

PROPOSAL 153

5 AAC 57.140. Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area.

Allow guiding on the Kenai River on Sundays and Mondays as follows:

OMIT Section 5 AAC 57.140(b) to read as follows;

Section 5 AAC 57.140 - Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area

((b) DOWNSTREAM OF AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE, A PERSON MAY NOT SPORTFISH FROM A REGISTERED GUIDE VESSEL ON ANY SUNDAY FROM MAY 1 THROUGH JULY 31, AND ON ANY MONDAY IN JULY, EXCEPT THAT A PERSON MAY FISH FROM A REGISTERED SPORTFISHING GUIDE VESSEL DURING THE LAST TWO SUNDAYS IN MAY AND THE FIRST SUNDAY IN JUNE UNDER THE TERMS OF A PERMIT ISSUED BY THE COMMISSIONER, FOR APPROVED CHARITABLE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OR FOR EDUCATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES.))

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The discrimination of guided sportfishing anglers in May, June, and July on the Kenai River. With current regulations, throughout the months of May, June, and July guided sportfishing anglers are not allowed to fish from a guide vessel on Sundays or Mondays downstream of Skilak Lake. These days were removed from guided sport fisherman in an effort to bring more parity between guided and private anglers king salmon harvest. Due to the dynamic nature of our fisheries, and continued low abundance of Kenai River King Salmon, the majority of guided sportfishing anglers are not targeting King Salmon but have transitioned into participating in more sustainable fisheries. Additionally, actively operating Registered Kenai River Guide numbers have seen a sharp decline in boat-based angling participation in the past five years. The lack of opportunity for boat based guided anglers on Sundays and Mondays in May, June, and July forces all guided boat-based anglers into the same days of operation throughout the week, resulting in concentrated pressure in river, as well as potential for increased user conflict. The increased participation in the Kenai River Sockeye fishery, by both private and guided anglers, has resulted in riverbanks and gravel bars being occupied by anglers for most of the days allotted for boat based guided sportfishing, thus the boat-based angling has become more challenging, with fewer areas to access and fish. By removing the day restrictions in Section 5 AAC 57.140 (b) on boat-based guided sportfishing, guided sportfishing anglers would have increased opportunity to fish outside of peak days (Friday and Saturday) of in river use and spread river use over a seven day time period.

It is not the intention of this proposal to eliminate nonmotorized restrictions downstream of Skilak Lake on Mondays in May, June, and July, but simply to allow guided sportfishing from nonmotorized vessels in accordance with current sportfishing regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai River Professional Guide Association

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