

PROPOSAL 166 – 5 AAC 09.350. Closed waters; and 5 AAC 09.369. Northern District Salmon Fisheries Management Plan. Eliminate closed waters in Caribou Flats and allow drift gillnet fishing in Caribou Flats by emergency order if Nelson Lagoon escapement goals are achieved, as follows:

5 AAC 09.350 and 5 AAC 09.369 are amended to read:

5 AAC 09.350 -- delete subsection (13)

5 AAC 09.369 Northern District Salmon Fisheries Management Plan. Revise subsection (d) to read as follows: In the Caribou Flats Section, from June 16 through August 15, the commissioner may, by emergency order, allow commercial fishing for sockeye salmon if escapement goals in Nelson Lagoon have been achieved.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Caribou Flats Section has been closed to drift gillnetting for many years, to ensure returns to Nelson Lagoon. The fishery inside the lagoon has concentrated on larger fish using larger mesh gear. This has, over time, skewed the escapement to smaller fish. Allowing drift gillnet effort in the Caribou Flats Section, once Nelson Lagoon escapements have been achieved, would likely result in the harvest of these smaller fish and help in rebalancing the size distribution of the escapement.

PROPOSED BY: Joe Hinton

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