

PROPOSAL 138

5 AAC 21.320. Weekly fishing periods.

Establish drift gillnet weekly fishing periods in the Chinitna Bay Subdistrict, as follows:

(A) in the Chinitna Bay Subdistrict [ONLY DURING PERIODS ESTABLISHED BY EMERGENCY ORDER] **starting August 15 salmon may be taken from 7:00 a.m. Tuesday until 7:00 p.m. Tuesday and from 7:00 a.m. Friday until 7:00 p.m. Friday.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Chinitna Bay is unique in the fact that it is managed by Upper Cook Inlet commercial fisheries management biologist yet the aerial surveys are conducted by Lower Cook Inlet commercial fisheries management biologist and funded in the lower Cook Inlet commercial fisheries budget. Aerial surveys for Chinitna Bay are conducted in conjunction with surveys in the Kamishak Bay district and are therefore dependent upon weather and budget. Weather in the Kamishak Bay district and Chinitna Bay are well known to be unfavorable starting in August and continuing unfavorable until May. Heavy rains this time of year muddy the water making salmon counts from aerial survey impossible. The Department's budget continually receives less money for aerial surveys. In some years Chinitna Bay never gets an aerial survey and the fishery occurring after August 15 is delayed until after the majority of the run is over, even though escapements have been met and there were abundant harvestable surpluses available. There is a precedent established from past years management practices that opened the fishery August 15 when weather or budget prevented aerial surveys of Clear Creek. August 15 is a date the chum salmon run into Clear Creek is considered over. In order to have a reliable fishery and allow the harvest of the surplus salmon, Chinitna Bay needs to be open starting August 15.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F19-104)
