

RE: C2 Cook Inlet Salmon FMP – Final Action

Let's not pretend that the guided sport fishing industry in Cook Inlet isn't commercial fishing. It is, under a different name. Certain factions of the guided sport fishing industry have been completely committed to the elimination of commercial fishing with nets in Cook Inlet for well over 30 years. The sport guided commercial fishing grounds are slightly different, mainly via the relative safety of the Kenai river, with some owners having high priced riverfront properties complemented by gardeners, cooks, multiple guides, entertainers and housekeeping staff etc... Fishing opportunities and profits are maximized for the commercial non-net fishers by packing the rivers full of fish whether biologically sustainable or not. Which brings us to where we are today, with the State of Alaska through the ADF&G and the Board of Fish increasingly for years behaving as if Cook Inlet were a special consideration not needing to comply with the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. What at one point was a good example of biologically sustainable fisheries management has now been transformed, with one commercial group pitted against another to resemble an ad-hoc sideshow that doesn't need science or any further research because "we have it all figured out". In consideration of the above I would strongly urge this body to adopt Alternative 2, with various amendments as necessary, to bring about a Fisheries Management Plan fully compliant with the Magnuson-Stevens act and Ninth Circuit Court ruling. The resulting plan should be biologically sustainable, and fluid enough to respond to changing run timing, rather than adhering to the current overly simplistic and disastrous model of "on this date is when the fish are supposed to be here, death by one thousand cuts" policy toward the fishermen with nets.