

PROPOSAL 149

5 AAC 15.357. Chignik Area Salmon Management Plan.

Increase commercial salmon fishing opportunity in the Western and Perryville districts, as follows:

(d) In the Western and Perryville District,

(1) during June, the commercial salmon fishery shall open concurrently with the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, and the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District, and the openings shall be based on achieving the Black Lake sockeye salmon escapement goals;

(2) from approximately June 26 through July 8,

(A) the department shall evaluate the strength of the sockeye salmon late run; and

(B) in order to continue managing the Black Lake sockeye salmon harvest and escapement, while assessing the Chignik Lake sockeye salmon run strength, commercial salmon fishing in the Western District will, in the department's discretion, be disallowed or severely restricted;

(3) from the end of the transition period, described in (b)(2) of this section, until the end of the fishing season, the department shall manage the commercial salmon fishery based on its evaluation of local pink, chum, and coho salmon runs, and the escapement objectives of the Chignik Lakes' system sockeye salmon.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Chignik Fishermen have little to no access to half of their fishing area prior to July 6. By regulation, Chignik Fishermen are only allowed a maximum of two 48 hour openings in the Western District between June 1 and July 5.

Chignik bound sockeye are being aggressively harvested in Area M beginning June 7 of each year, yet Chignik Fishermen are only allowed two 48 hour openings to harvest sockeye in their own Western Districts prior to July 5, just a few miles northeast of where the Area M Fishermen are allowed to harvest practically non-stop. With interception fisheries on both sides, Chignik Fishermen need all the fishing area available to them to be open to fishing when escapement goals are being met. When Cape Igvak is open, fishing in the Eastern District in Chignik drops off almost immediately. This compresses the Chignik fleet and reduces fishing opportunities for the entire fleet, especially when coupled with reduced sockeye abundance due to the sockeye intercepted just a few miles away. Opening the Western District would allow Chignik Fishermen more area to move to when fishing is negatively impacted by interception, as well as providing more opportunity for harvest of Chignik bound sockeye that is currently unavailable under the current regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Axel Kopun

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