



## Alaska Board of Fisheries Emergency Petition Meeting: July 17, 2018

*By Ernie Weiss, AEB Natural Resources Director*

On Tuesday July 17<sup>th</sup>, the Alaska Board of Fisheries met to decide a total of seven emergency petitions. Three of the petitions, from the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), the Chignik Fish & Game Advisory Committee (AC) and from the Chignik Regional Aquaculture Association (CRAA), asked for an emergency finding of the low 2018 escapement of Chignik sockeye, with a remedy that would curtail or potentially shut down South Peninsula area salmon fisheries.



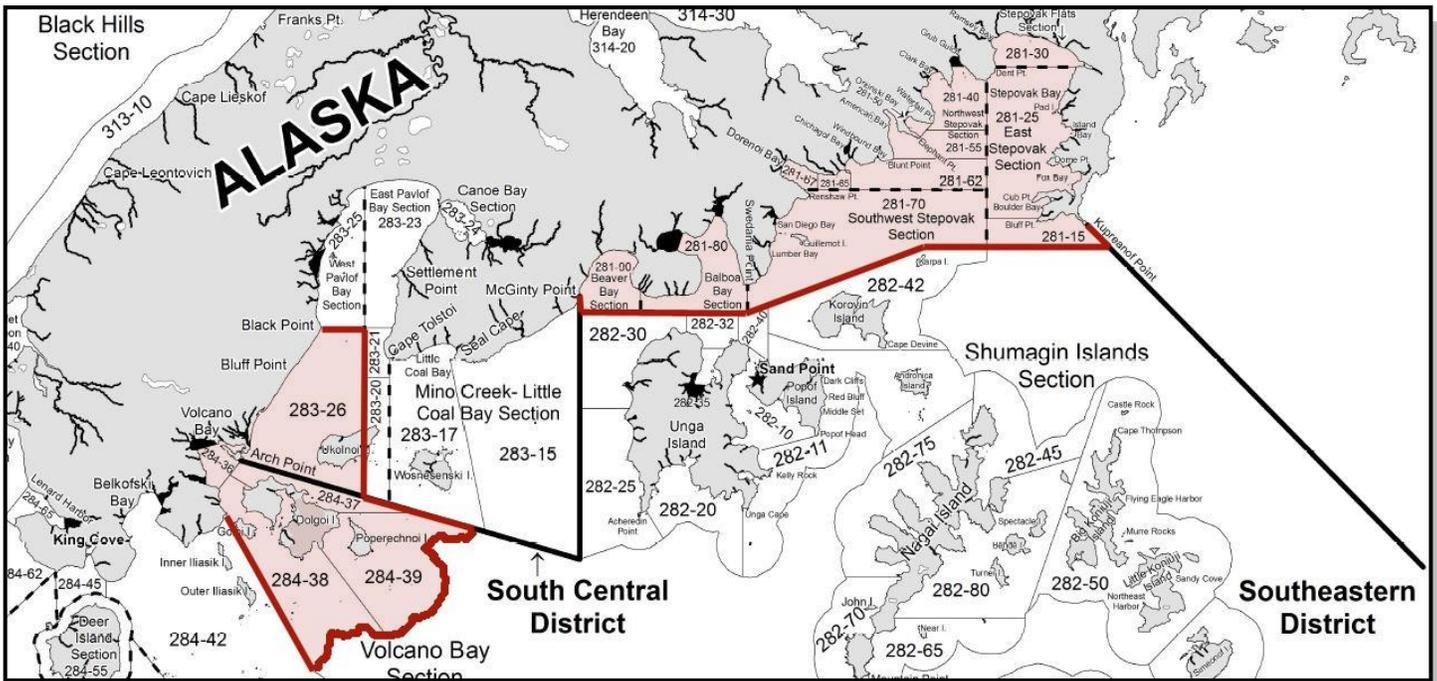
The Alaska Board of Fisheries held a special meeting in Anchorage on July 17<sup>th</sup> to consider a total of seven emergency petitions.

Board policy is that an emergency is “an unforeseen, unexpected event that either threatens a fish or game resource, or an unforeseen, unexpected resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action and such delay would be significantly burdensome to the petitioners because the resource would be unavailable in the future.”

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG), while recognizing that the Chignik run was ‘very poor,’ determined that the low Chignik escapement and/or incidental harvest in

the Kodiak Management Area or the South Alaska Peninsula Area of Chignik-bound sockeye did not constitute an emergency. The Board disagreed.

In a somewhat clumsy process, the Board first found an emergency existed related to the BBNA and the Chignik AC petitions. Board action on that emergency finding was tabled while the Board considered the CRAA petition related to the Chignik late-run of sockeye, and found an emergency existed. The Board then took action adopting emergency regulations (that will expire in 120 days), based on the emergency findings for the three petitions: The subsection of the Dolgoi area (stat areas 283-26, 284-37, 284-38 & 284-39) that closes by regulation when the 191,000 trigger of sockeye harvested in the larger Dolgoi area is reached, will remain closed through August 8<sup>th</sup>. The Southeastern District Mainland (SEDM) area will also remain closed through August 8<sup>th</sup>. The emergency findings and the emergency action were all adopted by votes of 5 to 2, with Chairman Jensen and Member Ruffner dissenting.



The Alaska Board of Fisheries took emergency action on July 17, 2018 to close the (shaded) areas to salmon fishing through August 8<sup>th</sup>.

South Peninsula fishermen had argued that Board action was unnecessary since ADFG has been exercising their emergency order authority this summer, reducing South Peninsula fishing time by 25% in June and closing the Dolgoi area subsection to fishing for the two most recent openings in July. The SEDM area does not open until and unless the Chignik Management Area fishermen harvest at least 300,000 sockeye.

South Peninsula fishermen have short 33 – 36-hour fishing periods in July, with longer 60 – 63-hour windows of fishing closures. They have shared in the burden of conservation for Chignik sockeye, specifically through the Dolgoi regulations since 2016, as well as through the SEDM regulations since 1985.

The Board will consider Chignik, South Peninsula and other Area M proposals in the regular 3-year cycle meeting scheduled for February 21 - 27 2019 in Anchorage.

In other Board of Fish action at the Emergency Petition meeting:

By a unanimous vote of 7-0, the Board found an emergency existed and took emergency action to allow for drift gillnet subsistence fishing on the 4A section of the Yukon in August as suggested in the petition by the villages of Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross.



The seven emergency petitions drew a large number of stakeholders to the July 17<sup>th</sup> Board of Fisheries meeting in Anchorage.

By a vote of 3 – 4, the Board denied a petition from Kenai River Sportfishing Association and others that requested a limit on pink salmon hatchery production in Prince William Sound.

The Board took no action on the petition from Yakutat residents to restrict fishing on the Situk River, and no action on the petition from Kasilof residents to allow more fishing on Kenai late-run king salmon.

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