

PROPOSAL 80

5 AAC 01.237. Subsistence Limits for Chinook Salmon on the Yukon River.

Restrict subsistence king salmon harvest in the middle and upper Yukon River, as follows:

Regulate the number of Chinook Salmon that may be harvested under the definition of subsistence on the middle and upper Yukon River in Alaska until such time the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service can provide factual data on the numbers of Chinook Salmon that make it to spawning grounds, are harvested under subsistence and listen to the people who know and witness others harvesting Chinook Salmon for sales under “Customary Trade.”

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Stakeholders on the mouth of the Yukon River (Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3) in Alaska have depended on Chinook Salmon commercial sales during the months of June and July to maintain their subsistence way of life since the early 1900’s. In the 1960’s the Alaska Department of Fish and Game began putting time constraint regulations on the harvesting season and limiting the number of salmon that can be harvested, this began the downward trend of our traditional commercial fishery also known as our subsistence utilization for our food security (using our commercial trade with canneries to live throughout the winters by buying needed supplies to gather, harvest and create/trade items such as arts and crafts, fur pelts, and other sought after items to maintain our healthy way of life).

The issue now is that the harvesting of Chinook Salmon has been moved by regulation to the Middle and Upper Yukon River under the definition of “Subsistence.” There are many Chinook Salmon unaccounted for (60 to 100 thousand in some years) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game collaborating with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service fail to identify where these salmon are going. Yet, in social media one sees many Chinook Salmon drying on racks and in smoke houses on the banks of the middle and upper Yukon River. I also know and have seen sales of this finished product throughout the winters. When addressed at the Federal level, I am continually told that this is allowed under “Customary Trade.” All my years as a Traditional Commercial Salmon Fisherman on the mouth of the mighty Yukon River and those before me know for a fact that “Customary Trade” meant trading ones product for other products and not for money. This definition needs to be corrected.

Under ANILCA the Secretary of Interior wanted to include the commercial Chinook Salmon Fishery as subsistence since it was 100% utilized by local indigenous Peoples and strictly for maintaining their subsistence way of life..

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