocks that are intended for the drift and set net fleets in the Northwest Districts. So far, ADFG and PWSAC have only offered excuses as to why the fishery is not in violation of the regulation. They have not offered a plan to correct the error or a meaningful plan to reduce interception of salmon bound for other districts.

PWSAC Board Administrative Policies – Allocation Policy states that “enhanced salmon allocations will be based upon the “PWS Management and Salmon Enhancement Allocation Plan (5AAC 24.370).

ADFG went so far to blame the Board of Fisheries (board) for the fishery being in violation of the management plan.

“The board’s adoption of the management plan closing salmon fishing in the district prior to July 18 predated ADFG’s approval of the release of enhanced chum salmon that return to the AFHSHA. The commissioner has emergency order authority under AS 16.05.060 to open or close seasons or areas “when circumstances require”, which includes authority to open or close seasons or areas notwithstanding a management plan when ADFG has new information, that was not considered by the board, showing that action by emergency order is required. In this instance, ADFG has new information not considered by the board that requires the opening of the SHA. Namely, when the board adopted the management plan, the board did not consider the release of enhanced salmon returning to the SHA that will not be harvested unless the SHA is opened prior to July 18.”

So, ADFG is implying that when the board adopted the management plan in 1990 (with tremendous input from all stakeholders), it was the Board’s fault for not considering that PWSAC would start and ADFG approve an early chum salmon remote release seine fishery in the Southwest District in 2004. The “new information” is that ADFG failed to read the management plan when remote release was proposed as a seine fishery.

Only the Board has authority to reallocate salmon resources, not PWSAC or ADFG.

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