

PROPOSAL 12

5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Prohibit dipnetting from a boat when within 50 feet of a person dipnetting from shore in the Chitina Subdistrict, as follows:

No personal-use fishing from boats is permitted within 50 feet of any personal-use fisher who is standing either on the riverbank, on a rock in the river, or on any permanent, immobile object connected to shore.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? With the increasing popularity of dip netting from boats, there have been some issues with user conflicts between dip netters who are using boats and those who are dip netting from the shore in the personal-use area. An increasing number of dip netters who dip net from the riverbanks have expressed concern that fishers in boats have been coming too close for comfort. This can be frustrating and encroach on those without boats, making it more difficult to harvest fish.

In the Woods Canyon area the banks are very steep, and the number of dip net sites is not unlimited. Also, it is much easier for a boat to move up or down the river (avoiding conflict) than for a dip netter on the riverbanks to move to another spot. For a shore dip netter to move, they usually must pack equipment and fish up a steep embankment.

The recent trend of increased dip netting from boats presents some management challenges that demand sensible conservation measures. Wild salmon stocks tend to hole up in deep areas and rest on their way up the river, especially during high water. By dip netting from motorized boats, fishermen are able to target these stocks with a precision that other fishers lack. By motoring slowly while dip netting, fishers in boats can "trawl" slowly down the river, running more cubic feet of river water per minute through their nets than their counterparts on shore are able to.

If boat dipnetters were required to tie off to shore, it would help to level the playing field, and mitigate some of the pressure on the resource. Fishers with boats would still have the advantage of being able to move around the river, quickly and easily, to different fishing spots.

There have also been some safety concerns about dip netters from boats in the Woods Canyon area. The current in this area is very strong, and there are very few beaches or banks suitable for landing a boat.

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