

**PROPOSAL 130**

**5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.**

Allow commercial fishing with drift gillnets in the Chinitna Bay subdistrict starting August 15, as follows:

Set an opening date of August 15th for drift fishing in the Chinitna Bay Subdistrict. There is very little directed effort on the chum run before that and by August 15th a majority of the chum run has gone by.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** In recent years, the Chinitna Bay subdistrict has been opened to drift gillnetting only after the department gets an aerial survey of the streams to verify chum escapement. The problem with this approach is that weather has hindered these surveys and the surveys have to be coordinated with lower Inlet surveys. Also, experienced biologists have stated that aerial surveys are the least accurate tool possible for management purposes. This has led to Chinitna Bay remaining closed only because of lack of information. Last year, the department waited so long that there was only a single day of decent fishing as the run had already passed. A large number of very high value coho went unharvested because the fishery wasn't open yet.

**PROPOSED BY:** Teague Vanek

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