

Guides – Kenai and Kasilof Rivers (12 proposals)

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 (EF-F23-056)

PROPOSAL 154

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

Allow guiding on the Kenai River without day and time restrictions if the king salmon fishery is closed as follows:

When King salmon fishing is closed on the Kenai River, day and hour restrictions will no longer apply.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? rescind days and hours restrictions for fishing from a guided vessel for May June and July when King salmon fishing is closed. Major revenue loss occurs when King salmon fishing closes. This would allow some of those losses to possibly be recovered by fishing for trout out of a vessel.

PROPOSED BY: Joseph Johnston Hanes

(EF-F23-144)

PROPOSAL 155

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 if king salmon fishery is closed as follows:

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

...

(b) Downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, a person may not sport fish 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 sport fishing 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. **In effect unless the king salmon fishery is closed due to Emergency Order (EO). In that case open to sport fishing on Mondays and Sundays from the start of the closure date during May 1-July 31.**

(c) From May 1 through July 31, sport fishing from a registered sport fishing guide vessel downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake is permitted only from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. **In effect unless the king salmon fishery is closed due to EO. In that case open to sport fish all days of the week and all hours of the day from the start of the closure date during May 1-July 31.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The regulations that are in place during the King Salmon sport fishing season (No guiding from a vessel Mondays and Sundays and guiding from a vessel only open Tuesday-Saturday 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) on the Kenai River (May 1-July 31) were put into place for two main reasons. The first being for the

conservation of the King salmon; relieving fishing pressure by restricting the days and the hours that guides may fish for them. The second aspect being a social one, allowing the private anglers time and opportunity to fish for king salmon without having to compete with guides on the river.

When the king salmon sport fishery is closed due to Emergency Order (EO) these regulations are no longer applicable or needed. The result of keeping them in place drastically limits the available fishing opportunities for guides. This puts a disproportional amount of pressure on the remaining available fisheries and bank locations on the river. In the last several years during EO closures this resulted in raised tensions and conflict between guides and locals over the limited locations and fishing options.

I propose that when the king salmon sport fishery is closed due to EO (May 1-July 31) in removing the special restrictions from guided sport vessel on the Kenai River, allowing guides to target other species from a vessel such as trout, silvers or pinks during their legal seasons at all hours of the day. As follows:

Closed to sport fishing Sundays and Mondays (except Memorial Day) May 1-July 31. **In effect unless the king salmon fishery is closed due to Emergency Order (EO). In that case open to sport fishing on Mondays and Sundays from the start of the closure date during May 1-July 31.**

Sport Fishing is only allowed Tuesday-Saturday from 6a.m. to 6 p.m. **In effect unless the king salmon fishery is closed due to EO. In that case open to sport fish all days of the week and all hours of the day from the start of the closure date during May 1-July 31.**

PROPOSED BY: Eric Loomis (EF-F23-044)

PROPOSAL 156

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

Allow sport fishing from a guided nonmotorized vessel on Mondays during May – July as follows:

[(3) (A) ON ANY MONDAY IN MAY, JUNE, AND JULY, EXCEPT MEMORIAL DAY, IN THAT PORTION OF THE KENAI RIVER FROM THE STERLING HIGHWAY BRIDGE UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE, EXCEPT THAT **UNGUIDED** SPORT FISHING FROM A NONMOTORIZED VESSEL IS ALLOWED ON MONDAYS IN MAY, JUNE, AND JULY AS DESCRIBED IN 5 AAC 21.359(C)(3); FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH, "NONMOTORIZED VESSEL" IS A VESSEL THAT DOES NOT HAVE A MOTOR ON BOARD;]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Drift only Mondays were instituted for the king salmon fishery. With recent closures of the king salmon fishery various outfitters have switched to offering trout fishing trips, and the river has become extremely crowded and noisy. Anglers looking for a quiet time on the river while fishing for trout simply cannot find

them. As a sport fishing guide, I want to offer my clients a quiet wilderness experience and I love the idea of drift only Mondays however I cannot currently offer that experience to my clients.

Alternatives: Drift only days for guides would reduce some of the traffic on the river but be confusing for both guides and the public.

Creating a drift only section on the middle river, while prudent, would likely face significant opposition.

PROPOSED BY: Patrick P McCormick (EF-F23-079)

PROPOSAL 157

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

Allow anglers to fish on the Kenai River on Mondays in August and September from a guided vessel as follows:

Allow guided anglers to fish for coho salmon on the Kenai River on Mondays in August & September from a guided vessel.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Monday closure on Coho's on Kenai river for guided anglers became a regulation around the year 2000, during conservation concerns and the department wanted to reduce the limit from 3 to 2, The guides wanted to keep the limit at 3 and in return for a Monday closure and loss of guide rod plus couple other restrictions, since that time the limit has been reduced to 2, guide numbers are substantially less, and the stocks have rebounded in the majority of years. There no longer is a justifiable reason to not allow guided anglers to fish on Mondays.

PROPOSED BY: Mel Erickson (EF-F23-099)

PROPOSAL 158

5 AAC 57.121 Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

Allow sport fishing from a guide vessel on Sunday and Monday with no hour restrictions as follows:

Allow sport fishing from a guide vessel on Sundays and Mondays with no hour restrictions above the Moose River in May, June & July.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The regulation restricting fishing from a guide vessel on Sundays and Mondays and the hour restrictions were intended for the King salmon fishery, for the most part all of this area is now closed for king salmon even on years king salmon fishing is open. Anglers now troll for sockeyes near the outlet of Skilak lake

and this fishery takes pressure off the bank fishery for sockeyes, Trout anglers also like to fish from boats in this area.

PROPOSED BY: Mel Erickson

(EF-F23-101)

PROPOSAL 159

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

Allow sport fishing from a guide vessel on the Kenai River on Mondays from August 1–November 30 as follows:

(i) **Repeal** [FROM JULY 31 OR THE END OF THE KING SALMON SEASON, WHICHEVER IS LATER, THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, SPORT FISHING FROM A VESSEL THAT IS REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, AS A SPORT FISHING GUIDE VESSEL IS RESTRICTED AS FOLLOWS:

(1) DOWNSTREAM FROM THE CONFLUENCE OF THE MOOSE RIVER AND KENAI RIVER, SPORT FISHING ON MONDAYS, EXCEPT LABOR DAY, IS PROHIBITED.

(2) UPSTREAM FROM THE CONFLUENCE OF THE MOOSE RIVER AND KENAI RIVER, SPORT FISHING FOR COHO SALMON ON MONDAYS, EXCEPT LABOR DAY, IS PROHIBITED; ANY COHO SALMON CAUGHT MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT FURTHER HARM.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The guide regulations currently in place for the coho salmon sport fishery prohibit fishing from a registered guide vessel below the confluence of the Kenai and Moose rivers on all Mondays from August 1- November 30 except Labor Day. It also prohibits fishing for coho salmon out of a registered guide vessel above the confluence of the Kenai and Moose rivers on all Mondays from August 1 - November 30 except Labor Day.

I propose that these regulations are repealed, and guides be allowed to sport fish from a registered guide vessel along the entirety of the Kenai River on Mondays from August 1–November 30.

The problem with this regulation remaining in place is that it puts extreme pressure on the remaining available fisheries and bank locations on the Kenai River. Once the sockeye run ends the only available option for guides is to trout fish in the middle river from Bings Landing. The result is that every guide on the river turns into a trout guide on Mondays and flood Bings Landing. This means instead of the guides being spread out over 50 river miles and targeting all available species. They are instead, pushed to the only available 10 river miles to fish, and can only target trout from their vessels.

In addition to the extreme pressure this region of the river receives on Mondays the pressure on Bings boat launch it just as extreme. The number of vehicles and boat trailers it receives is beyond its capacity as a launch.

By eliminating the Monday closures for guide vessels both above and below the confluence of the Moose and Kenai rivers, it would allow the entire river to be used as it is the remainder of the week and reduce the congestion and pressure placed on certain regions and fisheries. This would spread boats out throughout the river creating safer fishing and boating conditions for both guides and private anglers.

PROPOSED BY: Eric L Loomis

(EF-F23-156)

PROPOSAL 160

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

Limit guided activities on the Kenai River from May 1–July 31 as follows:

Modify 5AAC 57.140 to read:

...

(b) Downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, a person may not engage in guided sport fishing [SPORT FISH 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 sport fishing 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.

(c) From May 1 through July 31, guided sport fishing [SPORT FISHING FROM A REGISTERED SPORT FISHING GUIDE VESSEL] downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake is permitted only from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

An acceptable alternative to this proposal would be to limit guides to one boatload of clients per day, however without a requirement for guides to keep freshwater logbooks, this would be hard to enforce. I'd encourage the BOF to push the use of freshwater logbooks on the Kenai and Kasilof - not only for accountability for commercial operators, but for valuable in season data those logbooks provide local managers.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There has been a strategic shift by Kenai inriver commercial operators from guided King fishing to guided Sockeye fishing. Use and traffic is likely as high as it was during the busy years of the King fishery, but the fact that Sockeye fishing is shore-based has allowed the guide industry to avoid the old (King-based) rules of no guiding on Sunday, no powerboats on Monday, and guided operations being limited from 6am to 6pm. The guided sockeye fishery is a 24/7 operation, with guides working in teams to transport fishermen to accessible sockeye fishing locations with no limits on hours of operation, trips per day, no closed days, and no limit on the number of free guide permits handed out. Areas

normally closed to bank fishing are often still accessible by anchoring and exiting the boat in the river. The majority of this action occurs directly on top of King salmon spawning and rearing areas. We need some updated regs to maintain sideboards on this new industry.

PROPOSED BY: Todd Smith (HQ-F23-072)

PROPOSAL 161

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

Restrict guided shoreline anglers on the Kenai River to 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., from July 1 to August 15 as follows:

From Skilak Lake to the confluence of Cook Inlet restrict guided shoreline anglers from 6AM to 6PM, from July 1 to August 15 this very well might not be the go too solution, but I'd hope that the BOF and others will come up with a solid solution to a problem that continues to grow.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Over guided effort for reds on the Kenai River has found many residents having a tough time finding a spot for family and friends to fish, guides continue to grow their businesses on the second run of reds, many guides have locked up spots before 3 AM, especially when the king fishery is closed or restricted.

PROPOSED BY: Pete Imhof (EF-F23-004)

PROPOSAL 162

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

Allow guiding on the Kenai River prior to 6:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. as follows:

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

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

((c) FROM MAY 1 THROUGH JULY 31, SPORT FISHING FROM A REGISTERED SPORTFISHING GUIDE VESSEL DOWNSTREAM FROM AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE IS PERMITTED ONLY FROM 6:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? *2. 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 downstream of Skilak Lake are only allowed to fish from a guide vessel from 6AM – 6PM. 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 in river fisheries. Additionally, actively operating Registered Kenai River Guide numbers have seen a sharp decline in boat-based angling during May, June, and July in the past five years. The lack of opportunity for boat based guided anglers prior to 6AM and after 6PM forces nearly all guided boat-based participants into a similar hours of operation, resulting in additional pressure and the 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 day in the timeframe 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 hour restrictions in Section 5 AAC 57.140 (c) on boat based guided sportfishing participants alternate start times could be implemented leading to less crowding and/or user conflict at peak times of in river use.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai River Professional Guide Association (EF-F23-057)

PROPOSAL 163

5 AAC 56.140. Kasilof River guiding and guided fishing requirements.

Reduce the time fishing from and anchoring a guided vessel is allowed in the Kasilof River as follows:

Kasilof early run king fishery May 15 through June 30 6 Am to 6 PM from a guided boat and no anchoring from a guided boat until 6 am.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current issue is the over guided effort on Kasilof early king run, it's my belief that over the years residents back off when over crowded conditions exist. Plus it would allow a few more fish to make passage into crooked creek.

PROPOSED BY: Pete Imhof (EF-F23-003)

PROPOSAL 164

5 AAC 56.140. Kasilof River guiding and guided fishing requirements.

Limit sport fish guiding in the Kasilof River as follows:

Modify 5AAC 56.140 to read:

(2) From May 1 to August 31, guided sport fishing in Kasilof River waters downstream from Tustamena Lake is permitted only from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

An acceptable alternative to this proposal would be to limit guides to one boatload of clients per day, however without a basic program for industry tracking/accountability, this would be hard to enforce. I'd encourage the BOF to push the use of freshwater logbooks on the Kenai and Kasilof - not only for accountability for commercial operators, but for valuable in season data that logbooks provide local managers.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Increased Kenai River restrictions have led to a drastic increase in pressure on the Kasilof River, especially by the guided fishing industry. Unfortunately, there are no limits on use. In the past, guides have been limited to one trip per day but that regulation was repealed several years ago. I'd like to see us return to one trip per day rule, however it is unenforceable now, due to the elimination of guide registration fees which funded the data collection and accountability (logbook) program. We need sideboards on guided fishing on the Kasilof River. 24/7 operation with an unlimited number of trips would be unheard of on any river this size, with this amount of pressure, in any other place. In light of the fact that there is no way to effectively enforce a trip limit, I propose to adopt hours of use. This will give the river, the fish, and recreational users a break from commercial operation on this small river.

PROPOSED BY: Todd Smith

(HQ-F23-071)
