

PROPOSAL 70

5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Extend the lower boundary of the Chitina Subdistrict, as follows:

The Chitina Dipnetters Assn. is requesting the BOF extend the lower boundary of the Chitina Personal Use Dipnet Fishery with new language in 5AAC 77.591(h) as defined below.

For the purpose of this section, the Chitina Subdistrict consists of all waters of the mainstream Copper River from the downstream edge of the Chitina-McCarthy Bridge downstream **to a line crossing the Copper River from a point just upstream of Canyon Creek on the east (lat. 61 deg 24'36.00"N – lon. 144 deg. 28'25.34"W) angling across the Copper River to the existing lower limit sign at Haley Creek** [to an east west line crossing the Copper River approximately 200 yds. Upstream of Haley Creek]

This extension would, at its longest point, increase the drift area by approximately .4 of a mile or 694 yds. and give boat dipnetters a longer continuous drift, allowing more spacing between boats and alleviate the dangerous congestion of boats that occurs now. The revised language would still give law enforcement a straight line sight of the entire boundary line as viewed from Haley Creek. This small increase in size of the Chitina Sub-district is unlikely to result in increased harvests, since the fishery is managed by emergency order to stay within the allocation contained in the management plan and because Personal Use dipnetters are held to an annual bag limit and once met they are done for the year.

A map identifying the existing and proposed lower boundaries will be submitted to the BOF prior to the December 2024 Copper River/Prince William Sound meeting.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the last 12 years, drift dipnetting from both personal and guided boats has substantially increased as a method of harvesting salmon in the Chitina Personal Use Dipnet Fishery (CPUDF). This is in large part due to the very limited number of suitable sites available for shore based dipnetting. Because much of the CPUDF lies within the deep turbulent waters of Woods Canyon on the Copper River, productive areas to dip from boats are very limited. A favorable and high use area for drift dipnetting from boats lies at the downstream end of Woods Canyon, on the east side of the Copper River, just upstream of the lower boundary of the CPUDF. This short drift area is only approximately 250 yards long, has a gravel bottom and stays relatively snag free saving the loss of \$150+ dipnets. This short drift area has become the go-to spot for boat dipnetters and often becomes very congested with up to and over 15 boats drifting the same area. This congestion of boats in this short drift area has created a very dangerous navigation hazard for these boaters within the swift waters of the Copper River and boat accidents are inevitable.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. The Chitina Dipnetters Assn. and the Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED BY: The Chitina Dipnetters Assn.

(HQ-F24-030)
