

Fact Sheet

Title: New Motor & Boat Regulations Kenai River Special Management Area

On March 1, 2008 new regulations went into effect addressing boat and motor requirements for the Kenai River Special Management Area.

These regulations

- Prohibit the use of older two-stroke engines within the entire Special Management Area for the month of July. The exceptions to this are for those engines of recent manufacture that employ Direct Fuel Injection (DFI) technology. A list of those manufacturers are noted below. Beginning January 1, 2013, all older two stroke engines will no longer be allowed to operate within the Kenai River Special Management Area waters at any time of the year¹.
- Allow for increases in maximum horsepower of engines to 50 hp (except for Kenai and Skilak Lake where horsepower is unrestricted), however, all engines in excess of 35 hp may not be an older two stroke technology but must be of a cleaner burning technology (Four stroke or DFI).
- Restrict the length of vessels to 21 feet with a width no greater than 106 inches. It is important that powerboat users of the river understand that these new regulations will require that oversized vessels, in excess of 21 feet in length or greater than 106 inches in width, will need to have a permit issued from the Division of Parks in order to operate through 2008 and 2009. In 2010 all vessels in excess of this size will be prohibited within the Special Management Area (except for Kenai and Skilak Lake).

Frequently asked Questions:

Why are 2 stroke engines no longer allowed and why prohibited only in July?

July has traditionally been the busiest month for powerboat activity on the Kenai River as anglers pursue both King and sockeye salmon.

Water quality sampling over the last seven years has consistently shown that hydrocarbons originating from gasoline-burning engines have far-exceeded state standards during the busiest days on the river in July.

Studies have shown that increased hydrocarbon levels have a toxic effect on all small aquatic life, including aquatic insects that provide food, as well to both rainbow trout and salmon fry.

These repeated high levels of hydrocarbons led the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to declare the lower 19 miles of the Kenai River as "Impaired". This required the state to take actions to alleviate the pollution sources. The US EPA has tested and concluded that older two stroke engines contribute 12 to 20 times more unburned fuel into the environment than a four stroke engine of a similar size.

Prediction models for the river show that removing the two strokes engines from the river during the month of July will greatly reduce the level of hydrocarbons in the water below the State's "impaired" threshold standard.

How do I know if my engine is a four stroke or two stroke engine?

Older two stroke engines rely upon either mixed fuel, which combines a two-cycle oil with gasoline into one fuel tank, or the engine has an oil reservoir that allows the oil to be mixed at the carburetor before burning.

A four stroke engine requires only unleaded fuel for power; oil is added only for lubrication into a crankcase, similar to automobiles. If in doubt, take the motor to any outboard motor dealer who can assist you.

What two stroke engines can I use on the river in July?

Presently, only Nissan or Tohatsu, (Models 40 TLDI or 50 TLDI) and Bombardier Motor Corporation -Evinrude, (Models E-TEC 40 or E-TEC 50) make a Direct Fuel Injected (DFI) Engine.

I have an electronic fuel injected 2-stroke engine, so does that mean that it qualifies?

No, although Direct Fuel Injected (DFI) engines are also electronic fuel injected (EFI) engines, old 2-stroke EFI's are not DFI's. The 2-stroke engine must be one of the newer DFI's to qualify.

Can I still use my two stroke engine any other time of the year on the river?

Yes, as long as the horsepower does not exceed 35 hp.

Does the four stroke and direct fuel injected two stroke motor regulation apply to the entire Kenai River Special Management Area?

Yes, the KRSMA starts at the boundary markers at river mile 4, about one mile downstream from the Warren Ames Bridge, and extends upstream to include both Skilak Lake and Kenai Lake.

I have a two-stroke motor that is detuned to a 35 horsepower. Can I use it in the KRSMA other than in the month of July?

Yes, as long as the motor is detuned with the factory authorized and manufactured parts and the horsepower is clearly labeled on the cowling. These outboard motors will be subject to random inspections to verify that they are detuned to the 35 horsepower limit.

¹ This portion of the regulation became effective on June 5, 2008

HORSEPOWER RESTRICTIONS

Why was the horsepower limit increased?

Research conducted for and on the Kenai River has shown that heavier boats more commonly used on the river with 5 – 6 passengers tend to create less damaging wakes if a more powerful engine allows the boat to plane more efficiently. This regulation will do away with detuning of 50 hp engines and allow the public to utilize a more standard size of engine rather than a 35 hp engine, which has not been of a standard manufacture for over twenty years.

Does the horsepower restriction apply to entire Special Management Area?

No, there are no horsepower restrictions to the operation of boats on the Kenai Lake, on Skilak Lake, and on the Kenai River between the Kenai Lake Bridge and river mile 80.7 (near the Princess Lodge).

Can I detune an outboard greater than 50 horsepower to make it a 50 horsepower motor?

No, the 50 horsepower outboard is a standard manufactured motor. The detuning of any outboard greater than 50 horsepower is not permitted.

If I remove my 35 horsepower detune kit and reinstall my 40 or 50 horsepower component do I need to change my cowling decals back?

Yes, the outboard's propshaft horsepower rating must be clearly labeled by the manufactured factory cowling decals. - Please note that only four-stroke or DFI two-stroke motors may be re-tuned to 40 or 50 hp from their former 35 hp detuned status. Two-stroke engines larger than 35 hp are not allowed anywhere in the KRSMA now (unless they're DFI).

What is the "propshaft horsepower rating"?

It is the boat motor's original manufacturer rated and labeled horsepower.

How is the horsepower rating determined?

The rating is the original manufacturer's rated and labeled horsepower, and is included in the manufacturer's model or serial number plate

What happens to the horsepower rating if I have a jet drive unit on my boat motor?

A jet drive unit on any boat motor does not change the equivalent propshaft horsepower rating of the motor powerhead and driveshaft configuration for the purposes of this regulation.

If I purchase a 50 "Jet" drive from a manufacturer will it be legal to use in the KRSMA?

If you plan on operating a 50 hp "Jet" drive in the KRSMA, confirm that your propshaft horsepower rating is not greater than 50 hp. Some manufacturers that sell a "Jet" drive package will take into consideration that a jet drive unit will reduce the final output of a boat motor, and may label the cowling at the "reduced" horsepower. For the purpose of this regulation, the horsepower rating is determined at the motor's powerhead and not the final output.

BOAT SIZE SPECIFICATIONS

The maximum boat size allowed to be operated in the KRSMA is 21 feet in overall length and 106 inches in overall width.

Does the boat specification apply to entire KRSMA?

No, the boat size specifications do not apply to the operation of boats on Kenai Lake or Skilak Lake, or on the Kenai River between the Kenai Lake Bridge and river mile 80.7 (near the Princess Lodge).

What can I do if I own a boat larger than 21 feet in overall length and/or 106 inches in overall width?

A person who owns an oversized boat must provide proof of ownership (i.e. receipts, boat registration) showing they owned the boat before March 1, 2008. They then may apply for a permit to use the oversized boats until Dec. 31, 2009.

Where do I get the permit?

Permit applications will be available from any Kenai River Park Rangers or permitting staff. Application can be mailed by contacting the Kenai Area Office address at the bottom of this sheet.

What happens with my permit after Dec. 31, 2009?

Effective January 1, 2010, all permits for larger boats will expire and the boat specifications will apply to all powerboats used in the designated areas of the KRSMA.

What does "overall length" mean?

"Overall length" means the straight-line measurement between the extremities of the boat, but does not include trim tabs or outboard motors.

What does "overall width" mean?

"Overall width" means the straight-line measurement between the two widest extremities of the boat, measured at a right angle to the overall length measurement;

How will the overall length and overall width be measured?

The enforcement officer will use a standard tape measure to determine the overall length and width of the boat.

Will there be any leeway in the boat specification measurements?

No, the overall boat measurements will be taken to the exact inch.

Where can I get further information?

Please contact:

Jacques W. Kosto, District Ranger
Kenai River Special Management Area
Alaska State Parks
PO Box 1247
Soldotna, AK 99669
(907) 262-5581 ext 4 jacques.kosto@alaska.gov