

PROPOSAL 205 - 5 AAC 5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Allow shore-based personal use dipnetting in the Kenai River upstream to Skilak Lake, as follows:

In that portion of the Kenai River from a regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake downstream to the downstream side of the Warren Ames Bridge when the bag and possession limit in the sport fishery for late-run sockeye salmon is increased from 3 to 6 fish, 5 AAC 77.540 (c)(1) would be amended such that, the department may, by emergency order, allow personal use fishing with a dip net as follows:

1. Only on private land from a previously approved shoreline habitat protective structure.
2. A permit must be acquired from the Kenai River Center attesting to the authenticity of the habitat protective structure; and
3. The permit must be displayed at all times that personal use dip net fishing is taking place.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There is not enough access being made available to the shore based Personal Use Dip Net fishery in the Kenai River during years of exceptionally large runs of late-run sockeye salmon. During years when the SEG for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon is assured the Department may increase the bag limit in the sport fishery from 3 to 6 fish. In addition if the Department determines that the abundance of Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon is greater than 2,300,000 fish they may extend by emergency order, the personal use fishery in the Kenai River from 17 to 24 hours per day. At the same time, the Commercial fishery is fishing the maximum number of hours allowed unless under restriction due to the conservation of late-run king salmon. Under these circumstances, the sonar count of these fish often exceeds the upper bound of the in-river goal leaving significant numbers of these fish, which are already in the river, above the current geographic boundaries of the personal use fishery and in excess of the capacity of the sport fishery are available for harvest.

Shore based dipnetting along the Kenai River is currently restricted to areas below the Warren Ames Bridge. Opening up shore based dipnetting to property owners along the Kenai River who have fish habitat friendly structures on their property would allow those property owners to partake in the dipnet fishery from fish habitat friendly structures to protect bank habitat, and reduce crowding in the current areas on the Kenai where dipnetting is allowed.

PROPOSED BY: South Central Alaska Dipnetters Association (SCADA) (HQ-F16-074)
