

PROPOSAL 13

5 AAC 56.XXX. New Section.

Create a management plan for the Anchor River, Deep Creek, and Ninilchik River king salmon sport fisheries as follows:

- (a) **The purpose of this plan is to direct the department in the management of the sport fisheries for the king salmon stocks in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, and Ninilchik River using the Anchor River preseason forecast and inseason projections from the Anchor River and Ninilchik River salmon monitoring projects.**
- (b) **The department shall manage the sport fisheries in each drainage to achieve the sustainable escapement goal established for each of the three stocks, while providing sustainable harvest and fishing opportunities, and maximizing the harvest of hatchery king salmon. The Ninilchik River will also be managed to prioritize collecting naturally-produced and hatchery broodstock.**
- (c) **In the Anchor River and Deep Creek,**
 - (1) **the area, seasons, bag, possession, annual and size limits, and methods and means for king salmon are outlined in 5 AAC 56.122;**
 - (2) **if the Anchor River preseason forecast is less than the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal of 3,200 – 6,400 king salmon, the Anchor River and Deep Creek shall be closed to sport fishing during the season specified in 5 AAC 56.122 (a)(2)(E) and (a)(5)(D); and**
 - (3) **if the Anchor River preseason forecast is greater than the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal of 3,200 – 6,400 and less than the threshold of 4,800, the sport fishery for king salmon in the Anchor River and Deep Creek shall be closed to the retention of king salmon and gear shall be restricted to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure;**
 - (4) **if the Anchor River preseason forecast is greater than 4,800, the sport fishery for king salmon in the Anchor River and Deep Creek may start as described in 5 AAC 56.122;**
 - (5) **if the Anchor River inseason projection is less than the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal of 3,200 – 6,400 after June 1, the Anchor River and Deep Creek shall be closed to sport fishing during the season specified in 5 AAC 56.122 (a)(2)(E) and (a)(5)(D);**
 - (6) **if the Anchor River inseason projection is greater than the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal of 3,200 – 6,400 and less than the threshold of 4,800 after June 1, the Anchor River and Deep Creek shall be closed to the retention of king salmon and gear shall be restricted to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure;**
 - (7) **if the Anchor River inseason projection is greater than the threshold of 4,800 after June 1, the sport fishery for king salmon in the Anchor River and Deep Creek may proceed as described in 5 AAC 56.122;**
- (d) **In the Ninilchik River,**
 - (1) **the area, seasons, bag, possession, annual and size limits, and methods and means for king salmon are outlined in 5 AAC 56.122;**
 - (2) **if the Anchor River preseason forecast is less than the threshold of 4,800, the Ninilchik River shall,**

- (A) be closed to the retention of naturally-produced king salmon, and
- (B) gear shall be restricted to only one baited, single-hook, artificial lure;
- (3) if the Anchor River preseason forecast is greater than 4,800, the Ninilchik River sport fishery for king salmon may start as described in 5 AAC 56.122;
- (4) if the Ninilchik River inseason projection is less than 900 naturally-produced king salmon after June 1, the Ninilchik River shall be closed to sport fishing during the season specified in 5 AAC 56.122;
- (5) if the Ninilchik River inseason projection is greater than 900 but less than 1,200 naturally-produced king salmon after June 1, the Ninilchik River shall, during the season specified in 5 AAC 56.122,
 - (A) be closed to the retention of naturally-produced king salmon, and
 - (B) gear shall be restricted to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure;
- (6) if the Ninilchik River inseason projection is greater than 1,200 but less than 1,500 naturally-produced king salmon after June 1, the Ninilchik River shall, during the season specified in 5 AAC 56.122,
 - (A) be closed to the retention of naturally-produced king salmon, and
 - (B) gear shall be restricted to only one baited, single-hook, artificial lure;
- (7) if the Ninilchik River inseason projection is greater than 1,500 naturally-produced king salmon after June 1, the Ninilchik River sport fishery may proceed as described in 5 AAC 56.122;
- (8) if the Ninilchik River inseason projection for hatchery king salmon exceeds the need for broodstock collection, and the inseason projection of naturally-produced king salmon is also sufficient to meet the sustainable escapement goal of 900 – 1,600 and broodstock collection needs, then the department may further liberalize the fishery to maximize the harvest of hatchery king salmon.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Due to low productivity of Cook Inlet king salmon stocks, the lower Kenai Peninsula roadside streams king salmon sport fisheries have been restricted and/or closed by emergency order (EO) in 12 of the last 15 years. These sport fisheries have been managed inseason by EO with a run projection based on king salmon escapement monitoring in the Anchor River. Additionally, a preseason forecast for Anchor River king salmon has been used since 2020 for preseason restrictions for these streams, and an inseason projection for the Ninilchik River has been used since 2021. By specifying the actions in a management plan, the public and the Alaska Board of Fisheries have the opportunity to provide input on the fishery structure. Based on recent review of the Anchor River king salmon sustainable escapement goal (SEG), the SEG range should be lowered to reflect a level of escapement that is likely to produce sustained yield under current conditions. Given the recent low productivity of these king salmon stocks, a management plan provides more structure to these fisheries to protect the stocks in times of low productivity, maximize the harvest of hatchery king salmon, and provide sustainable fishing opportunities when appropriate.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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