

My name is Brian Harrison and I live in Homer; I am a drift fisherman in Cook Inlet and my wife and two daughters are all intimately connected to Cook Inlet fisheries.

Recent research on Cook Inlet fisheries demonstrates that the greatest barrier to sustainability of these fisheries is the conflict over allocation and conservation issues we all participate in. By refusing to work together to come up with a management plan we can all agree to, or at least live with, we do the greatest harm to our fisheries without even putting a net or hook in the water. We are all focused on taking from someone else, or trying to limit what others can take from us. And we are all losing.

While most of the time we talk about the things we disagree on, I would like to focus on several areas where agreement might be easily reached.

- The first area is pike eradication in the Susitna and Kenai River drainages. This is an obvious and very serious threat to our fish stocks – one that affects all user groups. Why we have not come together as fishing communities to seriously tackle this important issue is baffling to me. Whether we put a bounty on them, start a commercial fishery, or implement other effective methods, it is an easy win for everyone to take immediate and decisive action.

Whether a guided or private angler, a personal use fisherman, or me harvests a fish, the end result is a benefit to someone. The income it provides to fresh and salt water commercial users, the consumer who has access to a healthy, fresh seafood meal, or the

dinner it puts on a personal use family's table, it is a benefit. There is no benefit when it is breakfast for an invasive species.

- In the dip net fishery, I believe that you will find agreement that all users want a safe, orderly, and well-run fishery on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers. Education, better enforcement of regulations, and reduction of crowding in this fishery is desired by most, and could be funded through a nominal fee for the dip net harvest card if funding is a concern. Reasonable limits, when imposed correctly, make everyone's fishing experience more rewarding, profitable, and most importantly protects the habitat throughout Cook Inlet. Electronic in season reporting should be explored for all in river user groups where current up to date harvest information will further managers ability to respond accordingly when in season changes are warranted.
- The drift and set net fleets in Cook Inlet are hugely important, but not without their limitations. We worry about how the drift fleet impacts northern district-bound fish, and how the set net fleet impacts Chinook. Let's give managers the tools, and leniency within the management plan, to manage for abundance-based harvest. Let's also consider how we can be most efficient in our harvest. Requiring harvests to take place in prescribed areas at predetermined times may not be providing the intended results. Concentrating the fleet into small areas may have a more adverse effect on discreet stocks than allowing the effort to be spread out and having less of an effect on any one discreet stock.

- Finally, I encourage you, Board of Fish members, to look at proposals that make the fishery better for everyone, not just one group or another. Please don't buy into the politicization of science. I urge you to set aside those proposals that masquerade as conservation when in reality they allocate at their core. We have some excellent biologists and managers in our state, please listen to them and heed their advice.

Ben Hansen 1/31/04

Source List

- 2014** **Alaska Marine Science Symposium**
Presentation title: Identifying sources of conflict in Cook Inlet and Kenai River salmon fisheries within the context of resource sustainability. Anchorage, AK

Talks about the impact of resource conflict between user groups on Cook Inlet salmon and their management. Demonstrates that there are agreed upon sources of contention as well as consensus between user groups, and that the conflict itself is far more damaging than any particular management plan. Supports finding means to develop collaborative and balanced management plans.

- 2013** Loring, P.A., S.C. Gerlach and **H.L. Harrison**. Perceptions of Sustainability Among Fishers of Alaska's Cook Inlet Salmon Fisheries. *Society and Natural Resources*.

Talks about how fishers perceive the problems in their individual fisheries (gear types). Demonstrates that user groups have many important things in common (desire for conservation; self-identification through livelihoods as fishermen/women; importance of fishing to economic well-being), and desire the end to conflict and the ongoing sustainability of the fishery above all else.

- 2013** Loring, P.A., and **H.L. Harrison**. "That's what opening day is for:" Social and cultural dimensions of (not) fishing in Cook Inlet, Alaska. *Maritime Studies*.

Demonstrates the importance of having balanced and reasonably predictable management plans as a means of providing for safety and practice in an "opening day" for commercial fisheries.

- 2013** **Loring, P.A.**, S.C. Gerlach, and **H.L. Harrison**. "Seafood as Local Food: Food Security and the Role of Salmon Fisheries on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula." *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. [online first] doi:10.5304/jafscd.2013.033.006.

Demonstrates the importance of an integrated salmon harvest system (multi-user group) to the food systems of the Kenai Peninsula and health of Alaskans.

- 2013** **Harrison, H.L.** "This is Who I Am": Perspectives on economy, policy, and personal identity and culture of Cook Inlet and Kenai River fisheries. (Master's thesis). University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Winner of the Western Association of Graduate Schools Distinguished Thesis Award, this masters thesis explores Cook Inlet salmon fisheries and the conflict surrounding them.