



Alaska Board of Fisheries

Marit Carlson-Van Dort, Chair

Submitted via online portal & via email: [dfg.bof.comments@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.bof.comments@alaska.gov)

RE: Support for Proposal 33

November 13, 2022

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Alaska Board of Fisheries Members:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Ugashik Village Setnetters. We currently take part in the fishery and have for the 42 past seasons. (Lisa Albecker 35yrs. Set & William Albecker 36 yrs. Drift & 6yrs. Set as a permit holder + crewed previously) We are in strong support of this proposal and feel that if passed it would be in the best interests of the fishery, its participants, and the State of Alaska.

**Background:** During the last four+ seasons an extensive mudbank has developed along the inshore end of our area in which we fish our set gillnets. This hinders us from fishing as effectively as we have in the past (decrease in functional fishing time). The current offshore distance limitation of 600 feet from the 18-foot-high tide mark precludes us from fishing the full extent of our allowable gear and denies us the best use of the fishing time allowed. We have lost an estimated 20% of our opportunity due to fewer hours of available fishing time because our nets are not in the water.

In 2016 the BOF adopted the "Criteria for Board Deliberations on Commercial Set Gillnet Proposals Impacted by Coastal Erosion" (2016-238-FB) which outlines the criteria that the board will consider and weigh when deliberating on a proposal related to set gillnet sites impacted by coastal erosion. We feel that our situation in Ugashik Village clearly fits Criteria #1 which states that *"issues that arise from land that has either eroded or accreted through natural or artificial causes contiguous to the leasehold"* need to be taken into consideration when the Board deliberates on these types of situations.

**Proposal 33:** To remedy the issue we propose that the maximum offshore distance be increased from 600 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark to 800 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark. Increasing the offshore distance allowed will enable the set gillnets in Ugashik Village to effectively fish their historic fishing time as determined by the tides of the day. The eleven sites currently fishing in this area would



PC1

all have the ability to fish farther offshore negating any allocative effects potentially arising from this solution. This is an area that is only open to set gillnets, drift gillnets are not allowed in this area. At the time of the submittal of this proposal ten out of the eleven sites concur that the maximum offshore distance should be amended by the board to 800 feet from the 18-foot-high tide mark.

Regards,

Lisa Albecker, Set netter

William Albecker, Set netter



PC2

**Name:** Stosh Anderson

**Community of Residence:** Kodiak AK

**Comment:**

In the East side drift fishery after 17 July (end of EO) a general district is appropriate. Proposal 52 is the proposal that encompasses the concept best. The 3 mile West boundary needs to be defined with a series of Lat Log points. All up river boundaries remain the same.

Thank you

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November 13, 2022

Alaska Board of Fisheries  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK. 99811-5526

Dear Members:

Thank you so much for this opportunity to comment on the 2022 round of Bristol Bay Finfish proposals.

I have a 45+ year history in the Bristol Bay salmon fishery. I raised my children on the beach at Pederson Point in the Naknek-Kvichak district. Both grew up setnetting with me. My daughter took over management of our setnet operation over a decade ago. I love that she's now the skipper and I am the "crew". Please see my comments below on the following proposals.

**I SUPPORT the intent of Proposals 31 and 32 for king salmon tally sheets for all sport and commercial fishery removals of king salmon in Bristol Bay.** Commercial fishermen are currently required to report on fish tickets all king (and coho) salmon taken, but not sold. It only makes sense that king salmon sold also be tracked in order for the department to know total removals in the commercial fishery. Likewise, to enable managers to have a complete picture of king salmon resources, sport fishermen must be required to do the same. I don't know when logbooks stopped being required in the Bristol Bay sport fishery, but it is impossible for managers to actively manage without good information.

**I SUPPORT Proposal 35 to increase the minimum distance between gear.** Depending upon where fish are running, drift boat interactions with setnet gear occur far too frequently and usually to the detriment of setnetters. As the proposer mentions, it is frequently the case that if setnet anchors are pulled and/or running lines cut, replacement gear can only be redeployed on specifically low tides and the operation is dead in the water until that time occurs. The advent of D boats and additional gear, there is usually additional distance between the end of the drift net and the drift boat operator such that he/she has even greater difficulty seeing how the end of the drift net may be interacting with a setnet. Operating in this manner has created really unsafe situations for setnetters whose skiff is under the gear that's been entangled. For the safety of all involved and maintaining the integrity of setnetters' operations, increasing the buffer from setnets by 200' is an idea whose time has come.

**For the same reasons—and more—that I support Proposal 35, I also SUPPORT Proposals 36 and 37 to shorten drift vessel towlines.** Vessels using absurdly long tow lines in order to have the vessel sitting in deeper water while the net lies in the shallows precludes active engagement in safely maneuvering said net. Not only is the operator violating the definition of drift fishing when utilizing a lengthy towline as just described, 1) the operator simply cannot see how his/her net is acting from that far away and may 1) thereby potentially creating an unsafe situation should the gear snag on a setnet, 2) compromise the integrity of the setnet operation





should gear become moved and/or cut, and finally, 3) on an ebb tide the quality of fish will be compromised by dragging them across sandbars in order to retrieve them.

**I strongly SUPPORT Proposal 58 to open the NRSHA when the Naknek River has achieved the mid-point of its escapement goal range.** There is no justification for allowing for the kind of overescapement in the Naknek River that has been seen in recent years when it is possible to allow additional fishing effort to crop off overescapement in the circumstances described in the proposal. Openings can be tailored to minimize gillnet harvest of king salmon in order to address the concerns of upriver sport fishermen.

**I OPPOSE Proposal 57 to repeal the allocation plan in the Naknek-Kvichak District.** The concern raised by the proponent is nonsensical during years of high abundance. Managers need as much gear in the water as possible, particularly when larger runs on other districts have drawn drift effort away from the Naknek-Kvichak District. The allocation plan is moot at such times. But, I know that as a setnetter, we absolutely need the allocation plan in years of lower abundance and/or when the Naknek-Kvichak has a large run and all other districts have low runs, thus drawing a huge drift fleet to the Naknek-Kvichak. I fail to see how the proponent would have any more fishing time during runs such as the large runs of recent years had the department closed the setnets to balance allocation. The only result, besides hurting setnetters, would be even more overescapement up the rivers.

Having been intimately involved in the board process for nearly 35 years, you have my heartfelt gratitude. I know well the hours you invest in trying to make the best decisions possible for all stakeholders and the resource. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Sue Aspelund  
1517 W 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Port Angeles, WA 98363



November 14, 2022

Alaska Board of Fisheries  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Members of the Board of Fisheries:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposals for the 2022 Bristol Bay Finfish meetings. I have been a commercial fisherman in Bristol Bay since 1996 and am thankful to have had the opportunity to participate in both the set and drift gillnet fisheries. I currently fish in the Naknek District as a setnetter, and in the past I crewed on a drift gillnetter in the Naknek/Kvichak District and Naknek River Special Harvest Area (NRSHA) during the 2000s. As such, I'll begin my comments on the proposals directly pertaining to the East Side management area.

**I am writing to OPPOSE the intent of Proposal 57, regarding repealing set and drift gillnet allocations in the Naknek-Kvichak District.** Recent years have seen large salmon runs across the district, and across the Bay as a whole. With the largest runs in recent years going to the Nushagak District, the number of drift gillnet vessels in that district was larger than the number of drift gillnet vessels in the Naknek-Kvichak District. This, combined with larger run sizes, led to the setnet fleet catching more than the originally intended 16% allocation. During these larger runs where overescapement is a threat, it doesn't make scientific sense to shut down one gear type to keep the allocation in check as this could lead to even more overescapement. However, during smaller run sizes where the Naknek-Kvichak District is seeing a larger return than other districts, therefore ending up with a larger number of drift gillnet vessels, the allocation is of the utmost importance to setnetters to allow fairness to both gear types in the fishery. If a drift gillnet vessel does not like the allocation plan numbers in the Naknek-Kvichak District, it can move to a district that doesn't have the allocation plan or where the fishing is better. Setnetters do not have that option.

**I support Proposal 58 to open the NRSHA when the Naknek River escapement exceeds the midpoint of the escapement goal range and is projected to exceed the upper end of the escapement goal range.** I agree with the idea to provide increased fishing opportunity to reduce escapement in the Naknek River system. I particularly found it thoughtful of the proposer to add in a schedule for the in-river fishery to close one hour prior to high tide in consideration of tugs, barges, and tenders moving through the river system. In previous years of fishing in the NRSHA it was very difficult for larger vessels to navigate through the fishing activity. I also support the idea that fish harvested in the NRSHA shall be delivered prior to fishing the Naknek Section or Naknek-Kvichak District, as this reporting will help tally the specific pushes of fish up the Naknek River and perhaps help with emergency order in-season management decisions.

**In regards to proposals for the Bay as a whole, I support Proposals 31 and 32 which cover reporting requirements for king salmon harvesting.** As a commercial permit holder, I'm required to report any king salmon landings occurring in my operation, whether for personal use or for sale to a



processor. I was shocked to read that currently the sport fishing industry no longer requires logbooks to be on hand. I feel self-reporting from any gear type and both commercial and sport fishing industries is necessary for understanding the impacts of how fishing efforts or under-reporting are contributing to our declining king salmon runs.

**I support Proposal 35 to increase minimum distance between set and drift gillnet gear.** The current regulation allowing drift gillnet gear to be operated within 100 feet of the offshore end of a set gillnet is not sufficient, especially with an increase in dual-permit operations on drift boats, the use of longer tow lines, and the increase in jet-drive boats which allow fishing in shallower water. I agree that increasing the distance to 300 feet is more appropriate. As a setnetter I've had multiple encounters with drift boats having the end of their nets tangled up on the outside end of my setnet gear and have also had close encounters with drift gillnet vessels themselves coming into contact with my skiff because they were operating too close to my buoys. This is unacceptable from a safety standpoint. Additionally, it can create undue financial burdens on setnetters due to lost fishing time and damaged equipment, as these incidents can destroy buoys and running lines, and tension during an entanglement can dislodge a screw anchor. In many places, screw anchors can only be reset during a minus tide, which only occur once or twice a season.

**I also support Proposals 36 and 37 which aim to limit the length of a drift gillnet towline to 100 feet.** In many instances, longer tow lines allow drift gillnet vessels to fish in shallow water, become grounded and act more like setnets. I've witnessed vessels using long tow lines to effectively set their net across a river channel during low tide by letting the end of their net go dry, especially later in the season where fishing has been extended and there's no enforcement patrolling the fishery. This is not the intent of drift gillnetting. Long tow lines also create a visibility barrier for the vessel operator to effectively be able to monitor the end of their net, which can increase opportunity for contact with set net sites.

Thank you to the board for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Lindsey Aspelund  
3819 S Bean Rd  
Port Angeles, WA 98363



**Name:** Fred Ball

**Community of Residence:** College Place Washington

**Comment:**

Re: Proposal 41

I feel that a solid GPS line for the drifters will aid law enforcement and give Drifters a line to keep them from inadvertently destroying set net gear or their own. I disagree that the outer boundary for set netters be contingent on the mean high tide level on the beach. Many of the outer boundary permanent pegs/screw anchors, were installed before the bluff eroded back to its present position. Because of the erosion of the bluff, some setnets are now illegal. Historic outer ends are still in the same location. If some set netters are required to adhere to the mean high tide position, it would be a serious snagging issue to the drift fleet. The unremovable pegs installed decades ago would now be outside any future adjusted outer locations that would require moving more shoreward. The minus 3 foot level has not changed as far as I can tell since 1955 when I first fished on the Ekuk beach. I feel that the 500 foot from mean high tide regulation needs to be removed.

I have fished one site on Ekuk beach that made it impossible to reach 500 feet. I was only able to get my outer pegs/screw anchors installed 300 feet out. My request would be to be able to use historic outer ends that initially met the 500 foot requirement or were still accessible when experiencing a minus 3 foot low tide. There should also be a stipulation that no anchors could be dropped in deeper water outside of historic outer ends or the minus 3 foot level be allowed. Historic site outer ends should be the criteria. These suggestions only apply to permanent sites located between the Ekuk processing plant and 1st creek.

Thank you for your consideration

Fred Ball

Summery:

1. A GPS line would be good for both law enforcement and the drift fleet. ( Some in the drift fleet may not be happy with this because they tend to drag nets inside the set nets and often will cut set nets, ropes or buoy lines inadvertently)
  2. Historic outer ends should not be changeable due to the bank moving back or the depth of the gravel at the time on the upper end. The 500 foot from mean high water restrictive regulation to 1st creek should be removed.
  3. No anchors allowed outside of historic outer end permanent attach points. (sometimes an outer end is pulled or rope through the pulley is lost so an anchor could be used to replace the outer end until the tide was low enough to reinstall the historic outer end.)
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## PROPOSAL # 28 PUBLIC COMMENT – OPPOSITION

To Whom it May Concern:

Today I am writing to express my opposition to Proposal # 28, which regards the year-round closing of king salmon fishing in the Mulchatna river system and the Nuyakuk and upper Nushagak rivers.

Hopefully a short summary of my personal experience fishing on the Mulchatna River will add some credibility to my opposition to this proposal. Back in 1994, my father, who is one of the founding members of the 130,000-member conservation group, Pheasants Forever, brought me and two of my brothers to the Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris camp on the Mulchatna for the first time. Since that first trip - for the past 28 years- I along with various groups of friends, brothers, uncles, cousins, nephews, sons-in-law, have returned nearly every other year to spend a week on the Mulchatna at the Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris camp owned by John and Melissa Carlin. I now have a two-year-old grandson, who I am certainly hoping to bring to the Mulchatna someday in the future.

Needless to say, the Mulchatna River holds a very special place in my heart and I am certainly very concerned about maintaining the world class salmon fishery in that river system. To that end, my dad and brothers and friends and I were all involved in trying to protect the Mulchatna from the possible damages caused by the Pebble Mine. We care very much about the health of that river and the fishery there.

There are a couple reasons we are in opposition to Proposal # 28:

First, there are already mechanisms in place, through the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Executive Orders or Emergency Changes to protect the fishery if that is deemed necessary at specific times in specific years. I have experienced those Orders/Changes during a number of my trips to the Mulchatna. Changes have been routinely made to fish limits and bait usage. In some years “catch and release only” rules have been in place. In light of this flexibility that Alaska Fish and Game has, it appears that these are much more effective and flexible tools to use than a a year-round closure of King fishing, which seems to be a drastic and unnecessary step.

Here is the second reason for my opposition to Proposal # 28: Because of the timing of the King salmon run and the location along the Mulchatna of the Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris camp, I believe it is very safe to say that the anglers in that camp – or any camp along the Mulchatna within many miles of that camp- will **NOT** be fishing in waters that are king salmon spawning areas. In the nearly 30 years that I have been fishing on the Mulchatna, I have seen hundreds of Calico salmon that have spawned and are swimming past like white ghosts in the water with half of their heads missing. I know what fish look like after they have spawned and in those same 30 years, I have never seen a King salmon at this stage of its life. Consequently, I’m led to



believe that no angling pressure near that general location in the river, at that time of the year, will have any interference with king salmon spawning.

Third. It is my belief that more and better stewardship of all of our natural resources is necessary in order to protect those resources. In the 50 years that I have been hunting and fishing, it has been my experience that the people who care the MOST about fish and wildlife and water quality, and air quality are the anglers and hunters and sportspeople who spend so much of their lives enjoying those resources. And it is the responsible outfitters, and camp owners (Like John and Melissa Carlin at Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris on the Mulchatna), whose livelihoods depend on the health of our natural resources – those are the people who are most interested in protecting our natural resources. Certainly, having the opportunity to catch (and release) a big king salmon is a huge draw for anglers. And, it seems to me, that if you close down a fishery completely, then the anglers will leave to find another place to fish. And the responsible camp owners will close their camps and go somewhere else, or fold up entirely. And then the river will lose its greatest allies, the people who care about it the most. And that seems like it will do more damage than good.

As an example of this stewardship, I should note here that for many years the owners of the Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris camp on the Mulchatna have been dedicated preachers and practitioners of catch and release with many fish species in the Mulchatna system – especially the big king salmon. Certainly, in the groups that I have fished with, it is a very rare occasion that a king salmon is kept in the bag, and if that does occur, it is always a smaller male that is kept. We want the big fish- and certainly those big females- to survive and make it up river to their spawning grounds. John also encourages all of the anglers in his camp to spend some time during their trip targeting other species of fish (most on a catch and release basis) to broaden their Alaska fishing experience. Obviously one beneficial byproduct of this is less pressure on the king salmon. This is the type of stewardship these rivers need.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make my comments public. I strongly urge you to reject Proposal # 28.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like more input.

Regards,

Mitchell Berg  
W2331 Haider Road  
Sarona, WI 54870



## PROPOSAL # 28 PUBLIC COMMENT – OPPOSITION

My name is Kevin Berg. I have been fishing on the Mulchatna River for king salmon and other species on eight occasions over the past 23 years. I oppose the proposal to close the Mulchatna to chinook fishing. I believe the proposal lacks any foundation in what actually happens with sportfishing at the two small camps that share a vast expanse of the river. It is based on a gross exaggeration of the impact from the fishing that occurs at those two camps - at least the camp I have fished with several times. And it overlooks several very significant negative impacts from what happens elsewhere in the Bristol Bay system.

Each time I have fished the Mulchatna I have been the guest of Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris, under the leadership first of Dennis Harms, then John Carlin. Over the course of those many trips to the Mulchatna my brothers, my father and I have probably introduced 60 or more friends and family members to salmon fishing on the Mulchatna - both of my sons and my son in law included.

What I and all these folks cherish and remember about these trips is not the number of kings we get to keep and take home with us - although we do enjoy the very limited number of kings we get to keep - anywhere from 0 to 3 per trip, as I recall, depending on regs determined annually based on the size and health of the run. We are so much more focused on the thrill of hooking and landing a king salmon, handling it with care, and returning it to the water in good shape. We have learned these skills from Dennis, John, and their guides. We have also learned from these men about the critical role the chinook plays in the river's ecosystem and the respect that these magnificent animals deserve. It is part of the ethos of ATFS, and a big reason I keep returning. The vast, vast majority of kings we have caught in my years on the river have been carefully returned to the water, able to travel several more miles upriver to complete their breeding mission. If I were a meat fisherman, I would be fishing elsewhere. To me, the benefit to the chinook of teaching and spreading this ethos to the many people our group has introduced to the Mulchatna over the years far outweighs the impact to the resource from the very small number of kings taken out of the river by that same group.

So I do not understand why a camp that takes the right approach to caring for and respecting this precious resource would be shut down while the meat fisheries of various kinds elsewhere in the same ecosystem are allowed to continue practices that put fish meat and profit ahead of the long term health of the chinook. Makes no sense to me. Regulatory resources are so limited. Please direct them where they can help the chinook the most. This stretch of river that is lightly and carefully fished is not your best bet. I actually believe that closing down this part of the river would hurt the chinook in the long run by disengaging some very good caretakers of the resource. I think if you look hard at the actual facts you will agree.

Respectfully submitted.

Kevin Berg



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ADF&G  
Boards Support Section  
Regarding Proposal 40

My name is Aiden Brehan and I have been a Naknek/Kvichak set netter since 2011. In these years I have fished in all areas of the Kvichak section, notably the various areas of the Eastside and the Westside up and down both banks from the south boundaries to the north. I have “set my anchor” on the southern boundary of the area defined in 5 AAC 06.331. section (m)(5) on the Westside bank. I plan on fishing this location for years to come.

**In regard to Proposal 40, I wish to oppose it.**

**Some background for clarification:**

Per the recollections of my predecessors, at the time of its formation the site I lease (ADL 231008) (from now on referred to as “my site”) was at the location of the “Unnamed Creek” mentioned in 5 AAC 06.331. section (m)(5). (From now on Section (m)(5)) Said location was the “mouth” of said “Unnamed Creek” when the water receded to the “time of the opening” tide height near Mean Low Water (MLW). It puts the location of the my site a good distance from the 18’ tide mark, separated by a long mud flat. The “mouth” of the creek in question at the “time of the opening” tide mark has migrated south some distance in years since. My site has remained in place.

My site and the sites around it exist based on the language in Section (m)(5). The location of my site and the other three sites nearby show that contrary to as stated in Proposal 40, this mud flat did not form in years since the language of Section (m)(5) was written and my site was created. It has existed so similarly to as it was then, in 1989 I believe. At such time, Section (m)(5) was written under an accord between drifters and set netters over prime fishing territory with the assistance of Alaska State Troopers. The area south of this site is still a viable fishing location at high water and within 1000 ft of the 18ft mark, although not as viable as the “cut bank” near mean low water. (See Figure 1)

These fisherman making proposal 40 did not indeed lose any fishing opportunity from the formation of a mud flat in the area described. It is a land grab. They seek to legally access the “cut bank” existing here when there are plenty of good fishing opportunities to the north of our sites! **OR** to the south further up on this bank if fished within those regulations! **OR** on their own sites existing on the Eastside. They seek *alternate* fishing opportunity that would be **detrimental** to our established and leased fishing sites. Those that do not possess any Eastside sites already in fact seek **NEW** fishing opportunity or to justify the areas they may have been fishing illegally already. **There is nowhere else I can go for additional opportunity!**





In the following passages, arguments to **clarify the current regulation for enforceability and oppose Proposal 40** will be discussed along with the suggestion of new language for Section (m)(5).

### **1. No Visual Landmarks at the Proposed Location with a Consideration for Enforceability.**

My site is a “low water site” made fishable at low water by a cut bank on the edge of the mud flat in combination with the operational regulations for the area of the Kvijack district defined in Section (m)(5). South of this location, and historically the site located there, the regulations defer back to 5 AAC 06.331. section (m) in which “*no part of a set gillnet may be more than 1,000 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark*”

Over the years when fishing slows down, other set netters in the district descend upon us from their traditional Eastside of the Kvichak sites in search of more fish. Some fisherman set up north of our site in the unclaimed area between us and the northern boundary of the district, nearly two and quarter miles of shoreline. They are well within their rights. **Some** set up south of us, and do so much further than *1000 ft from the 18-foot high tide mark*. We have approached these individuals to inform them of their transgression and some are grateful we may be saving them a ticket! **OTHERS KNOW** the regulations and simply do not change course. **I hypothesize most are confused by vagueness in the language of the regulation, including me and furthermore... law enforcement.**

In an attempt to hold fisherman accountable, we approached David Bump of Alaska State Troopers about enforcement. Subsequently we were told enforcement would be difficult due to the vagueness of the regulation. This leaves us watching fisherman get away with **Illegal harvest across the line** with nothing we can do about it. The trooper then advised us to propose a housekeeping measure in order to clarify the boundary.

Proposal 40 seeks to set the line “about a mile” south of its current location in a no mans land with no physical landmarks to combine with a GPS point. This would do nothing but **increase the ambiguity surrounding the boundary and make this regulation even more difficult to enforce.**

**Alternatively,** I would propose a line from the unnamed creek on the northwest shore of Kvichak Bay at 58° 52.25' N. lat., 157° 06.75' W. long. to the Libbyville Dock at 58° 46.58' N. Lat., 157° 3.41' W. long. to make a clear and enforceable delineation in combination with physical landmarks fishermen and enforcement officers can use to discern the boundary. This new area would be enclosed by the points mentioned and so be clearly defined. (See Figure 2)

Example language. Alternate text italicized and underlined:

(5) in the Kvichak Section of the Naknek-Kvichak District from Libbyville Dock to a point near Graveyard Point at 58° 52.07' N. lat., 157° 00.80' W. long. and from the unnamed creek on the northwest shore of Kvichak Bay at 58° 52.25' N. lat., 157° 06.75' W. long. north to a point on the northwest shore of Kvichak Bay at 58° 53.37' N. lat., 157° 04.26' W. long. and north of a line from the unnamed creek on the northwest shore of Kvichak Bay at 58° 52.25' N. lat., 157° 06.75' W. long. to the Libbyville Dock at 58° 46.58' N. Lat., 157° 3.41' W. long. the maximum distance that a set gillnet may be operated offshore is as follows:



## **2. Allocation, Escapement and Management with Consideration of Unencumbered Permits Moving into District.**

The addition of a near mile of territory south makes room for additional fisherman to enter the district with unencumbered permits from other districts. This is definitely a trend. Additional permits puts a strain on an already over capacity tender fleet.

Fishing on the Westside of the Kvichak in years past had indeed been a lonely prospect. In more recent years however, we have seen new boats and new ADF&G numbers surrounding us on both the north *and* south. With all the territory on the Eastside taken up, these fisherman have nowhere to go and look to the Westside. Theoretically, **in the two and quarter miles unclaimed north of us, 39 sites could theoretically be utilized.**

In regard to our markets, we are already finding ourselves at capacity and on limits regularly despite the promises and efforts of our canneries! One would think any fisherman in the district would be against more fisherman entering the district not only based on allocation but also the sheer capacity of our canneries! **Adding a mile of territory would theoretically add 17 more available sites!** To other fishermen in the district: **Plan on being limited in what you can catch by your markets or regulated by allocation!**

Apologies for the conjecture on consequences, but these fears are based in facts from experience: ***The Westside of the Kvichak is a different fishery than that of the Eastside.*** It often catches fish when the Eastside does not and vice versa! If not properly managed as so, it could detriment the catch of the whole district and possibly weaken the management tools already in place and obviously working well!

In addition, these *ALTERNATIVE* fishing sites would most assuredly diminish **our** catch during the time we need it the most. Often our catch is slow when the Eastside is good and vice versa but we do not have the privilege to move from one side to the other. Many of these fishermen seek to utilize this, likely not thinking it could harm us so. Just as some years are good for us, bad years are dismal. **In 1989 the language of Section (m)(5) was written to accommodate completely displaced fishermen, not accommodate additional opportunity.**

**It seems unfair to me that fishermen who have utilized illegal harvest south of us, and thus diminishing our catch in doing so, should be able to change the rules based on wanting alternatives!**

**It also seems unfair to me that new fisherman to the district should be able utilize a change in the rules in their favor. In doing so they diminish our catch and the catch limits of the whole fleet, our fellow veteran Kvichak set netters.**

## **3. Allocation, Escapement and Management with Consideration of Drifters.**

The area proposed to be annexed is fished and lucrative for drifters. It goes against my natural set netter instincts to say I support their reasons to want to keep this area. When the existing boundary was formed it is my understanding it was a compromise between drifters and set netters for rights to fish the cut bank and along the mudflats where we ALL know the fish are. I would rather not poke this bear.



Our set buoys make it nay but impossible to drift along this bank where the best fishing is. Numerous times we have had whole sets ripped out by drifts that unfortunately go awry. Although it does affect our catch, **when the escapement needs to slow down, drifters are the best tool**. You cannot expect set netters in any force to make consistent effort in this cause. Especially when it is “alternative fishing” for most fishermen. **I would rather promote healthy runs long term** than worry about the drifters.

Compared to drifters we are no match for filtering fish out of the water. With this in mind, when it comes time to slow the run down and meet our district escapement goals, drifters are an excellent tool. **Adding near one mile of un-driftable shoreline south of the established boundary could make this tool less effective and lead to unsatisfactory escapement.**

### **In Conclusion:**

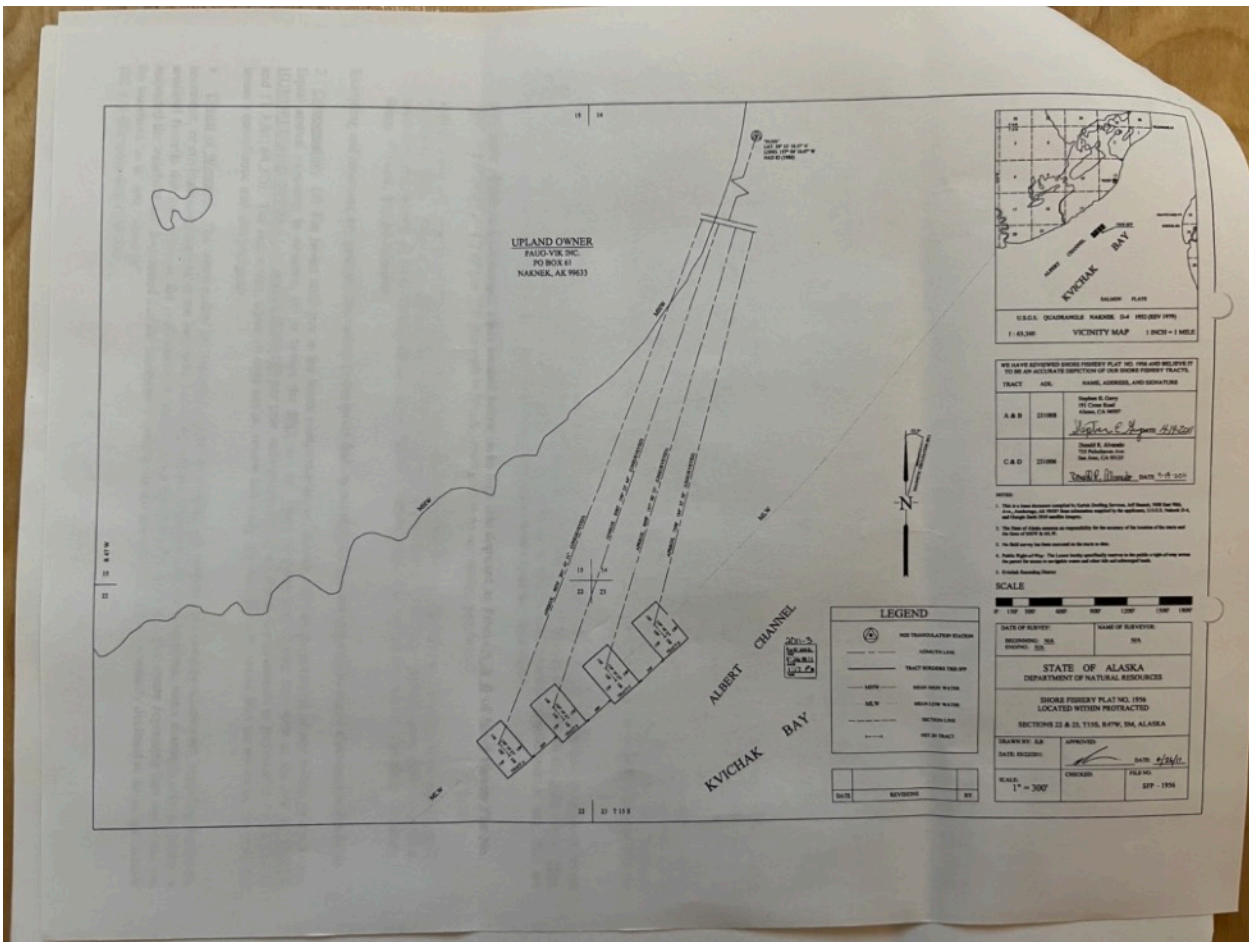
The sands (or rather mud) of time has had its toll on the shoreline since the inscription of 5 AAC 06.331. section (m)(5). It seems appropriate to amend this language to contain both current physical landmarks and GPS points as to appropriately define these boundaries and thus make an **enforceable delineation** so I can stop getting “corked” illegally without a means of recourse.

It should be known to the board that my site is the location I fish. When fishing is better on the Eastside I do not and **can not** change sides. In recent years my site’s catch has been ample, but from experience, I know it is only luck that has made it so. The time will surely come when the Eastside benefits and us Westsiders struggle. To have a fleet flung upon us when Westside fishing is good would dilute our catch and more importantly the catch of whole fleet of Eastsiders holding on to their legal limit of sites and/or not geared to change everything at the drop of a hat. There **will** be limits and/or there **will** be closures based on cannery capacity or allocation thus leaving our fellow Eastside fisherman with a weaker hand.

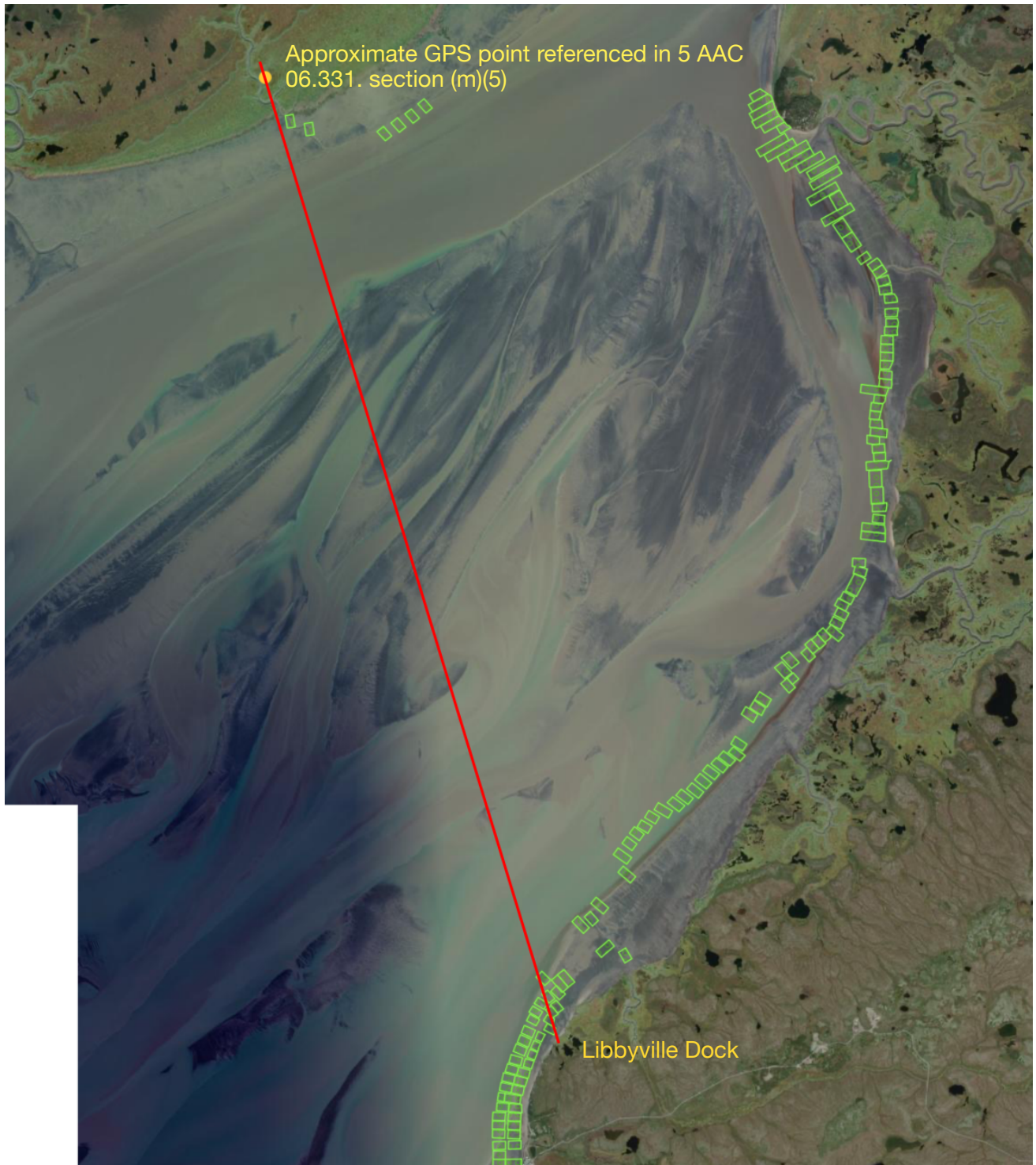
- **Adding additional (or *alternative*) fishing grounds would undoubtedly and indefinitely harm my catch numbers and also worth mentioning, the value of my site.**
- **Adding additional (or *alternative*) fishing grounds would also undoubtedly and indefinitely harm the ability of the Drift fleet to fish this area.**
- **Prop. 40 authors’ claim the development of a mud flat, however the topography has been relatively unchanged since 1989. They seek *ALTERNATIVE* fishing grounds that would harm my site when alternatives already exist to the north. They stand to gain and we stand to lose.**
- **Keeping the existing boundaries, with clarification, would harm NO ONE and make enforcement of said boundary FINALLY POSSIBLE.**

Respectfully,

-Aiden Brehan

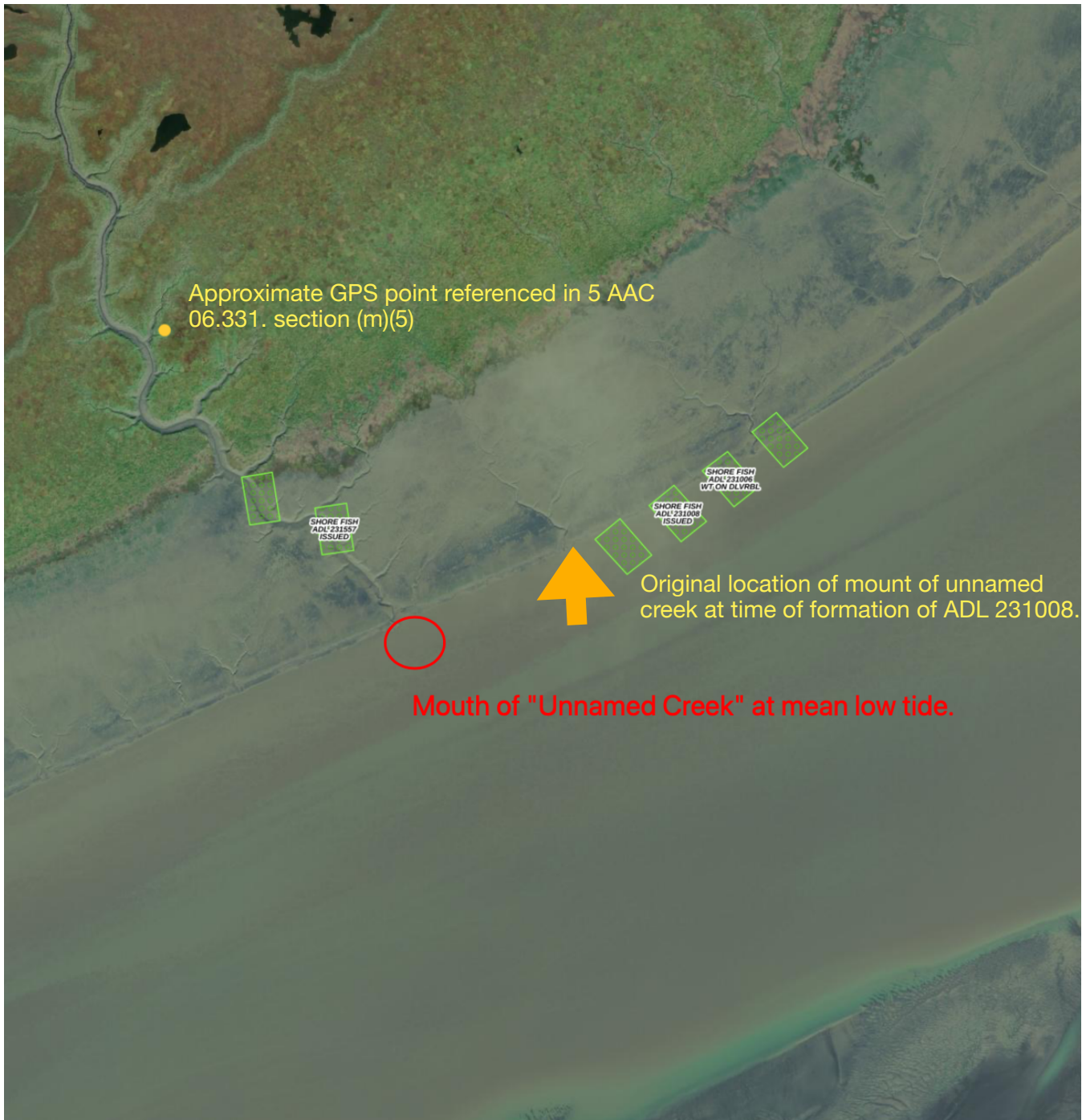


**Figure 1:** Shore fishery plat no. 1956 showing the location of the ADL 231008 and ADL 231006 when formed. The mouth of the “unnamed creek” in question was located at the south western most site in 2011. Notice the MLW (Mean Low Water) mark and its relative location to the tracts.



**Figure 2:** The red line would extend from the existing gps point of the “unnamed creek and extend to the Libbyville dock, enclosing an area defined by 5 AAC 06.331. section (m)(5).





**Figure 3:** Alternative to the above suggestion, the point could be made to be at the mouth of the creek at mean low tide or otherwise similar time of the tide. This way there would be no question of the boundary line and it would evolve with the shoreline.



PC9

## **Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association**

P.O. Box 60131

Seattle, WA 98160

Phone/Fax (206) 542-3930



Date: November 14, 2022

ATTN: BOF COMMENTS  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Boards Support Section  
PO Box 25526  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526

The **Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association** (BBFA) submits the following positions and comments on proposals for the Bristol Bay Finfish Board of Fisheries Meeting.

BBFA represents permit holders who fish for salmon in Bristol Bay. Our mission is to protect the renewable salmon resource and promote economic sustainability for commercial salmon permit holders in Bristol Bay.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on these proposals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Peterson".

Luke Peterson  
President



## **BBFA's Bristol Bay Board of Fisheries Proposals Positions/Comments**

### **Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan**

Proposal 11: Neutral

Proposal 12: Oppose

Proposal 13: Oppose

### **King Salmon Reporting**

Proposals 31 and 32: Oppose. All Chinook that are caught are currently required to be reported on ADF&G commercial fish tickets.

### **Gear Specifications and Operations; Vessel Specification and Operations**

Proposal 33: Neutral

Proposal 34: Oppose

Proposal 35: Oppose. This is an enforcement issue and not a regulation issue.

Proposals 36, 37 and 38: Neutral

Proposals 39, 40 and 41: Neutral

Proposals 42, 43, 44 and 45: Oppose.

The dual permit regulation should be retained. This regulation was adopted twenty seasons ago in 2003. It has stood the test of time and significantly contributes to the successes of Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery management.

Proposal 46 and 47: Support.

BBFA supports permit stacking in Bristol Bay. Permit stacking would be the next step to further the successes of the dual permit rule.

### **Registration and Re-registration; Time and Area; Area and District Descriptions**

Proposal 48: Neutral

Proposals 49-54: Neutral (General District)

Proposal 55: Support

BBFA supports aligning the Naknek Section southern boundary line with the Naknek-Kvichak District southern boundary line.

Proposal 56: Neutral

### **East Side Management**

Proposal 57: Oppose

The allocation plan is long established and has proven to provide successful management for over two decades.

Proposal 58: Neutral

Proposal 59: Neutral

Proposal 60: Neutral

Proposal 61: Oppose

It is impractical to require commercial fishermen or tendermen to grade chinook salmon on the water. If data is needed on the size/grading of chinook salmon, that data is best derived at the time the fish are processed.

### **Herring**

Proposal 62: Neutral





**Name:** Robert Buchmayr

**Community of Residence:** Shoreline, WA

**Comment:**

My name is Robert Buchmayr and I have fished in Bristol Bay my entire life and have not missed a season since 1985. This is my first time commenting to board of fish proposals. Thank you for your time.

Proposal 31 and 32:

I oppose both proposals, drift and set netters have to report all king salmon on the fish tickets at the time of delivery, including "home packs". I do not see where this would in any way improve the King Salmon runs. I do not know what the lodges have to report.

Proposal 35:

I strongly oppose changing the minimum distance required from 100' to 300', the arguments under the guise of additional safety and ease of enforcement ring hollow to me. At maximum tide it only takes 30 seconds to drift 200', which renders the argument of less entanglement invalid. Drift boat skippers still need to be able to plan their drift and control their vessel and net, just like they have been doing for decades. It is really an argument for additional allocation of the available catch. There really is no additional breathing room for drifters, 300' will be much harder to judge from a drift boat than 100' and enforcement will be unchanged as well.

Proposal 38:

25 fathoms seems like a reasonable change and allow for a bit more than the 100' the two other proposals have. I strongly feel that there should be a limit to tow lines, the current situation is out of control and I agree with all the reasons stated to limit the length, the top open been that fish quality suffers greatly for boats dragging the nets out for miles in the flats.

Proposal 42:

I am a little uncertain of all the details, reading the proposal, the concerns that I have is that it would really just allow the sites on Ekuk beach to get more and more fishing area as time goes by and the bluff erodes, so in essence increase the value of the sites as the years go by. Having a straight line with GPS marking for the outer bags may be helpful, I do believe that most drifters already have the current bags marked on their GPS, what would be really helpful is if there would be night lights on all the outer markers. I am certainly no expert on moving outside anchors, but I have helped in installing new anchors and the job was done in one low tide and I do feel just because it is hard to be within the current law should not be a reason to change that law. I oppose this proposal based on my impression that it really is written to increase the amount of fishing area for the current sites.



**Name:** Spencer Burnfield

**Community of Residence:** Shelton, Wa

**Comment:**

I am a drift fisherman in Bristol Bay and own a permit.

Proposals 36, 37, & 38 are functionally they same. I do not know if 100 feet or 25 fathoms is an appropriate number but a limit should be put in place. Somewhere between those two numbers is probably appropriate. Anything we can do to discourage shallow water fishing by the fleet will benefit the product quality. But the competitive aspects mentioned are also very valid. Excessive amounts of tow line are also dangerous. I'm in favor of limiting tow lines. But not less than 100'

42 & 43: It's hard to put a real number on it but I would wager 50% of the D's in use are "fraudulent" as-in abusing the system and not using them as intended (people putting them in children's names for example so one "person" functionally ends up with multiple permits). It's a great system to allow a deckhand entry into a fishery, but it also increased the value of permits which makes entry harder. I would be in favor of ending the D. It's only making the rich richer and creating barriers for entry (fewer permits available, higher permit cost).

46: 100% opposed. This is pure greed. Permit prices will jump significantly if this were enacted and further exacerbate entry barriers. All this does is concentrate more wealth in the hands of those who already have it. More boats equals more crews who get paid (jobs), more airfares, more boat parts purchased, more money spread out everywhere.

47: 100% opposed. This is pure greed. Permit prices will jump significantly if this were enacted and further exacerbate entry barriers. All this does is concentrate more wealth in the hands of those who already have it. More boats equals more crews who get paid (jobs), more airfares, more boat parts purchased, more money spread out everywhere.

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## Comments on BOF BB Finfish Proposals for Nov 29-Dec 3 meetings, 2022.

By Catie Bursch

**Proposal 34 and 35 -I SUPPORT these two proposals.**

**Problem: Drift boats putting their nets too close to set nets and entangling them has become a serious problem due to the following:**

The drift fleet has evolved in size and horsepower much more than the set net fleet has in the last decades. These changes have created a dangerous mix of two very different fishing crafts in the same fishing grounds.

A standard drift boat in the past may have been five times the horsepower of a standard outboard. Now, the largest jet boats have two engines equaling 2,200 hp, which is **fourteen times more power** than even a rather large set net skiff outboard of 150 hp.

Drift boats have gotten much larger, 3-4 times larger than the average boat 20 years ago. Now they are about as wide (18 ft) as a setnet skiff is long. If you are in a set net skiff and look up at a driftnet skipper in the wheelhouse, they are 15 feet above you. If they are in an enclosed wheelhouse with engines running, they cannot hear anything you are saying to them from your set net skiff. **A drift boat weighs 10 times what a setnet skiff weighs.** Drift boats have strong hydraulics; the setnet fleet is sometimes relying just on the strength of the two fishermen's arms holding onto their net that is being drug by a drift boat.

With the advent of D-permits, drift nets can be 30% longer than before. This makes it harder for drift boats to control and maneuver in wind and current. **Drift D boat nets are 4 times longer than a set net.**

There are now **many more jet-boats** than there ever were. Jets make it possible to fish these much bigger boats into very shallow water; **in and amongst the set net fleet.** In the past, most of the drift boats were prop boats and could not come in as close.

These changes have created a dangerous mix of two very different fishing crafts in the same small areas. When a drift net entangles a set net, the drift skipper tows hard on their net to separate. This is very dangerous to the set netter if they are working their net, and very damaging to set net gear.

**What can we do to mitigate this dangerous change in our fishery?**

**Solution: Put more room between the gear groups!**

**Divide the fleets with the 1000' line from the 18 foot hightide line (prop 34)  
OR change the 100' distance off the end of a setnet to 300' (prop 35).**



## PROPOSAL #28: PUBLIC COMMENT | OPPOSITION

My name is John Carlin, owner/operator of Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris LLC on the Mulchatna River. We are an Alaskan family-owned and operated small sportfishing tent camp. I have lived and worked on the Mulchatna each summer since 1987.

After more than 35 seasons of witnessing the king salmon runs in the exact location of the Mulchatna River, we are **STUNNED** by Proposal #28 to totally shut down the king salmon fishery year-round in the Mulchatna river drainage, as well as the Nuyakuk and upper Nushagak rivers.

We vehemently **OPPOSE** Proposal #28 for the following reasons:

### Targeting the Mulchatna, Nuyakak, and Upper Nushagak Rivers: Minimal Pressure

- The proposal speaks of the declining king salmon numbers *area wide*, but only targets the Mulchatna, Nuyakuk and upper Nushagak rivers without providing justification with quantifiable data or scientific research on the “excess amounts of pressure on the spawning areas for Chinook salmon.”
  - Between Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris camp and the new fishing lodge downriver from us, there are **virtually no other fishing operators on the entire 160-mile long stretch of the Mulchatna river**. I have fished there every summer for 35 years and can attest to *insignificant pressure* on this tributary compared to other user groups of the Nushagak king salmon populations.

### Existing Management Tools in Place

- The Alaska Department of Fish & Game Sportfishing Division already has all the management tools they need for conservation of king salmon on the Nushagak and Mulchatna rivers.
  - Fish & Game Sportfishing Division already issues Emergency Orders to close the fishery, determine use of bait, catch/release, altering fish limits, etc.
- From our understanding, there has been no discussion over the past few years by the Nushagak/Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan Revision Committee about going to such drastic measures as to shut down these upper fisheries.

### Run Timing

- We do not typically see the king salmon come up the river in our area until the first week of July. **Our season doesn't even start, nor do our clients arrive until July 6<sup>th</sup>.**
  - The kings that are counted, via the Nushagak sonar site in June, are not present in the Mulchatna until early July, typically around July 2-3.
  - Most big pushes of kings occur down river in June, so any amended regulations take effect by early July. However, those counted fish are not even in the proposed targeted area yet. Hence, how can there be excess pressure on them?
  - By the time Fish & Game has a conservation concern, and issues modified regulations in the form of an EO, the Mulchatna river is being restricted just as the kings start to show up and nowhere near their spawning grounds.



### Run Timing continued....

- **Contrary to the proposal's reasoning, and with consideration of the EO history in the area, two outfitters on the Mulchatna river drainage puts minimal pressure on the king salmon.**
- The EO's for the Nushagak/Mulchatna Drainage king salmon fishery have historically been in effect from early July to July 31 – basically during the entirety of our fishing season. Note, the king salmon season on the Mulchatna river closes on July 25, not July 31 like the lower Nushagak, further ensuring there is no pressure on the spawning fish.

2022

- Effective July 7-31, 2022: Reduced Limit
- Effective July 13-31, 2022: Catch & Release; No Bait

2021

- Effective June 27-July 31, 2021: Reduced Limit

2020

- Effective July 10-31, 2020: Reduced Limit

2019

- Effective July 3 – December 31, 2019: Reduced Limit
- Effective July 10-31, 2019: Catch & Release; No Bait

2018 – No EOs

2017

- Effective June 23 – December 31, 2017: Reduced Limit

### Blanket Closure Does Not Solve Issue

- To propose a blanket closure above a certain point does not accomplish or solve the heart of the proposal's issue. Reading the proposal in this context, there is nothing to solve – if the run is good, the fishery will stay open downriver. If the run is bad, the fishery gets closed using Fish & Game's existing management tools.

In closing, I believe it must be a collective effort on all king salmon user groups to diligently manage and conserve our fisheries without discriminating and penalizing one user group to take the brunt of the consequences with a blanket closure, especially when it holds no merit.

My family and I are year-round Alaskan residents, and our fishing business is our **livelihood**. Moreover, our goal is to retain the fishery and resources for every user group, the future of Alaskans, especially our two daughters and our three grandchildren. Thank you for considering the rejection of Proposal #28.

Respectfully,

John J. Carlin  
Owner/Operator  
Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris LLC



### PROPOSAL #28: PUBLIC COMMENT | OPPOSITION

My name is McKenna Carlin, and I have spent every summer of my almost 16 years on the Mulchatna River. My family owns a sportfishing camp called Alaska Trophy Fishing Safaris. Both my parents have taught me to learn, cherish and respect all wildlife, fish, and culture in Alaska. In other words, our core belief is to protect and honor our resources.

I wanted to share a poem I wrote in 5<sup>th</sup> grade which reflects on my love and respect for the Mulchatna. My poem, "I Am," won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the University of Alaska/Anchorage Daily News Creative Writing & Poetry Contest in 2019.

This is why I **OPPOSE** Proposal #28:

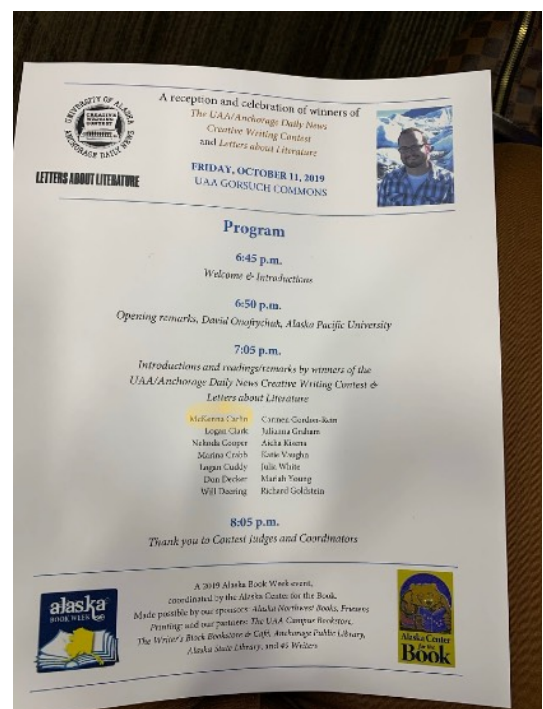
#### I AM By McKenna Carlin

I am aware of my surroundings.  
 I wonder what is out there.  
 I hear the splash of the Coho,  
 Beautifully jumping out of the water.  
 I see wondrous glory of the bright light  
 that greets me every day.  
 I want to witness all the beauty.

I am aware of my surroundings.  
 I pretend I am flying over the river.  
 Just as the eagle graces me.  
 I feel the sky coming down when it rains  
 Helping Mother Nature fulfill Her duty.  
 I touch the cool water with the tips of my fingers.  
 I worry I might get lost in the dark of night.  
 I cry only when I leave the Mulchatna River.

I am aware of my surroundings.  
 I understand the beauty of this land  
 May not last forever.  
 I say, "I will meet the ancestors one day."  
 I dream of the next time I'll come.  
 I try to drive the motor as I'm forced back to reality.  
 I hope I will see the spawning salmon  
 As I leave this land.

I am aware of my surroundings.





I believe it is up to all Alaskans and people who use the rivers and oceans to be responsible for their waters. If we all work together, instead of against each other, we can accomplish greater things.

Please reconsider and reject this proposal and its impact.

Thank you,

McKenna Carlin



PC15

**Name:** Mike Carr

**Community of Residence:** Port Townsend, WA

**Comment:**

Proposal 11, Opposed

The official king escapement for the Nushagak in 2022 is 44,434. The king salmon harvest in 2022 is 5,325, less than 11% of the total king run. This is not a failure of fisheries management and proposal 11 is not justified.

Proposal 42/43, Opposed

These proposals if passed, would hurt every fisherman in Bristol Bay. There would be more boats fishing and more total net in the water which would make the fishery more competitive and crowded. The infrastructure needed to support the fleet would be greater and fishermen themselves would be in lower demand, both of which would lead to a lower price. Even those who can't afford to purchase a permit at the current prices do not stand to gain by this because the fishery would be less lucrative to all of those involved.

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To the Alaska Board of Fisheries Members,

My name is Craig Chythlook, my folks are Joe and Molly Chythlook who still live in Dillingham. I have grown up in this fishery and continue to make it back to fish for salmon every season, in the Nushagak district. I have been an SO3T permit holder since 2004 and have been in the waters of the Nushagak river fishing with my family every season since 1987.

I would like to thank you all for reviewing our public comments and will do my best to group and be efficient with my arguments in this letter. I will start with grouped proposals I want think are most important and that I believe deserve the most attention by the board this year.

Proposals 42, 43, and separately 44. Also, separately grouped - 46, and 47. **All under 5 AAC 06.333.**

Proposals 42 – 43, I support and agree with. I have participated as a D-permit holder within own family for several years before I took over my own vessel and with family since between boats breaking down or teaching family members how to fish. These reasons were the original intent of this regulation, to allow watershed residents whose vessels were becoming inoperable in the early 2000's before major support and funding from area CDQ groups like BBEDC – To allow relatives, family, and friends the ability to work with each other while ex-vessel values were historically low and create opportunity a chance to fish their family's permit and fund improvements or repair to inoperable vessels.

Currently, this fishery has seen ex-vessel values and returns at historic highs and for several years now we have had permits north of \$150 – \$200k. The gillnet fishery has improved beyond the need to have two permits fishing one boat. A single dual permit vessel earns on average substantially more than non-dual permit vessels, as highlighted a 2018 public comment to the BOF, and two research papers discussing the greying of the Bristol Bay fleet and Turning The Tides report (*Alaska's Next Generation of Fishermen*, n.d.; Gho, 2020). These two reports along with a public comment from the 2018 Nushagak AC meeting highlights that the original intent of the Dual Permit system is no longer being met. From discussions with AC members and those who worked on supporting the original proposal to enact the dual permit system was at times of low returns in both ex-vessel values and returns, the intent was to allow fisherman with boats that were not fishable to hop on another boat, the original intent was to get more gear out of the water, and above all it was to empower local Alaskan and most specifically watershed residents the opportunity to participate in the fishery without a boat. This is no longer the reality and the fishery has moved past the intended use of the regulation and as the author of prop's 42 and 43 stated, and supported by literature, the dual permit system has disenfranchised local fisherman, it has overcapitalized out of state and non-watershed resident fisherman, and in time of regular over-escapement – has allowed only those with the biggest, most powerful, and most aggressive (non-local and generally western or non-Indigenous) residents an unfair advantage (Gho, 2020). Most of the money made in the fishery leave the state and the greatest disparity is between those with and those without a dual permit (*Alaska's Next Generation of Fishermen*, n.d.). This is a huge barrier to the majority of local and Alaskan fisherman who live in the region that has less economic opportunity to supplement the offset cost needed to purchase bigger boats, additional permits, and upgraded capital cost expenses needed to be ultra-competitive in the current fishery. The Nushagak AC chose to shot down both 42 and 43 for many reasons, it was good discussion – however, I think one of the biggest reasons were the lack in forward thinking about how a sudden change in regulation would impact the fleet, and most importantly the local Nushagak and Bristol Bay residential fisherman – This would likely make those roughly 13% of watershed residents that utilize the dual permit system no way out because



to go from being a regular deckhand on an operational vessel to suddenly needing to buy a operational boat with RSW and all the gear required is too much, all this has done is created opportunity for out of region and out of state fisherman to buy more permits and make more money(The Nature Conservancy, 2021), as permit outmigration only got greater when Alaskans owned 63% of permits to 44% as of 2020(The Nature Conservancy, 2021).

The purpose of the board is to ensure equal opportunity and equity in the fishery, as a local fisherman of Bristol Bay as nearly two decades of anecdotal evidence and more statistical data than you all will have time for – **you need to take into serious consideration proposal 44 and support the sunseting of the dual permit system.** We are currently in a time of relative abundance for sockeye, most fisherman who take advantage of the dual permit system are from outside the region, in some districts we are needing more gear in the water to deal with over-escapement issues, and most importantly – the continued support of a dual permit regulation is widening the economic/capital (investments like boats and better gear) gap between a local smaller propellor boat fleet and an outside watershed overcapitalized and **over-incentivized** fleet of fisherman willing to continually ask for permit stacking.

#### **Proposals – 46/47**

I won't discuss too much on this, the Nushagak AC and most likely most others will unanimously shoot down these proposals. However, my previous statements and the four reports/papers I mention in this paper have much more data about the many **perverse incentives** that have resulted because of the dual permit system. Money and greed are powerful incentives, and as a fisherman who prides myself with knowing many relatives in the Bristol Bay region and live, hunt, and subsist along side so many local watershed residents – I do not share the enthusiasm of greed that is the catalyst for many proposals that you will be deliberating over.

#### **PROPOSAL 38 - 5 AAC 06.331. Gillnet specifications and operations**

I will align my comments with the Nushagak AC and focus on why they and I support this proposal. I have been fishing a 32x14' wide twin propellor boat that draws 36"-39" of water depending on how much RSW water I am carrying aboard. It is very difficult for me to turn my boat against tide, wind, and waves – it is very dangerous to put my crew at risk with short tow lines (25 fathom or 150') when we are against the elements like heavy seas or happen to drift over a sandbar or are getting blown onshore into shallow water. I am young and I am aggressive, and I push my crew and boat to its capacity at times – like so many others – I have roughly 300' to 350' of rope on my reel and standard practice for my vessel and many others is to point our bow into the waves (as a stern picking vessel) when it is rough. This maneuver requires me to pull out 50' to 100' of tow line so my crew can safely bring my tow line to the bow so my vessel can safely fish rough seas. At times of severe sleep deprivation, hunger, and fatigue we have miscommunications or simply at times cannot hear each other – Many times, I would suggest on a daily basis when it is windy, I need almost all of my 300' to competitively and safely fish. The issue these proposals are looking to address will not be solved by a board decision of an arbitrary number. There are new 32x17' wide vessels that draw 18" or less water depending on how much fish and water they have on board, these boats will always be in the shallows up next to set-net sites competitively fishing those area, because that's where a majority of the salmon run is happening during some of the heaviest and busiest times of the season – the fish run shallow and especially with an on shore wind. These big vessels will be there at 100' or 1200' – the number you choose will not change that. The decision you need to make is about safety, I agree that 1000' – 1500' feet is excessive and quite often



because my boat is less competitive and has a deeper draft I am fishing just outside of ultra-competitive jet boats and multiple times a season I will be drifting at a much faster rate than these vessels – their ability to have 1000' or greater line out impedes my vessel or nets safe passage because they are so far away from their net they make it impossible to fish near them. This is unequitable, the fish these fisherman pull off the beach is of poorer quality than deeper caught salmon not being dragged in mud or very shallow water and because of the massive mechanical advantage of the jetboat fleet – the rest of the drift fleet have to maneuver around guys who are willing to subject their boats and catch to ultra-competitive conditions, like catching big numbers of salmon in very shallow water utilizing 1200' of tow line.

The board needs to come up with a fair compromise that does not impede the safety of an aggressive style of fishing by utilizing different attachment points of net to our boats in rough weather but also not be so long to allow guys who don't care, will never care, and will do what they can to get an advantage regardless of regulation – I would support a compromise of 300' to 400' as being fair while ensuring safety.

**PROPOSAL 35 - 5 AAC 06.335 - Minimum distance between units of gear.**

This is an enforcement issue. The ultra-competitive fisherman will be a quarter of a mile or more over a line fishery, will be on the beach in-between setnet sites as is, and will likely completely disregard any new regulation with any new number you have on board. To me this is also an allocative issue, there is a reason that a lot of us lawfully fish at or outside the 100' off set-net sites – there's a ton of fish there! The setnet fleet already running 24/7 in the Nushagak district cannot keep up with their allocation, allowing more fish to run into plugged nets on the beach or not along for lawful catch of fish near shore will have long-term impacts to the catching power of lawfully abiding fisherman. None of us want to catch setnet sites and very few regularly fish in the manner as described in this proposal. It's a regular and returning group of fishermen who know they will not get in trouble fishing close to or in-between sites. Changing the distance by 50' or 200' is not going to achieve any of the issues requested by this proposal.

**PROPOSAL 11 - 5 AAC 06.361. Nushagak-Mulchatna River King Salmon Management Plan and 5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for season, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

This is really the most important, but I am waiting to see what the department recommends and will make public comments at the BOF meeting based on their suggestions.



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The Nature Conservancy. (2021). *Righting the ship: restoring local fishing access and opportunity in Bristol Bay salmon fisheries*. 48. [https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/RightingTheShip\\_elec\\_2021.pdf](https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/RightingTheShip_elec_2021.pdf)



PC17

**Name:** Dennis Courtney

**Community of Residence:** Ugashik, Alaska

**Comment:**

I oppose proposal #33 to Increase maximum offshore operation distance for set gillnets in Ugashik Village to 800 feet.

Reasons: Possible navigational hazards and safety to set netters traveling to deliver to the tenders in bad weather. Our family has fished Bristol Bay 46 years, as drift gillnet and set netting, fishing is a dangerous job why make it worse. We have two set net sites and a home in the village.

Thank You

Dennis Courtney

Elizabeth Courtney

Mariena Courtney

Marshall Courtney

---



Byron Cullenberg, Fisherman

Proposal 35

I oppose this proposal. 100' is more than enough distance between the ends of set gillnets and a drift gillnet.

Proposal 36 - 38

I oppose this proposal. There should be NO maximum length of towline regulation. Choosing the length of towline that you so desire should not be regulated. It is a safety issue. The tide drops extremely quick and to avoid going dry, getting stuck and damaging your vessel it is crucial to be able to let out as much line as you need to get to deeper water so you can tow your net to safer deeper waters.

Proposal 42- 44

I oppose this proposal. There shall be no reversal of allowing Dual permits in Bristol Bay. Every fisherman has the choice to Dual permit their boat. Not only does it keep the number of vessels at bay, but it also allows the people that want to invest more into the fishery the opportunity to create more wealth due to their investment.

Proposal 45

I oppose this proposal. A person willing to invest enormous amounts of money to be a dual permit should not be subject to lesser fishing opportunities because those that choose to remain a single permit are complaining about catching less when the opportunity exists for them to also become a dual. There should be no special treatment for those who choose not to partake in the opportunities available. Likewise those who do partake in the opportunity should not be punished for doing so.

Proposal 46-47

I support these proposals. It is more economical as a business owner to be able to own and fish two permits rather than leasing one every year for absurd amounts of money.

Proposal 49- 54

I STRONGLY support these proposals. Dissolving outer district lines on the east side districts once escapement goals have been met is an incredibly reasonable & necessary proposal. Six separate proposals were presented all for this same issue because it has been a growing problem every year.

Specifically prop 53-

Once law enforcement is no longer present at the end of the season, the lines become lawless. As it currently stands, any fisherman with integrity does not have an equal opportunity to catch fish for the remainder of the season as those who break the law year after year. We should not be at a disadvantage for fishing legally.



PC19

**Name:** Thomas DEPauw

**Community of Residence:** St. Paul, MN

**Comment:**

This makes no sense. 2 camps on that much water can't make a material difference on the fisheries. Is there any science back up to support this proposal.

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Support for Proposal 33

November 14, 2022

Dear Alaska Board of Fisheries Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ugashik Village Setnetters. I participate in the fishery and have for the past 20 seasons. I am in strong support of this proposal and feel that if passed it would be in the best interests of the fishery, its participants, and the State of Alaska.

**Background:** During the last four seasons an extensive mudbank has developed along the inshore end of our area in which we fish our set gillnets. This impedes us from fishing as effectively as we have in the past (decrease in functional fishing time). The current offshore distance limitation of 600 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark precludes us from fishing the full extent of our allowable gear and denies us the efficient use of the fishing time allowed. We have lost an estimated 20% of our opportunity due to fewer hours of available fishing time because our nets are not in the water.

In 2016 the BOF adopted the “Criteria for Board Deliberations on Commercial Set Gillnet Proposals Impacted by Coastal Erosion” (2016-238-FB) which outlines the criteria that the board will consider and weigh when deliberating on a proposal related to set gillnet sites impacted by coastal erosion. We feel that our situation in Ugashik Village clearly fits Criteria #1 which states that *“issues that arise from land that has either eroded or accreted through natural or artificial causes contiguous to the leasehold”* need to be taken into consideration when the Board deliberates on these types of situations.

**Proposal 33:** To remedy the issue we propose that the maximum offshore distance be increased from 600 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark to 800 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark. Increasing the offshore distance allowed will enable the set gillnets in Ugashik Village to effectively fish their historic fishing time as determined by the tides of the day. The eleven sites currently fishing in this area would all have the ability to fish farther offshore negating any allocative effects potentially arising from this solution. This is an area that is only open to set gillnets, drift gillnets are not a legal type of gear. At the time of the submittal of this proposal ten out of the eleven sites concur that the maximum offshore distance should be amended by the board to 800 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark.

Regards,

Brandon Digsby, Ugashik Setnetter