

PROPOSAL 235

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

Reduce the size of the Palmer - Wasilla Zone as follows:

(1) from June 15 - April 14, the flowing waters of the Palmer - Wasilla zone are open to sport fishing; the Palmer - Wasilla zone consists of all flowing waters inside a zone bounded on the north by Willow Creek, **on the west by the Parks Highway to Meadow Creek inclusive, along the shoreline of Big Lake to Fish Creek inclusive,** [ON THE WEST BY A LINE ONE HALF MILE EAST OF THE SUSITNA RIVER,] on the south by Cook Inlet and Knik Arm.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Waters of the Palmer - Wasilla zone have a April 15 - June 14 closure to protect spawning rainbow trout, however a portion of this closure area now may be primarily infested by invasive northern pike, with few significant populations of rainbow trout remaining to utilize flowing waters. This portion of the season could provide an opportunity to remove more invasive northern pike with little insignificant impact on rainbow trout in a specific portion of the current Palmer- Wasilla zone, that appears to have little effort and catch of rainbow trout during any portion of the season. This proposal would therefore reduce the size of the Palmer - Wasilla zone where fishing in flowing waters is currently illegal for two months of the season. Note: If ADF&G wanted to suggest further refinements to the proposed area either expansions or exclusions that could be agreeable as well. From discussion with ADF&G staff, I know there are a couple streams draining from the Nancy Lake system the department may want to remain closed from April 15 — June 14, and those two streams could easily be listed as exceptions. Purposes of this proposal are pike removal and providing a harvest-focused sport fishery during a time when few ocean-run salmon are available. Any rainbow trout caught would require immediate release during the April 15 - June 14 period. This would be similar regulation to the adjoining streams north of this area, where fishing remains open, but any rainbow trout caught must be released.

PROPOSED BY: Andrew Couch

(EF-F23-018)
