The Bristol Bay sockeye run is one of the last remaining healthy salmon systems on the west coast of North America, with tens of millions of fish returning annually. Salmon are harvested by people in enormous numbers for both commercial purposes and as part of complex “subsistence” lifeways. Bristol Bay is celebrated as a poster child of fisheries sustainability, meaning that annual harvest of salmon is limited to ensure a viable return in the future. For my capstone I addressed the question: is the structure of fisheries governance in Bristol Bay conducive to residents’ participation in the commercial sockeye fishery? To address my question I reviewed scholarly writing and engaged with non-academic sources (personal experience, websites, news). I found that the limited entry system, which restricts commercial fishery participation to a fixed number of permit-holders, has resulted in the exclusion of local people. Millions of dollars are generated by the commercial fishery, but fewer of those dollars are remaining in local communities as time goes on. Concern about the rapid decline of local permit holdings has been prominent in recent years, and more people are asking whether there is a different way to govern the fishery that secures the local right to fish for generations to come. Permit banks, local preference, and community allocations are all plausible considerations for the future of fisheries governance. A guarantee of access opportunity for local people would re-ground commercial fishing benefits in communities, instead of perpetuating treatment of Alaska as an extractive resource frontier.