



## The War on Alaskan Salmon

In his book *"King of Fish: The Thousand-Year Run of Salmon,"* Professor David Montgomery recounts how the phenomena known as the "death by a thousand cuts" has led to the demise of once-proud salmon fisheries from Europe to New England to the Pacific Northwest. While Alaska prides itself on a progressive salmon management regime, we're increasingly repeating the habitat management mistakes made elsewhere. Some examples include:

**Pesticide & Herbicide Spraying:** ADEC recently issued new rules that eliminate permit requirements for spraying pesticides by state agencies on state public lands and rights-of-ways. As a result, there will be no requirement to identify and protect salmon streams or to establish buffers necessary to safeguard the state's salmon resources, and no opportunity for Alaskans to comment on or even to know about pesticide spraying around salmon streams.

**In-Stream Flow Reservations:** Governor Parnell has introduced legislation (HB77/SB26) designed to strip Alaskans of our rights to reserve water in our streams to support our salmon. Alaskans currently have the right to apply for an "Instream Flow Reservation" to assure adequate water for salmon spawning, rearing and migration. This common-sense water right benefits all Alaskans by protecting salmon and the economies salmon support. To compound matters, the Governor's legislation would also expand water rights for oil, gas and mining companies seeking out-of-stream diversions.

**Mixing Zones in Salmon Streams:** The Parnell Administration continues to pressure EPA to allow polluting "mixing zones" in salmon spawning habitat, under the misguided notion that "dilution is the solution to pollution;" ADEC argues spawning redds are only spawning redds when there's actual spawning occurring, and wants to allow pollution dumping in salmon habitat for the majority of each year. Mixing zones create sacrifice areas in water bodies where important uses – such as fishing – are not attained under the Clean Water Act.

**Cruise Ship Dumping:** The Governor's cruise ship bill (HB 80) is moving quickly through the legislature in an aggressive attempt to overturn the 2006 statewide initiative which provided strict pollution controls to prevent cruise ship companies from dumping heavy metals and other wastes in important coastal fish habitat.

**Alaska Coastal Management Program:** The Parnell Administration played a leading role in killing Alaska's coastal management program, which was the ONLY program that provided Alaskans a meaningful role in federal decisions affecting our coastal salmon resources. Parnell and Republican legislators threw local control under the bus simply to divest local communities from having a say in coastal decision making. Now Alaska – with more coastline than all Lower 48 states combined – is the only state without an approved coastal management program.

**Unsuitable Lands Petition:** Three years ago, Alaskans petitioned the Department of Natural Resources to find that salmon streams are "unsuitable" for large scale coal strip mining at the proposed Chuitna coal strip mine in Upper Cook Inlet. Despite the Governor's repeated promise to Alaskans he would "never trade one resource for another," his Administration has yet to decide whether to include wild salmon streams in the strip mine project area. Experts and layman alike agree, there's no technology to re-build a salmon stream that's been mined bank-to-bank down to 350 feet. If allowed to proceed, the Chuitna strip mine would set a horrendous precedent for salmon habitat management across the state.

**ADFG's 2013 Chinook Stock Assessment & Research Plan:** Despite a goal to identify key issues surrounding Chinook survivorship, the plan ignores public comments and fails to address the loss and degradation of fresh water habitat as a factor in Chinook salmon run strength, productivity and overall population health. It also fails to address ADFG's inability or unwillingness to enforce laws designed to protect salmon habitat. The Governor's approach is the politically easy route but fails to address the concrete actions the State can take today to protect our salmon-based economies for current and future generations.