

PROPOSAL 215 – 5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan. Close commercial fishing within one mile of the Little Susitna River, if the Little Susitna River king salmon sport fishery is restricted to harvest less than 7 days per week and artificial lures by emergency order, as follows:

Amend the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan by adding the following provisions:

(13) if the Little Susitna River sport fishery is restricted to harvest less than 7 days a week and artificial lures by emergency order: the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, commercial fishing within one mile of the Little Susitna River confluence with Knik Arm.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Little Susitna River King Salmon sport fishery is bearing the greatest burden of conservation during times of low abundance. During times of low abundance, King Salmon are being harvested within a mile radius of the Little Susitna River at the same time the Little Susitna River King salmon sport fishery has been under emergency order restriction.

Harvest in the Little Susitna River Sport fishery has been dramatically reduced since 2009. Opportunity and chance of catching and harvesting a King Salmon has been seriously altered. Significant efforts have been made in river in the sport fishery to reduce harvest under emergency order, by restricting harvest at least 3 days/week (4 days prior to 2016), mandating single hooks, reducing the annual limit 60% (only 2 fish), and increasing the weir boundary three more holes down the river to protect staging fish.

The one mile radius of the Little Susitna River's at its confluence with Knik Arm, is a major staging area, for King Salmon migrating up the Little Susitna River. Highest King Salmon abundance within the one mile radius of the Little Susitna River occurs in the first 3 weeks of June. Scientific studies on the Kenai Peninsula suggest King salmon behavior at the confluence in this one mile radius zone, would be to swim back and forth increasing susceptibility to commercial harvest in a set net.

With in season weir monitoring and Little Susitna King Salmon behavior, the Department of Fish and Game cannot accurately assess run strength until the third or fourth week June, depending on river conditions and King salmon behavior.

PROPOSED BY: Ben Allen

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