

PROPOSAL 60

5 AAC 18.369. Mainland District Salmon Management Plan.

Modify the *Mainland District Salmon Management Plan* to increase fishing opportunity as follows:

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Weekly fishing periods may not exceed 57 hours from July 6 **through July 19** [August 1]. **Weekly fishing periods initiated after July 19 are to be limited to 57 hours of initial duration but may be extended up to 48 hours in those sections exhibiting strong returns of local pink and chum salmon.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? July openings in the mainland district are limited to 57-hour weekly openings regardless of the abundance of local pink and chum stocks. Many salmon systems in the mainland district, especially in the southern sections, often experience high volumes of salmon returns in the latter half of July, however current restrictions in the management plan do not provide adequate harvest opportunities focused on these stocks. Recent management changes in the mainland district have further limited harvest opportunities to those portions of the mainland district defined by cape-to-cape boundaries that further inhibit the harvest of local stocks in the area when sockeye are present, resulting in substantial forgone harvest opportunities. Additionally, increasingly inclement weather in the area has made transit across the Shelikof Strait more dangerous and often untenable for smaller vessels. When local stocks are abundant, and with the same sockeye protections in place the department should provide additional harvest focused on these stocks in order to achieve the department's goal of achieving optimal yield. Allowing but not requiring extendable fishing periods in those sections of the mainland district where local salmon abundance is sufficient to warrant additional fishing time while maintaining the outer area closures that are triggered by sockeye harvests would better enable the department to achieve harvest and escapement objectives. Extensions may also allow for fishermen to opt for safer transit opportunities without sacrificing substantial fishing time.

PROPOSED BY: Darren Platt

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