

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission

P.O. Box 439
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Copper Center, AK 99573

October 21, 2022

Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS-121
Anchorage, AK 99503

Subject: Comments on Federal Subsistence Fisheries Proposals for 2023-2025

Dear Mr. Christianson:

The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) met in Copper Center, Alaska, on October 3 and 4, 2022. The commission is a federal advisory committee that represents subsistence users of federal lands within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. At this meeting, the SRC reviewed the federal subsistence fisheries proposals for the Wrangell-St. Elias area that are being considered for the 2023-2025 regulatory cycle and would like to provide the following comments.

FP23-14 Revise customary and traditional use determination for Chitina Subdistrict salmon. The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission unanimously supported FP23-14. Serendipity residents are subsistence users with patterns of subsistence use that are similar to other communities that already have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Chitina Subdistrict. And specific to the request, they have harvested salmon in the Chitina Subdistrict for up to 20 years under State of Alaska regulations.

FP23-15/16 Revise customary and traditional use determination for Chitina Subdistrict salmon. The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission unanimously supported FP23-15/16. The people who live along the Alaska Highway between Dot Lake and the Canadian border outside of communities are rural subsistence users with patterns of use similar to those of the adjacent communities – which already have a customary and traditional use determination for the fishery.

FP23-19 Rescind Lower Copper River Area salmon fishery. The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission vote on FP23-19 tied, and as such the motion to support the proposal failed. Members voting in support of the proposal expressed concern about the potential for high numbers of permits to be issued for the fishery in the future and recent low returns to the Copper River. They also stated that Cordova residents have many other fishing opportunities, whereas the up-river communities only have harvest opportunities in the Copper River. Members who opposed the proposal stated that the harvest has been very low and that the delegated federal manager has the authority take action in the event that there is a significant increase in participation and harvest. Those opposed also noted that some Cordova residents have expressed appreciation for the new fishery and stated that they don't want to take away an opportunity in the absence of conservation concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Stevens
Chair

cc: Superintendent, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council