

PROPOSAL 134

5 AAC 21.320. Weekly fishing periods.

Modify weekly fishing periods as follows:

Delete from all management plans that restrict commercial fishing on two regular, Inlet wide, 12 hour fishing periods per week.

Establish in all management plans that the commercial fisheries will fish on two regular, Inlet wide, 12 hour fishing periods per week. If salmon abundance warrants additional Inlet wide fishing periods per week will be implemented.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The commercial fishery is the only indicator and calibration of the test boat of the run strength and salmon species on a real time bases. Without regular 12 hour, inlet wide, fishing periods the Department is basically managing blind as to the salmon species abundance, migration pattern and timing. The fishery has data from decades of management without regular inlet wide periods and the results have always been consistent gross over-escapements of all species and the lost harvest of millions of surplus salmon that is disastrous to the commercial fishing industry, the salmon resource and communities. In comparison the fishery has data from decades of management with regular inlet wide periods and the results were scientific escapement goals being met and sustainable harvest was maintaining a viable commercial fishery while providing ample sports fishing opportunity and harvest. Not fishing two inlet wide fishing periods per week, or more based on abundance, has resulted in tens of millions of harvestable salmon going un-harvested that negatively affects the commercial fishing industry, communities, National food source, interstate commerce, economies and also decreases future salmon production resulting from the effects of over escapement. It also violates the Magnuson Stevens Act and other applicable laws. The sports fishery has a reasonable opportunity to fish and reasonable numbers of salmon to harvest. In comparison the commercial fisherman, when restricted or closed down, has no other area to fish because they are restricted to the areas and their gear type by their limited entry permit they own. This is unfair and has no parity in reasonable opportunity between commercial and recreational fisheries under the current management plans. Because of overly restricted commercial fishing management plans only around half of the CFEC permit holders are currently participating in the Cook Inlet fishery, thereby reducing their harvest potential by half.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F23-038)
