

## Homer Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting of January 13, 2014

Meeting began at 6:00 pm and was held at the NERRS building.

Members Present: David Bayes, Ty Gates, Tom Hagberg, Dave Lyon (Chair), Lee Martin, George Matz, James Meesis, Marvin Peters, Gary Sinnhuber, Dennis Wade

Members Absent Excused: Gus Van Dyke, Pete Wedin

Members Absent Unexcused: Joey Allred, Jr, Michael Craig

Public Present: Luke Kumfer, Chuck Lindsay, Louie Flora, Representative Paul Seaton (arrived after the city council meeting)

Staff Present: Sherry Wright

AC held elections with the following results: Lee Martin, George Matz, Marvin Peters, Gary Sinnhuber and Tom Young were all re-elected for three year terms.

The Homer AC discussed with a member of Seaton's office about their proposed action on Kenai River proposals. They are proposing to submit a letter to the BOF that addresses their common and primary concern, which is advocating on behalf of the fish, rather than fighting over who catches the second to last king salmon (because the last guy that catches the fish will tow the blame).

### Upper Cook Inlet BoF Proposal discussion

135	<b>5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.</b> Modify management plan to remove provisions 5 AAC 21.353(a)(2)(A), (B), and (C) in the management plan, as follows.	Support 11-0  Asks for full openings back on Mondays and Thursdays. With test boats working and DNA samples being taken, evidence shows the fishery is a mixed stock fishery traveling to various streams. Fisheries management moved the fishery around (and off the ball of fish present in the waters).
136	<b>5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.</b> Modify management plan to change dates of drift fishery to June 19-September 1 and run-strength trigger points for late-run Kenai River sockeye salmon; remove area restrictions in July; and modify provisions affecting additional fishing periods.	Support 10 – 0 -1  This proposal has to do with the trigger points. UCIDA proposals that are along these lines are good because the commercial fleet have been overly and inappropriately restricted for the last several years on runs that were strong. The lines are drawn and they are drawn daily.
137	<b>5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.</b> Modify management plan to remove area restrictions and change expanded corridor area.	Support 11 – 0  This proposal seeks to remove area restrictions and change expanded corridor areas. The index boats

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		reveal that this is a mixed stock fishery. This takes fish from area 1 and puts it into area 2, which attempts to correlate to where the rifts are.
161	<b>5 AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.</b> Amend management plan to change the upper end of the three inriver goals (tiers) for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon to 1,500,000.	Oppose 0-11  Data in the brood stock tables retained since 1968 shows that over-escapement does not work.
205	<b>5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Close Kenai River tributaries to all fishing July 1-August 30, and the Kenai River mainstem upstream of river mile 13 from July 10-September 20.</b>	Support 11-0  This was proposed by the Homer AC and any fishing is going to interfere with the spawning kings. The survival / mortality of Chinook salmon doesn't identify if any of those fish actually spawn or not. Even if they get some eggs in the gravel are they around long enough to defend their beds. Some people along the river testified that they could just go and collect king salmon that had been played out along the beaches. Why are we not closing from the bridge up? The committee believes this proposal supports the drastic and unprecedented action to preserve the stocks of Kenai River King salmon.
218	<b>5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.</b> Use the southern Anchor River marker instead of the Bluff Point marker when restricting the marine king salmon fishery to protect Kenai River king salmon.	Support 10-0-1  This would allow fishing and still provide protective measures.
226	<b>5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area and 5 AAC 75.011. Sport fishing by proxy. Prohibit proxy fishing for king salmon in the Kenai River.</b>	Support as amended 11-0  Amendment: Fresh water fishing only on the Kenai Peninsula 10-0-1 Support  When you have a fishery that is in trouble, you don't go catch a couple extra for your neighbor who can't go out there anymore.
228	<b>5 AAC 57.XXX. New Section. Stock the Kenai River with 50,000 king salmon smolt.</b>	No action  Where are they going to harvest the fish to begin the stocking program? This discussion will likely begin whether we like it or not. When the fish are gone – someone is going to want to stock fish. Not sure if there are federal laws that would prohibit this from happening. We can make our own Frankenfish.....

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247	<b>5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Allow snagging of sockeye salmon in the Kenai River.</b>	<p style="text-align: right;">Oppose 2-6-3</p> <p>At least a fish that is caught by the head should be kept. If they are snagged in the gill, they are likely to die anyhow. Legalizing this method of fishing would change the nature of the fishery, which is socially marginally acceptable already. People observe how other people are fishing and concern of others applying this technique is high. There is a modicum of skill involved in fishing and this will cause pandemonium. Most people just leave (once they have caught their limit) but there are people that continue fishing catch and release when they have caught their limit. The escapement is not an issue in the sockeye fishery so the concern of keeping fish that have been mortally snagged is not a bona fide concern. Support is as long as they don't change the hook restrictions (to a 3/8 opening).</p>
249	<b>5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area. Prohibit use of eggs for bait in the Kasilof River king salmon sport fishery.</b>	<p style="text-align: right;">Oppose 0-10-1</p> <p>If we allow this to happen on the Kasilof, concern that it will trickle to the Lower Cook Inlet streams was expressed. Prohibiting the use of eggs flat out is wrong. There are plenty of people that don't keep their roe, it is readily available on most fisheries. This is a poorly written proposal (didn't say what kind of eggs).</p>
251	<b>5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area. Reduce king salmon bag and possession limit to one fish on the Kasilof River.</b>	<p style="text-align: right;">Support 11-0</p> <p>The fishery is in trouble and we are looking at options to resolve the problem. The reason there is retention of two fish is because we have hatchery and natural runs of the fish. As the Kenai becomes more restricted the effort will rise on other systems</p>
266	<b>5 AAC 56.140. Kasilof River guiding and guided fishing requirements and 5 AAC 57.140. Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area. Prohibit a registered guide who guides on the Kenai River from guiding on the Kasilof River when the Kenai River is closed to guided fishing on Sundays and Mondays.</b>	<p style="text-align: right;">Support as amended 11-0</p> <p>Amendment: Kenai guides may not move to the Kasilof or Cook Inlet saltwater if the Kenai River is closed to fishing. Support amendment 11-0</p> <p>Local fishers utilize the Kasilof when other systems are closed. Concern of being able to fish from the bank (as a guide) was expressed and would like clarification.</p>

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276	<b>5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Open Kenai River personal use fishery after 350,000 sockeye salmon escapement has been reached.</b>	Support 9 - 2 Why open the fishery if there are no fish present. We like it. Personal use fishing harvests more fish on a daily basis per person. 15% are Kenai Peninsula residents. 85% are from outside of the Peninsula. There have been times one member has been sitting on the river because ADF&G doesn't have the escapement which is being caught as he sits there (so commercial fishing can't be prosecuted). So he must sit and watch others harvest those same fish. That fishery is completely and totally out of control. This proposal is a start. The opposing view believes these are Alaska fish. Dipnetting has created a huge constituency for salmon in the state that supports the sustainable management. It has created a huge sense of entitlement. Personal use begins at an arbitrary time.
281	<b>5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Prohibit retention of king salmon in the Kenai River personal use fishery.</b>	Support 11-0 This is currently closed by EO and not by regulation. This would make it permanent. This also aligns the Kasilof and Kenai.
290	<b>5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan. Change dates for the Kasilof River personal use (PU) set gillnet fishery from June 15-24 to June 20-30, and close the PU set gillnet fishery and require release of all king salmon in the PU dipnet fishery when sport fish restrictions are placed on king salmon in the Kenai or Kasilof rivers.</b>	No action This is also a cause that there are no kings coming into the Kasilof. Changing the dates would only target older and not as fresh of kings. Having all those nets out in front of the river on both sides is not allowing fish to come up the system. The personal use fishery is overwhelming to law enforcement – causing need for additional people out on the ground. Realistically, this should be changed to a dipnet fishery, if it continues.
291	<b>5 AAC 77.527. Personal use smelt fishery. Extend fishing season for personal use smelt fishery from April 1 through June 15.</b>	Support 11 - 0 For the last three years the fish were not prevalent during the season (this past year they were there in abundance). It would line up the regulations with other hooligan fisheries. Generally, for the last 30 years the fish are coming later.

Rep Seaton provided some information to the committee regarding a literature review titled "Barbed and barbless hooks and their effect on juvenile and adult salmonid mortality" and a *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* article on the "Hooking mortality of Chinook salmon released in the Kenai River, Alaska."

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Gary Sinnhuber will represent the AC at the UCI meeting by unanimous consent. The letter will be read into the record.

Next meeting February 11<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at the NERRS building to take up game issues and get a report on the UCI BOF meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.