

PROPOSAL 58

5 AAC 06.360. Naknek River Sockeye Salmon Special Harvest Area Management Plan.

Provide increased commercial salmon fishing opportunity in the Naknek River Special Harvest Area, as follows:

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(i) The commissioner may open, by emergency order, the NRSHA when the Naknek River escapement exceeds the mid-point of the escapement goal range and is projected to exceed the upper end of the escapement goal range.

(A) Fishing periods may open concurrently with fishing periods in the Naknek Section and the Naknek-Kvichak District, except that, drift gillnet fishing periods may close one hour before high tide.

(B) Fish harvested in the NRSHA shall be delivered prior to fishing the Naknek Section or the Naknek-Kvichak District.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

NRSHA open concurrent to Naknek and/or N/K openings, which increases fishing area and reduces escapement. This proposal addresses over escapement of sockeye salmon in the Naknek River.

The situation as it currently exists: The Naknek River has experienced over escapement in recent years due to increasing runs, and unusual fish-movement patters in which the fish swim through the Naknek Section and “magically” appear in the Naknek River with an express ticket to the spawning grounds. In such instances over 1,000,000 fish have eluded fishermen and swam up the river during a “push” of fish, even though the Naknek Section was open for fishing when the fish swam through the district. Currently fishermen are allowed to fish in the Naknek River Special Harvest Area (NRSHA) only as a conservation measure to protect the Kvichak River stocks, and are not allowed to fish with consideration of catching a push of fish that are in the river.

Situation if this proposal were enacted: When fish are “sneaking past” the fleet and winding up in the river in abundance, the NRSHA may be opened concurrently with the Naknek Section or Naknek/Kvichak district openings. This will allow for those fish to be caught, and not go up the river to add to the over-escapement tally. Since the in-river fishery will close one-hour prior to high tide, this proposal will allow for the orderly and unobstructed flow of traffic on the Naknek River for tug-and-barge, and salmon tendering activities. .

PROPOSED BY: Matt Marinkovich

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