

Kenai River Vessels and Habitat Restrictions (2 proposals)

PROPOSAL 151

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.

Add days and area to the nonmotorized restrictions on the Kenai River as follows:

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.

...

(A) on any Monday **and Thursday** in May, June, July and **August** except Memorial Day, in that portion of the Kenai River from the **Warren Ames Memorial** [STERLING HIGHWAY] Bridge upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, except that unguided sport fishing **on Mondays, and guided or unguided on Thursdays** from a nonmotorized vessel is allowed in May, June, July **and August** as described in 5 AAC 21.359(c)(3); for the purposes of this subparagraph, "nonmotorized vessel" is a vessel that **has a motor less than 10 hp, which may be used only below the ADF&G marker at Cunningham Park, and only after fishing has commenced for the day. Except in cases of emergency, a non motorized vessel may not be attached to a motorized vessel in any capacity while operating** [DOES NOT HAVE A MOTOR ON BOARD.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Heavy, high density motorized vessel use is responsible for excessive turbidity, increased erosion, and safety issues. There are other social issues associated with crowding that are compounded by motorized vessel use in the current configuration of the fishery. Another drift day on the river, open to both guided and unguided anglers with no time restrictions, will help address hydrological and social issues and may promote more folks to invest in resource friendly drift boats. This would also reduce the exploitation of Late Run (LR) Chinook on the Kenai and allow more fish to move upriver and disperse during subsequent days. **A 2011, ADF&G memo regarding driftboat harvest states, "The creel estimates for late-run Mondays were approximately 4.2% of the total late-run harvests in both 2009 and 2010."**

This proposal seeks to offer an additional day of drift boat use on the Kenai River. An additional drift only day would be well received by the majority of sport fishermen as shown in the 2010 DNR Kenai River Recreational Study that says, **The majority of driftboat users (80%), drift boat guides (85%), and bank anglers (55%) support additional "drift-only" days.** There is little consensus about the best times for "drift-only" days, but support is greatest in higher density periods. Additionally more effort needs to be made in-river to mitigate the impact on main stem spawning chinook. The East Side Setnet fleet has been all but eliminated yet large king numbers continue to decline, more conservation effort is needed in-river to ensure that all chinook entering the river are allowed to spawn.

PROPOSED BY: Eric Nyce

(EF-F23-164)

PROPOSAL 152

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.

Prohibit motorized vessels on the Kenai River, as follows:

Make the Kenai River drift only.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Damage to habitat, no king salmon, unlimited guides, unlimited dipnetters, unlimited traffic, and because the river is a park. Unsustainable.

PROPOSED BY: John McCombs

(HQ-F23-065)
