

**PROPOSAL 47 – 5AAC 24.361. Copper River King Salmon Management Plan.****PROPOSED BY:** Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee.**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** When deemed necessary for the conservation of king salmon, the department may close the commercial gillnet fishing season and immediately reopen a fishing season during which dip net gear may be used and all king salmon caught must be returned immediately to the water.**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Drift gillnet gear is the only legal commercial salmon fishing gear within the Copper River District.**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would decrease mortality of king salmon in the CRD commercial fishery, reallocate harvest of Copper River salmon to other fisheries, and potentially increase king salmon spawning escapement. It would likely lead to foregone sockeye salmon harvest and potentially exceeding sockeye salmon escapement goals.**BACKGROUND:** In recent years, fisheries using dip net gear have been shown to reduce mortality of king salmon on the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. However, these are inriver fisheries, in which salmon are susceptible to capture by dip net due to restricted area of the river channel as they move upstream. The result is a fishery for all species of salmon that allows for release of species for which conservation concerns exist. In these cases, fishermen are still able to harvest chum or sockeye salmon while releasing king salmon. Fishermen in the Yukon and Kuskokwim can use small, open skiffs to fish, and the channelized riverine environment allows them to target salmon with greater success than an open ocean environment. The environment within the CRD would not be conducive for this gear type. The CRD is either open ocean or broad intertidal flats. In the CRD there is little channelized shallow area to concentrate fish and allow dip net gear to be effective.**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. The magnitude of sockeye salmon run entry would overwhelm harvest ability because ineffective nature of dip net gear in the CRD environment. The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative aspects of this proposal.**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal may result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery. Commercial fishermen would need to purchase dip nets and any other associated gear to be able to participate in the fishery.