

**PROPOSAL 118 – 5 AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.**

Remove the optimum escapement goal for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon and add the guided sport fishery to the list of fisheries managed under the plan, as follows:

5AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan. (a) The department shall manage the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon stocks primarily for commercial uses based on abundance. The department shall also manage the commercial fisheries to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho, late-run Kenai River king, and Kenai River coho salmon stocks in order to provide personal use, sport, and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon resources.

(b) The Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon commercial, sport, **guided sport fishermen** and personal use fisheries shall be managed to

[ (1) MEET AN OPTIMUM ESCAPEMENT GOAL (OEG) RANGE OF 700,000 – 1,400,000 LATE-RUN SOCKEYE SALMON; ]

**(1)**[(2)] achieve inriver goals as established by the board and measured at the Kenai River sonar counter located at river mile 19; and

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Repeal the Kenai River late-run sockeye Optimum Escapement Goal OEG

The Kenai River is the only river in the state to have five different sockeye salmon goals. These OEGs are not scientifically defensible and annually puts escapement into the Kenai River that is more than double the biological escapement goal. The OEG is extreme and is being used as a method to restrict commercial fishing and allocate more sockeye into the river, that will not be utilized by any one and will jeopardized future returns. There are numerous studies that document over escapement as not beneficial to the resource, habitat or users. World renowned sockeye salmon expert University of British Columbia professor emeritus Carl Walters states that severely restricting salmon fishing to put more spawners on the grounds did not produce more fish and only cost fishermen money. Walters points out that adding more spawners above an intermediate level does not create more fish. Adding extra spawners are not producing any more salmon and adding more spawners isn't adding more value to anybody. He states that consistently putting too many spawners into a system is bad for the fish. This is exactly what the OEG is doing to the Kenai River. The OEG is contrary to Alaska's Constitution, Alaska's laws, statutory conservation mandates, the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) and the Sustainable Salmon fisheries policy 5AAC 39.222 especially (a)(2) formulate fishery management plans designed to achieve maximum or optimum salmon production, and (c)(2)(B) salmon escapement goals should be established in a manner consistent with sustained yield: unless otherwise directed, the department will manage Alaska's salmon fisheries, to the extent possible, for maximum sustained yield; and (c)(3)(P).the best available scientific information on the status of salmon populations and the condition of the salmon's habitats should be routinely updated and subjected to peer review. The OEG must be repealed!

The guided sport fishermen should also be added with the other users who shall be managed to in 5AAC 21.360 (a)(b)

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-151)  
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