

PROPOSAL 159

5 AAC 57.140. Kenai River guiding and guided fishing requirements in the Kenai River Drainage Area.

Allow sport fishing from a guide vessel on the Kenai River on Mondays from August 1–November 30 as follows:

(i) **Repeal** [FROM JULY 31 OR THE END OF THE KING SALMON SEASON, WHICHEVER IS LATER, THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, SPORT FISHING FROM A VESSEL THAT IS REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, AS A SPORT FISHING GUIDE VESSEL IS RESTRICTED AS FOLLOWS:

(1) DOWNSTREAM FROM THE CONFLUENCE OF THE MOOSE RIVER AND KENAI RIVER, SPORT FISHING ON MONDAYS, EXCEPT LABOR DAY, IS PROHIBITED.

(2) UPSTREAM FROM THE CONFLUENCE OF THE MOOSE RIVER AND KENAI RIVER, SPORT FISHING FOR COHO SALMON ON MONDAYS, EXCEPT LABOR DAY, IS PROHIBITED; ANY COHO SALMON CAUGHT MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT FURTHER HARM.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The guide regulations currently in place for the coho salmon sport fishery prohibit fishing from a registered guide vessel below the confluence of the Kenai and Moose rivers on all Mondays from August 1- November 30 except Labor Day. It also prohibits fishing for coho salmon out of a registered guide vessel above the confluence of the Kenai and Moose rivers on all Mondays from August 1 - November 30 except Labor Day.

I propose that these regulations are repealed, and guides be allowed to sport fish from a registered guide vessel along the entirety of the Kenai River on Mondays from August 1–November 30.

The problem with this regulation remaining in place is that it puts extreme pressure on the remaining available fisheries and bank locations on the Kenai River. Once the sockeye run ends the only available option for guides is to trout fish in the middle river from Bings Landing. The result is that every guide on the river tuns into a trout guide on Mondays and flood Bings Landing. This means instead of the guides being spread out over 50 river miles and targeting all available species. They are instead, pushed to the only available 10 river miles to fish, and can only target trout from their vessels.

In addition to the extreme pressure this region of the river receives on Mondays the pressure on Bings boat launch it just as extreme. The number of vehicles and boat trailers it receives is beyond its capacity as a launch.

By eliminating the Monday closures for guide vessels both above and below the confluence of the Moose and Kenai rivers, it would allow the entire river to be used as it is the remainder of the week and reduce the congestion and pressure placed on certain regions and fisheries. This would spread

boats out throughout the river creating safer fishing and boating conditions for both guides and private anglers.

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