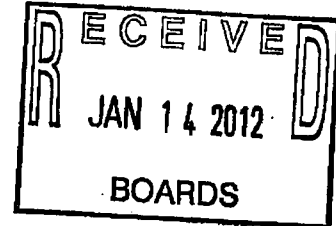


RC21



Board of Fisheries  
Monica Wellard, Executive Director  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5226

Members of the Board of Fisheries,


The American Fly Fishing Trade Association is writing today to voice our strong opposition to proposal 113 under your consideration, which would prohibit catch and release fishing on the Kanektok and Arolik Rivers. On behalf of our membership which includes fly fishing tackle manufacturers, retailers, outfitters, lodges, guides, travel companies and others with a vested interest in the fly fishing industry, we are deeply concerned about this attack on a management strategy which is at the core of our industry.

Catch and release management is a proven technique used globally by user groups that care deeply about their fishery resources. On the Kanektok and Arolik Rivers as in other parts of the world, catch and release allows all user groups to enjoy the benefit of the resource, while minimizing the impact of users for whom retention is not a priority. Many anglers who visit the Kanektok and Arolik Rivers each year are in fact opposed to the retention of fish, and we feel that their right to continue to experience the resource must be retained.

Of particular concern is that fact that proposal 113 seeks to ban catch and release fishing purely on ethical grounds - there is no argument in proposal 113 that is specific to the Kanektok and Arolik drainages. The passage of proposal 113 would set a precedent that would be devastating to sportfishing in the state of Alaska, and devastating to the sportfishing industry as a whole.

We ask that you maintain the highly successful management strategy that is catch and release fishing, and do not accept proposal 113.

Sincerely,

  
Ben Bulis  
AFFTA President

  
Jim Klug  
AFFTA Board Chairman