

PROPOSAL 128

5 AAC 21.310 Fishing Seasons.

Provide additional commercial salmon fishing opportunity with set gillnet gear in the Upper Subdistrict as follows:

5 AAC 21.310. Fishing Seasons (C) (ii)

...; when **any portion of** the Kasilof Section is open to commercial fishing with set gillnets and the Kenai and East Forelands Sections are closed to commercial fishing with set gillnets, commercial fishing with set gillnets **will** [MAY] be allowed within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark in that portion of the Kenai Section north of the latitude of the Blanchard Line

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This issue deals with fishing North Kalifonsky Beach (NKB) (244-32), within 600 ft from Mean High Tide (MHT), on or after July 1.

With a recommendation from ADF&G, in 2020, the BOF lowered the OEG in the Kasilof River from 160,000-390,000 to 140,000-370,000 sockeye. Some of the reasoning, was in 1985, 501,071 spawners produced a return of 369,740 sockeye. The system failed to replace itself.

Since the 2020 BOF meeting, the Kasilof River has exceeded its OEG, every year. In 2022 almost ONE MILLION sockeye made it past the sonar counter.

NKB is a traditional harvester of "beach orientated" Kasilof stocks. Genetics reports have verified this over the years. A genetics report on sockeye, for the NKB 600 ft fishery, 7/13 & 7/21, 2019 showed the Kasilof River stock composition to be 59.5%.

In comparison, the Kasilof Section half-mile fishery for 7/13 & 7/21, 2019 the Kasilof stock composition was 27.3%.

Earlier in July, before the Kenai River sockeye show up on NKB, data and common sense would indicate that the Kasilof River sockeye component would be even higher on NKB.

According to Area Management Reports, 2020 & 2021, and conversations with ADF&G for 2022, for those three years, fishing NKB 600 ft, there were 32,474 sockeye harvested and 10 kings. A ratio of 3247/1 sockeye per king. Fishing 29 mesh deep nets, with 4 3/4 in gear, until the entire Kenai Section opens, is definitely a beneficial tool to harvest sockeye, while reducing king catches.

In 2022 NKB 600 ft fishery fished one day, on July 7. The entire Kasilof Section fished July 2, 4, and 7, prior to opening the Kenai Section. With ADF&G predicting 16,004 large King salmon to the Kenai River, closures to the ESSN fishery, were pretty much guaranteed. With restrictions/closures to the ESSN fishery, in-river goals to the Kenai and Kasilof rivers were grossly exceeded. NKB 600 ft should have fished on July 2 & 4.

It seems that ADF&G, over the past few years has been asking for " guidance" or "clear intent" of the Board of Fish thoughts and positions on various regulations.

At the March 2019 BOF Statewide meeting, "clear intent" was given by a BOF Member as to when the NKB 600 ft fishery should be used. In passing a portion of 5 AAC 21.310. (C) (ii), on the record, he stated his position was when "any portion of the Kasilof Section is fishing to help control escapement into the Kasilof, the Northern K Beach setlers within 600 ft WOULD be fishing". There was no opposing discussion to his statement. This proposal passed the BOF 6-1. The proposal, in 2019, as written was a, " may be allowed", even thou INTENT was given by the BOF to ADF&G to fish NKB 600 ft fishery, when any portion of the Kasilof Section was fishing.

The proposal I am submitting, would change the (may) be allowed to a WILL be allowed. This would give ADF&G guidance, but more importantly help stop exceeding BOF mandated sockeye goals to the Kasilof River.

PROPOSED BY: Gary Hollier

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