

Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan (6 proposals)

**PROPOSAL 117**

**5 AAC 21.365. Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan.**

Increase open waters from within 600 feet of mean high tide to within 1,200 feet of mean high tide as a restrictive option in the Kasilof Section set gillnet fishery after July 8, as follows:

(C) (3) amend as follows “within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark” change to “within 1200 feet of the mean high tide mark” within this paragraph provision in the Kasilof River Management Plan.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The 600 feet limitation in provision found in (C) (3) does not provide a fair and equitable or reasonable means of harvest on Kasilof bound stocks; this represents an extreme reduction of fishing area by 94.5% (from 1.5 nautical miles to 600 feet). This “further” restrictive measure was only intended to be used after half-mile openings when the Kenai and East Forelands are closed in order for the department to achieve the Kenai late-run sockeye goal. Note: the Kasilof Section genetic data on salmon harvest composition shows a de minimis incidental harvest on Kenai large kings (similarly situated to the drift fishery) and the composition of Kenai bound sockeye are also low, especially along the lower beach stat areas (244-21, 244-22).

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Beaudoin

(HQ-F19-114)

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**PROPOSAL 118**

**5 AAC 21.365. Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan.**

Amend the *Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan* to include the Kasilof River biological escapement goal, as follows:

Apply similar direction by the Board as found within the Kenai Late-run sockeye salmon management Plan (b) 1; i.e. **meet the biological escapement goal (BEG) range of 140,000–320,000 sockeye salmon.** Placed under (c) (1) of the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Remarkably, the Kasilof River sockeye salmon BEG goal is not provided within the Kasilof River Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Beaudoin

(HQ-F19-115)

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**PROPOSAL 119**

**5 AAC 21.365. Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan.**

Eliminate the Kasilof River sockeye salmon optimal escapement goal, as follows:

I recommend the Kasilof River sockeye salmon OEG be eliminated, so 5 AAC 21.365(b) would be amended as follows:

(B) [ACHIEVING THE LOWER END OF THE KENAI RIVER SOCKEYE SALMON ESCAPEMENT GOAL SHALL TAKE PRIORITY OVER NOT EXCEEDING THE UPPER END OF THE KASILOF RIVER OPTIMAL ESCAPEMENT GOAL RANGE OF 160,000 — 390,000 SOCKEYE SALMON.]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** An OEG of 150,000-300,000 fish for Kasilof River sockeye salmon was first adopted in 2002; the BEG at the time was 150,000-250,000 fish. The reason for the OEG - achieve the lower end of the Kenai River in-river sockeye goal at that timeframe. In both 2000 and 2001, sockeye salmon passage in the Kenai River was near the lower end of the inriver goal of 600,000 fish, while the sockeye salmon BEG in the Kasilof River was exceeded in both years.

In 2011, ADF&G recommended, and the BOF adopted, a new BEG for Kasilof River sockeye salmon of 160,000-340,000 fish and an OEG of 160,000-390,000 fish. The modified BEG represented a 90,000 fish increase on the upper end of the escapement goal, which was 40,000 fish more than the previous OEG. In the 2019 escapement goal memo, ADF&G recommended a BEG for Kasilof River sockeye salmon of 140,000-320,000 fish. If adopted, the upper end of this modified BEG is still 20,000 fish more than the original OEG for this stock.

This proposal seeks to eliminate the OEG for Kasilof River sockeye salmon. Since the OEG was adopted in 2002, the Kasilof River BEG has been exceeded in 14 of 17 years, while the Kenai River inriver goal was exceeded in 13 of 17 years. The need for the additional 50,000 fish buffer the BOF provided for with the original Kasilof River OEG was negated in 2011 with the modified BEG that was 90,000 fish higher than the BEG. The 2019 Kasilof River BEG goal recommendation is still 70,000 more than the original BEG and 20,000 fish more than the original OEG. In keeping with the original intent of the OEG, it is no longer needed because the modified BEG was increased to a level that exceeds the original OEG.

**PROPOSED BY:** Mark Ducker (HQ-F19-128)  
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**PROPOSAL 120**

**5 AAC 21.365. Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan.**

Remove the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area from (c)(4) of the *Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan*, as follows:

5 AAC 21.365 would be amended as follows:

[(4) AFTER JULY 8, IF THE KASILOF SECTION SET GILLNET FISHERY IS RESTRICTED TO FISHING WITHIN THE FIRST ONE-HALF MILE OF SHORE, THE COMMISSIONER MAY, BY EMERGENCY ORDER, OPEN THE KRSHA DESCRIBED IN (F) OF THIS SECTION TO BOTH SET AND DRIFT GILLNET FISHING USING ONLY ONE GILLNET, FOR FISHING PERIODS NOT TO EXCEED 48 HOURS IN DURATION WITHOUT ONE PERIOD OF 24 CONSECUTIVE HOURS OF CLOSURE; THE PROVISIONS IN (F)(1) — (8) OF THIS SECTION APPLY DURING THESE OPENINGS;]

Option B: move “fishing periods not to exceed 48 hours in duration without one period of 24 consecutive hours of closure” under the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** At the 2017 UCI finfish meeting, the BOF modified the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan to state that if fishing with set gillnets is limited to within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark in the Kasilof Section the hours fished are not subject to the time limitations in 5 AAC 21.359(e)(3) and 5 AAC 21.360. Kasilof River sockeye salmon are to be harvested in the fisheries and area that have historically harvested them, including the methods, means, times, and locations of those fisheries. The intention of this modification was to limit use of the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area (KRSHA).

With this new harvest provision, section (C)(4) of the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan should be eliminated to reinforce the direction of harvesting Kasilof River sockeye salmon found within the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan’s preamble, i.e., not in the KRSHA.

To meet that directive by the board, this proposal seeks to eliminate (C) (4) from the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Beaudoin (HQ-F19-117)

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**PROPOSAL 121**

**5 AAC 21.365. Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan.**

Amend the *Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan* to prioritize achieving the lower end of the Kenai River late-run king salmon escapement goal, as follows:

(b) Achieving the lower end of the Kenai River sockeye salmon escapement goal **and the lower end of the Kenai River late-run king salmon goal** shall take priority over not exceeding the upper end of the Kasilof River optimal escapement goal range of 160,000-390,000 sockeye salmon.

KRSA recommends no change in the Kasilof River optimum escapement goal – this goal continues to be appropriate for management of mixed stock commercial salmon fisheries in Upper Cook Inlet and recent escapement goal analyses have demonstrated that corresponding escapements within the OEG will continue to provide high levels of production and yield of Kasilof River sockeye.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Current plans do not provide adequate protection for Kenai or Kasilof late-run kings particularly during years of moderate to large Kasilof and/or Kenai sockeye returns. The current Kasilof salmon management plan provides guidance for prioritizing the minimum escapement goal of Kenai sockeye over the high end of the Kasilof sockeye escapement goal during periods of low Kenai sockeye abundance. However, it does not provide similar guidance with respect to the low end of the Kenai late-run king escapement goals. Meeting the low ends of escapement goals should always take precedence over not exceeding the high ends of other escapement goals due to the large impact on low escapements

on future returns, particularly during extended periods of reduced ocean survival like we are currently seeing for kings throughout Cook Inlet.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai River Sportfishing Association (HQ-F19-123)  
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**PROPOSAL 122**

**5 AAC 21.365. Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan; and 5 AAC 21.330. Gear.**

Create a commercial dip net fishery in the Kasilof River, as follows:

5 AAC 21.365 Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan

I don't know where exactly to place the new language...especially as this is a new fishery I can't even begin to give precise regulatory language.

When the commercial fishery is open to setnetting, a permitted commercial fisherman may fish the Kasilof River using up to (3) nets aboard his boat. Salmon shall not be marked as personal use fish, but rather recorded on regular fish tickets. Dip nets shall be subject to the descriptions found in general provisions 5 AAC 39.105 (24). Crewmembers shall be subject to license requirements of 5 AAC 39.109 and 5 AAC 39.110

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? 5 AAC 21.363 Upper Cook Inlet Management Plan**

(B) The need to allocate the harvestable surplus within user groups;

(5) in the absence of a specific management plan, it is the intent of the board that salmon be harvested in the fisheries that have historically harvested them, according to the methods, means, times, and locations of those fisheries;

AND

5 AAC 21.365 Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan

(3) and (4)

I would consider this a 'right to work' proposal. Fish and Game management, by BOF directive and at the request of groups such as KPFA are willing to fish a select group of fishermen, prioritizing the leases they fish, while systematically excluding others.

While there is plenty of precedent both in the Northern District and now written into the king salmon management plan in which a fishing period could be fished with a restricted number of nets, I know that this has been and will continue to be strongly opposed. I myself am certainly not sold on the idea. Why should a particular individual be penalized when his/her business is actually productive? I do not think they should. Also, most of the fishermen with holdings in the 600 foot fishery have a level of seniority and command a level of respect.

But this is not all roses. In addition to maintaining a full gear complement, a good portion of their success is due to the fact that depending upon the regulation in play, a large number of fishermen further out on the ocean or up the beach are shut down.

Whatever rationalizations might be given to the relative catch strengths of Kasilof fish in different locations, it is absolutely true that they can be caught in abundance up and down the Inlet, and that this stock is the main or major component of the harvest of fishermen excluded from the harvest. I don't disagree that North K-Beach fishermen should be included amongst those who have historically harvested Kasilof River stock; however, by expanding upon the 600 foot fishery, fishermen and fishing sites from the quarter mile out continue to be systematically excluded from the set net fishery.

In years when we have faced overescapements, a fairly egalitarian fishery, at least in concept, has come into play in the form of the Kasilof Special Harvest Area. I can understand very well many of the fishermen's general dislike of the fishery... having to leave home. And the egalitarian notion is bashed up quite badly when the few fishermen who camp out at the boundary catch the lion share of the incoming fish. However, it is also likely that a lot of the bad opinion towards the KRSHA comes from those who really do not wish to compete or be exposed to an egalitarian fishery. They would prefer that regulation preserve the status quo. Whatever all the different opinion, regulations do state that it is the intent of the BOF that the KRSHA should rarely, if ever be opened under the management subsection in which it is written and this only for conservation reasons.

So where does that leave the situation? I do have a solution. It's not perfect. But I think that it improves upon the current situation.

I would propose for the implementation of a commercial dip net fishery in the Kasilof River whenever the Kasilof Section is open to commercial fishing. An individual holding a commercial set net permit could fish a complement of three nets in the areas open to dipnetting in the Kasilof River.

I am not sure how many permit holders/boats would choose to participate, but given the flow of the river, it really is a nice egalitarian sort of fishery. There are currently very few boats that fish the Kasilof dip net fishery. Nearly all of the PU effort is shore-bound, and so additional effort in the river channel will be for nearly uncontested fish. How often can you say that in the Cook Inlet! It is also timely that the ADFG has recommended lowering the BEG on the Kasilof. As it has been difficult in recent years to achieve that BEG, and as the KRSHA has not been a raving success, additional fishing effort in the form of this new fishery may well be warranted even from a conservation perspective, let alone the allocation issue which I maintain should be the primary focus of the Board.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nathan Hoff

(EF-F19-116)

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