

**PROPOSAL 66**

**5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area.**

Allow a catch-and-release fishery for northern pike in Harding Lake, as follows:

Allow catch and release fishing for Northern Pike in Harding Lake.

Proposed regulatory language

(c)(13)(A) in Harding Lake, northern pike may be taken by catch-and-release fishing only [SPORT FISHING FOR NORTHERN PIKE IS CLOSED].

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Sportfishing for northern pike is closed in Harding Lake. If nothing is changed, the restrictions will continue to deny anglers opportunity to catch-and-release northern pike in Harding Lake.

Sportfishing for northern Pike (*Esox Lucius*) has been closed to fishing since 2000 due to declining abundance during the 1990s. These restrictions did not lead to an increase in abundance of northern pike. Northern pike abundance in Harding Lake is a function of available spawning and rearing habitat, and the population abundance reaches equilibrium (carrying capacity) at each water level. The water level in Harding Lake is nearly 4 feet higher than in 2012 and there have been substantial increases in spawning and rearing habitat. Recent surveys of northern pike population indicate recruitment of young northern pike has increased. A catch-and-release fishery will be sustainable at all lake levels.

**PROPOSED BY:** Fairbanks Advisory Committee Fisheries Sub-Committee (HQ-F22-036)

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