

**PROPOSAL 18**

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

Extend the lower boundary of the Chitina Subdistrict downstream ½ mile, as follows:

Currently in regulation 5 AAC 77.591(h), the Chitina Personal Use Dipnet Fishery (CPUDF) boundary consists of all mainstream waters of the Copper River from the downstream edge of the Chitina McCarthy Bridge downstream to an east west line crossing the Copper River approximately 200 yards upstream of Haley Creek.

Our proposed remedy for the hazard of so many boats fishing in a small area is for the BOF to approve extending the CPUDF lower boundary approximately ½ mile downstream from the existing CPUDF lower boundary. This would allow boat dipnetters a longer continuous drift, allowing more spacing between boats, and alleviate the dangerous congestion of boats that occurs now.

New wordage in 5 AAC 77.591(h) would read **“For the purposes 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 downstream of Canyon Creek on the east (lat. 61 deg. 24'30.00”N -- lon. 144 deg. 28'39.00”W) to a point directly across the Copper River on the west (lat. 61 deg. 24'37.00”N—lon. 144 deg. 29'3.00”W)**

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.

The Chitina Dipnetters Association in its public comments will include a map identifying the existing and proposed lower boundaries.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** In the last 10 years, drift dipnetting from personal boats has substantially increased as a method of harvesting salmon in the 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 has created a very dangerous navigation hazard for these boaters within the swift waters of the Copper River.

**PROPOSED BY:** The Chitina Dipnetters Association and Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F20-044)

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