

Testimony to the Alaska Board of Fisheries

Submitted by Mac Minard, Fisheries Consultant for the Matanuska Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission

My name is Mac Minard; I serve as the fisheries consultant to the Matanuska Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission. I am a former Alaska Department of Fish and Game Biologist with 27 years' experience in Bristol Bay, Cook Inlet and AYK where I served as Regional Supervisor.

At Statehood of the Alaskan fisheries Governor Eagan said "***On the ruins of this once great resource we shall rebuild***". Of course at that time he was describing the plight of Alaskan salmon fisheries in 1959 resulting from decades of Federal mismanagement and fishing with fish traps.

Today there is a need to rebuild the stocks of the Northern District that have over a generation of management been neglected and in some cases "written off". Seven of the 11 identified salmon stocks of concern exist in the waters of the Matanuska Susitna drainages. The complexities of managing mixed stock fisheries are at the core of the problem and reversing this trend and rebuilding these stocks pose a serious and complex management challenge.

You will hear testimony today from Borough officials about the economic impact that is being endured and from residents who are being excluded from fishing in their home waters. Both will address the urgency for action.

You will hear from residents about the importance of the Personal Use Fisheries that subscribe to the notion that the highest and best use of Alaskan resources is those resources that end up on the tables of Alaskans.

You will hear from former Board of Fisheries Members and Department Managers, who point out that the principles of terminal stock fisheries management, and the creation and use of Conservation corridors that allow fish to freely migrate north, the hallmark of Bristol Bay, and the most successfully managed salmon fishery on the planet, have a place in Cook Inlet management system.

You will also hear that the habitat is degraded and that pike and beavers are to blame for the declines and we ask you reject those notions. Simply stated we have failed to place adequate numbers of fish on the spawning grounds to sustain historic populations.

There have been some excellent presentations that suggest that a management framework that emphasizes terminal harvests and reduced by-catch are both effective and doable. Providing management direction to staff as to when to transition from sockeye to coho management is essential.

Going forward we ask you as Board members to simply consider the following question when making decisions during this meeting. "***Will the action you are being asked to take aid or interfere in the rebuilding of Northern District salmon stocks***".

Thank you for your time and thank you for your service on this Board.