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STATE OF ALASKA

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Illegally Dumped Fish Waste Invites Bears, Fines

(Anchorage) – With salmon arriving now in many Alaska fisheries, anglers and dipnetters are reminded to take care to dispose of fish waste properly. Discarding fish waste on public or private property or along roads, pull-offs, and trails can attract bears into residential areas and result in fines ranging from \$300 to \$1,000.

In Anchorage, where some 300,000 people live in close proximity to bears, fish waste is illegally discarded each summer in vacant lots, greenbelts, and along city streams and lakeshores. Anchorage area wildlife biologist Dave Battle believes many people who dump fish waste don't realize the danger they create for others.

"Fish attract bears," said Battle, "and brown bears, particularly, may aggressively defend those food sources."

The problem isn't limited to Anchorage. Illegally discarded fish waste also sets the stage for human-bear conflicts in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and on the Kenai Peninsula. Illegal dumping is prohibited under Alaska's littering laws.

Anglers and dipnetters who clean fish on site are encouraged to chop carcasses into numerous pieces and throw them into fast-moving water. Those who remove fish from the fishing site and fillet or process them elsewhere should consider the following recommendations:

- If allowed, fish waste should be taken directly to a waste transfer station or to the landfill. Another option is to freeze fish waste to eliminate odors and then place it out with garbage on the morning of trash pickup. Do not place waste out the night before pickup.
- The Central Peninsula Landfill located at Mile 98.5 Sterling Highway 2.5 miles south of Soldotna accepts fish waste free of charge from 8 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. seven days a week in summer.
- Fish waste can also be deposited at Peninsula transfer facilities, including those in Cooper Landing, Kasilof, and Ninilchik, but in smaller quantities; all fish waste must be double-bagged in plastic trash bags with a limit of two bags dropped off per day.
- Anchorage Regional Landfill, the city's Central Transfer Station, and the Girdwood Transfer Station all accept residential, non-commercial fish waste.

- Matanuska-Susitna Borough Solid Waste accepts small quantities of non-commercial fish waste (less than 150 pounds) at the Central Landfill located at N. 49th State Street in Palmer. Must be double-bagged and tied in leak-proof bags. Fish waste from private residents is accepted at transfer stations. For more information, call 861-7620.

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