

PROPOSAL 62

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

Allow inseason adjustment of the Copper River personal use maximum harvest level, as follows:

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(f) The maximum harvest level for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery is 100,000 - 150,000 salmon, not including any salmon in excess of the in-river goal or salmon taken after August 31.

IF THE COPPER RIVER DISTRICT COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERY IS CLOSED FOR 13 OR MORE CONSECUTIVE DAYS, THE MAXIMUM HARVEST LEVEL IN THE CHITINA SUB DISTRICT IS REDUCED TO 50,000 SALMON

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current condition of the copper river salmon stock on years of low abundance is dire. Ever growing non limited populations of upriver users are pulling out salmon at their most fragile and critical adult stage, during their late stages of migration and pre spawning. These pre spawning salmon must be protected on years of low abundance and all user groups need to share equitably in these conservation measures. In December 2017 the board of fish adopted proposal 18 which repealed and replaced regulatory language and has put the copper river salmon runs at risk ever since. The action taken by the board of fisheries to repeal what was known as the “shared burden” regulation resulted in the copper river nearly missing escapement during the 2018, and 2021 seasons, all despite unprecedented commercial closures. In 2020 despite achieving lower bound sonar goals the stock for the first time actually missed the in river escapement levels. During that year unprecedented commercial fishery closures also occurred, the lions share of the harvest in those low abundance seasons took place upriver, putting the runs at risk. Had this regulation been in place and enforced, the salmon runs would not have missed their escapement goals. It is essential that the burden of conservation is shared among all users not just placed solely on the historical commercial user which has been the case since 2017.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes, other fisherman are overwhelmingly in support of this.

PROPOSED BY: Kenneth B. Jones

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