

PROPOSAL 106

5 AAC 15.357. Chignik Area Salmon Management Plan.

Amend the *Chignik Area Salmon Management Plan* to increase inriver escapement of sockeye salmon prior to opening a commercial fishery by emergency order, as follows:

5 AAC 15.357 (b)(1) THE COMMISSIONER MAY OPEN, BY EMERGENCY ORDER, THE CHIGNIK COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERY WHEN 40,000 SOCKEYE SALMON HAVE ESCAPED INTO THE CHIGNIK RIVER. The Original Language reads; 5 AAC 15.357 (b)(1) the commissioner may open, by emergency order, the commercial salmon fishery when 20,000 sockeye salmon have escaped into the Chignik River, however, if the department determines that a strong buildup of sockeye salmon exists in Chignik Lagoon and that 20,000 sockeye salmon will escape into the Chignik River, the commissioner may open, by emergency order, the commercial salmon fishery before 20,000 sockeye salmon have escaped into the Chignik River.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A previously used management practice which ADFG has sought to move away from was to allow for the passage of 40,000 sockeye through the Chignik Weir prior to the first commercial harvest period. This management practice allowed for subsistence opportunity as well as providing an early deposit of escapement into the spawning grounds as well as give managers the opportunity to more effectively gauge run strength.

The current language does not allow for an adequate influx of early sockeye especially since in recent years low quality spawners have been predominant in the early run timing apportionment.

Current language also allows guesswork in ADFGs management by pre loading their escapement with the expectation that sockeye in Chignik Lagoon will escape past Chignik weir and that management can currently open the commercial fishery prior to 20,000 sockeye pass Chignik Weir. While this is widely understood as a trigger so that intercept fisheries that rely on Chignik’s salmon fishery being open to commercial harvest so that they may also open, this type of management can no longer be afforded given the current state of run failure in Chignik thanks to the immense pressure placed on Chignik stocks and minimal escapement requirements over the years.

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