



# Three Things to Watch: 2022 Update

Susitna-Watana, Recreation Rivers, West Susitna Industrial Access

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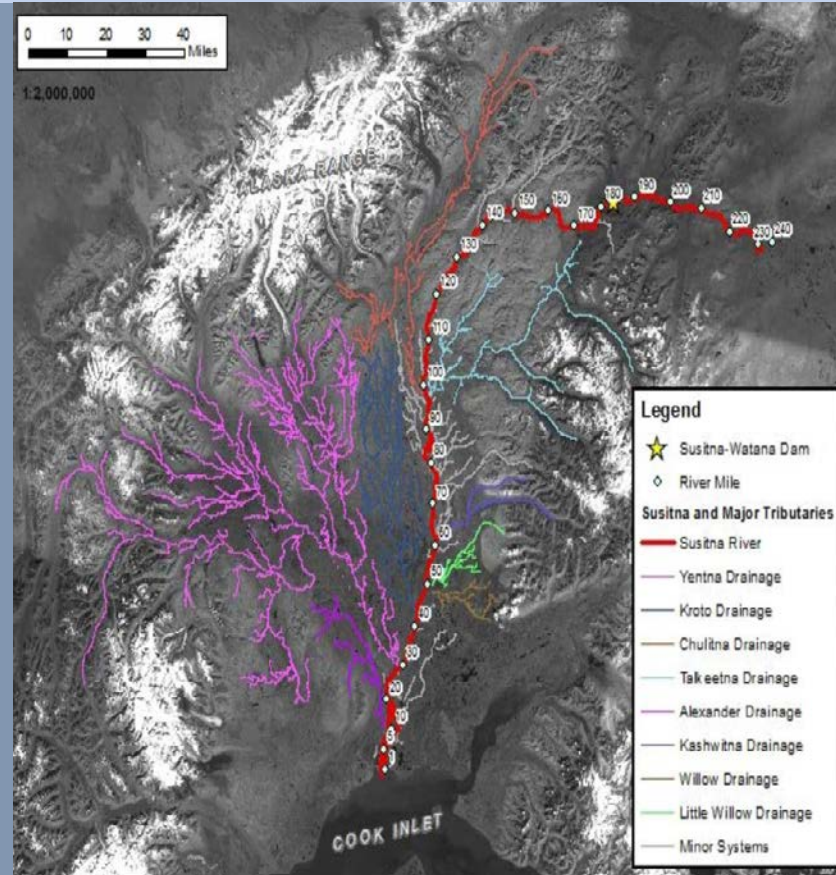
# What to Expect



- I. Who is the Susitna River Coalition?
- II. Susitna-Watana Hydro Project:
  - a. Background
  - b. Status
- III. Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers:
  - a. Background
  - b. Status
- IV. West Susitna Access Road:
  - a. Background
  - b. Status
- V. How Can You Monitor?

# The Susitna River Coalition

- Grassroots organization based in Talkeetna, Alaska
- Representing the entire Susitna Watershed
- Monitors and engages in watershed issues
- Watershed Watchdog



# Susitna-Watana Hydro Project

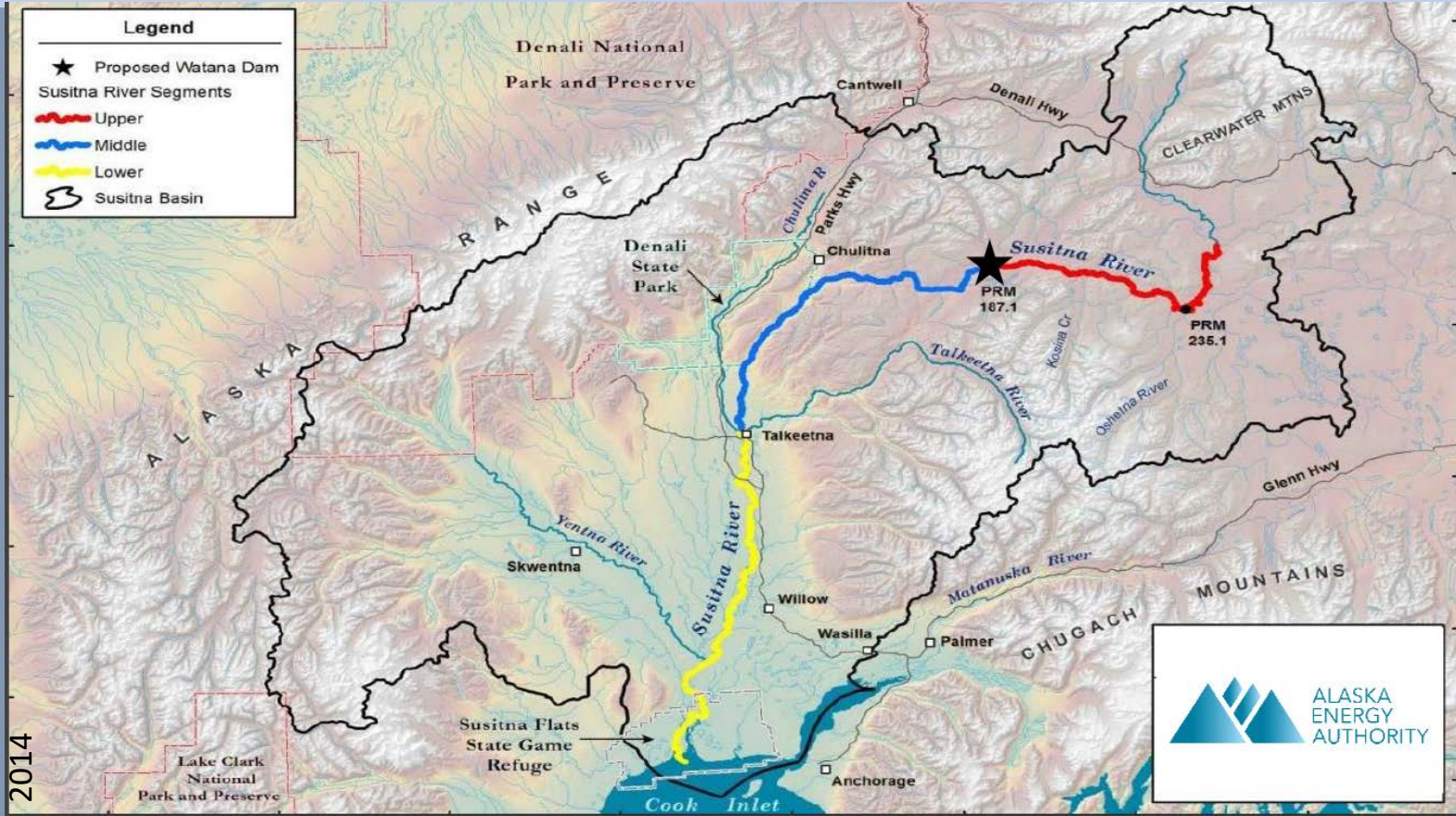


Figure: Ross,  
2014

# Susitna-Watana Hydro Project: Background

- 1950s, investigated by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- 1980's, feasibility studies by Alaska Energy Authority (AEA)
- 2011-2014, AEA explored the project
- In 2015: \$192 million total spent
- Last discussed in the 2021 Leg. Session

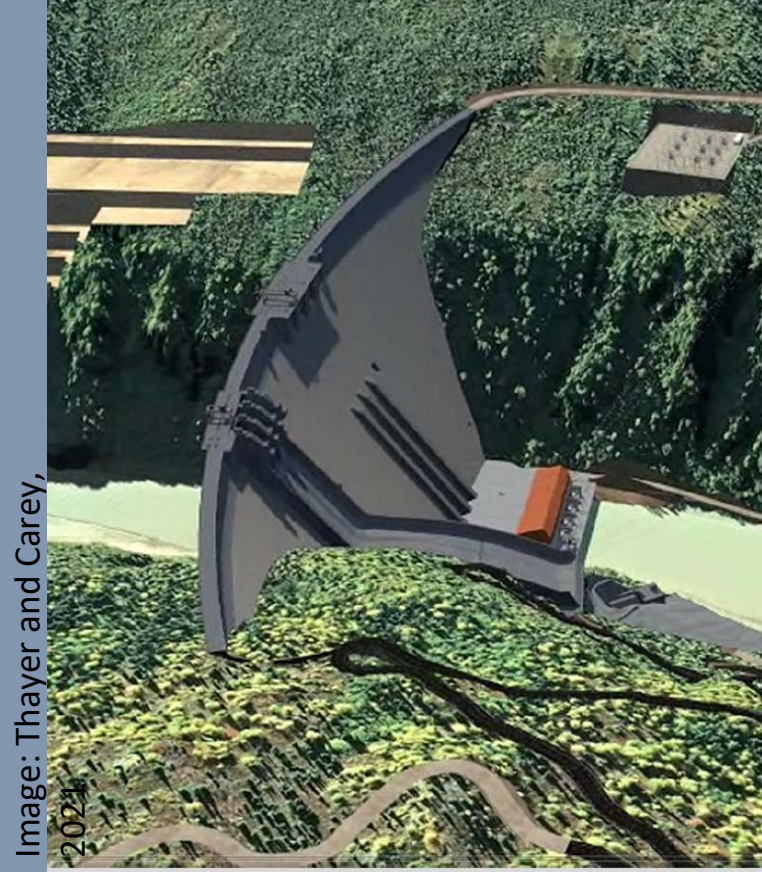


Image: Thayer and Carey, 2021

# Susitna-Watana Hydro Project: Current Status: Renewable Portfolio Standard

- SB 179 and HB 301
- Introduced by Governor Dunleavy, 2/2022
- 25% renewable by 2025  
80% renewable by 2040
- 5 scenarios to meet this goal, one including Susitna-Watana Hydro Project
- Did not pass, expect to see bill again in upcoming legislative session

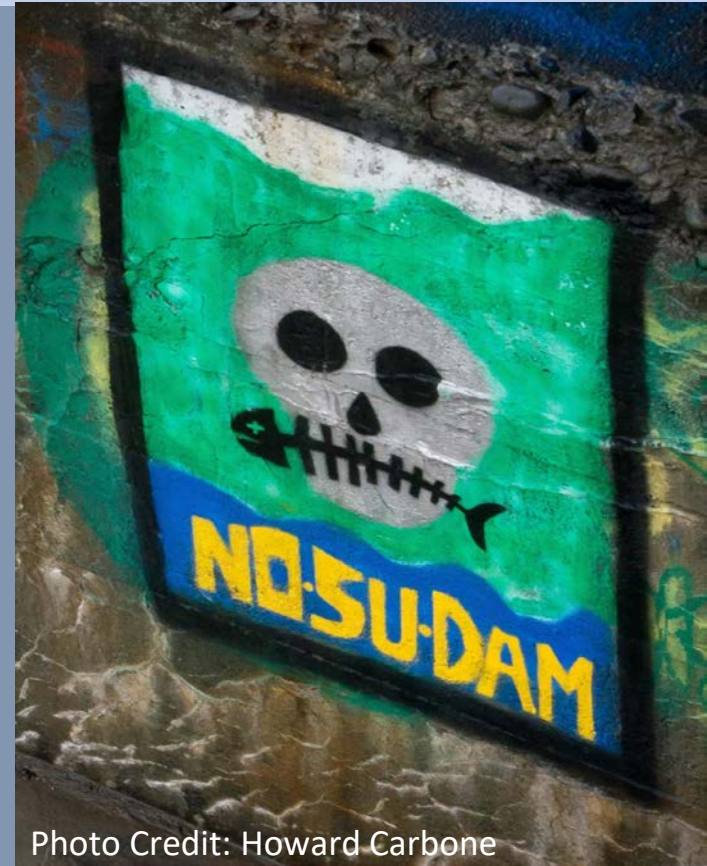
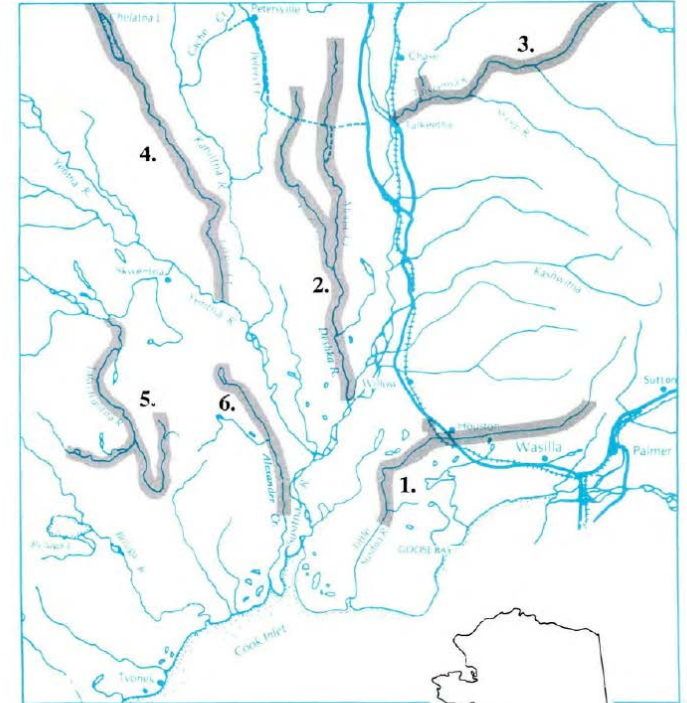


Photo Credit: Howard Carbone

# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

- 1988, Alaska State Recreational Rivers Act Passed
- 1991, Susitna Recreational Rivers Management Plan Implemented
- Six Susitna Watershed Rec Rivers:  
Little Susitna, Talachulitna, Lake Creek, Alexander Creek, Talkeetna River, and Deshka River
- All of these water systems are anadromous



### Management Units\*

1. Little Susitna River
2. Deshka River (Kroto Creek / Moose Creek)
3. Talkeetna River
4. Lake Creek
5. Talachulitna River
6. Alexander Creek



\* 1:63,360 maps of the Recreation Rivers are included in Chapter 3.

# SB 97

## SB 97 States:

"An Act relating to state land; relating to the authority of the Department of Education and Early Development to dispose of state land; relating to the authority of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to dispose of state land; relating to the authority of the Department of Natural Resources over certain state land; relating to the state land disposal income fund; relating to the leasing and sale of state land for commercial development; repealing establishment of recreation rivers and recreation river corridors; and providing for an effective date."

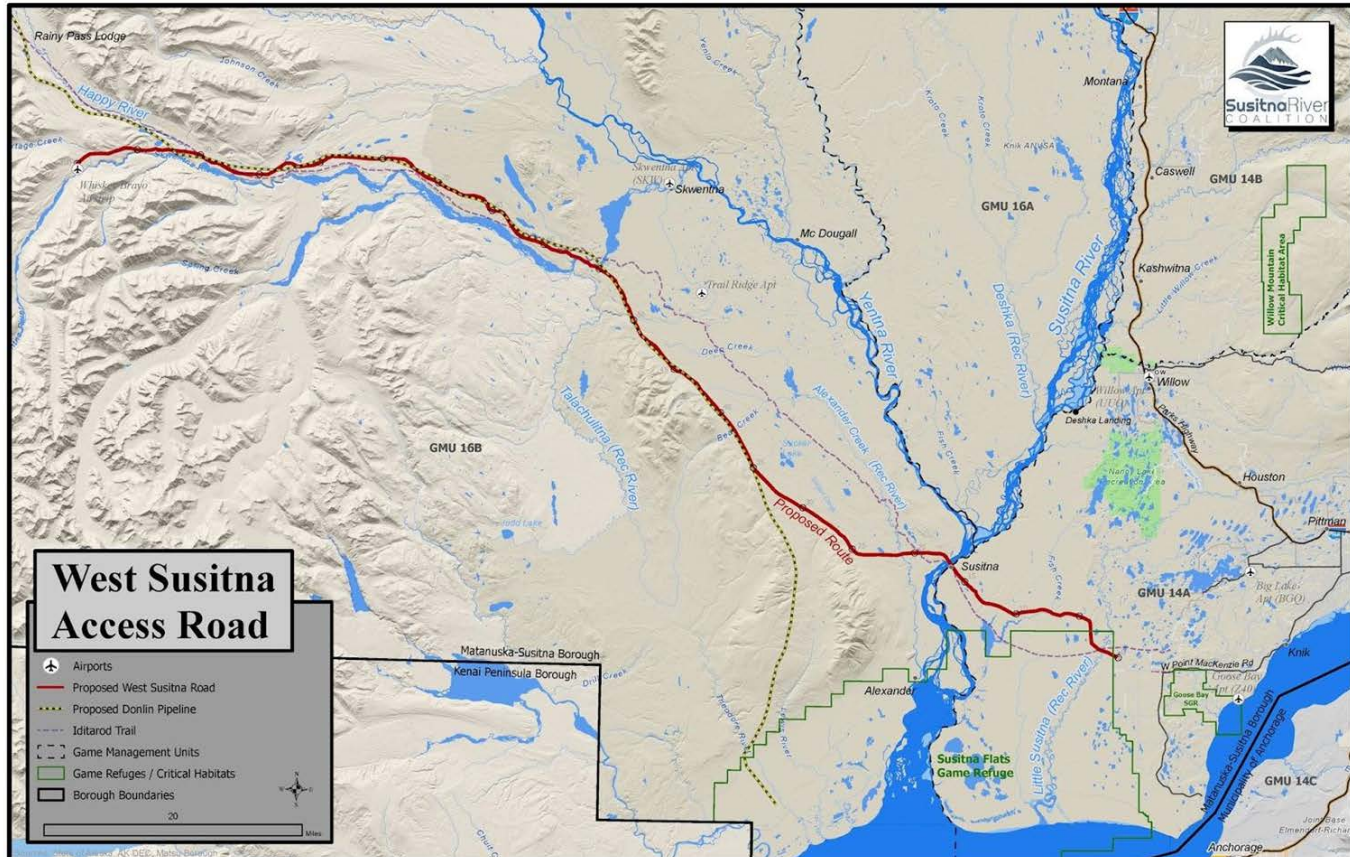


# Recreation Rivers Revision: Status

- September 2021: Rec Rivers Advisory Board
- Set the stage for revision
- Fall 2022: Potential revision of the plan announced
- 9-Step Process: Scoping completed over the summer and fall of 2022
- Revision process moving forward



# West Susitna Industrial Access Corridor



# West Susitna Access: Background



# West Susitna Access: Phase I, & II MOUs

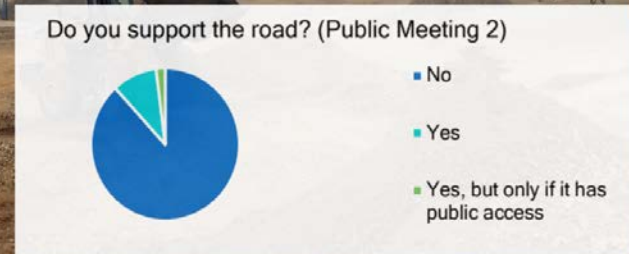
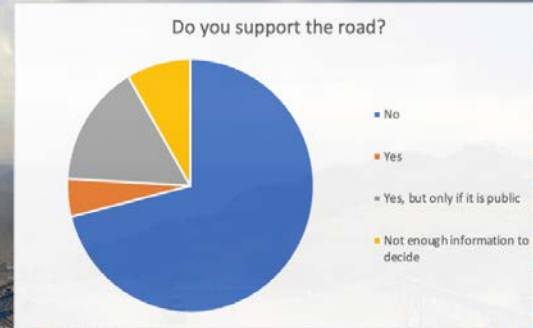
- Phase 1 MOU: 2019     \$200,000
  - Study of potential routes
  - Minimal opportunity for public input
- Phase 2 MOU: 2020     \$310,000
  - Researched two routes
  - Public Outreach: Poorly Done
  - Port Mackenzie Route Chosen



Photo Credit: Susitna River Coalition

# West Susitna Access: Phase III & Mat-Su Borough Outreach

- Introduced December 7, 2021 to MSB Assembly
- AIDEA unable to answer basic questions
- December 21, 2022, heard again before a new Mayor & Assembly
- Phase III approved, and MSB accountable for public outreach
- Majority of the public opposed
- AIDEA spent the summer of 2022 conducting field studies.



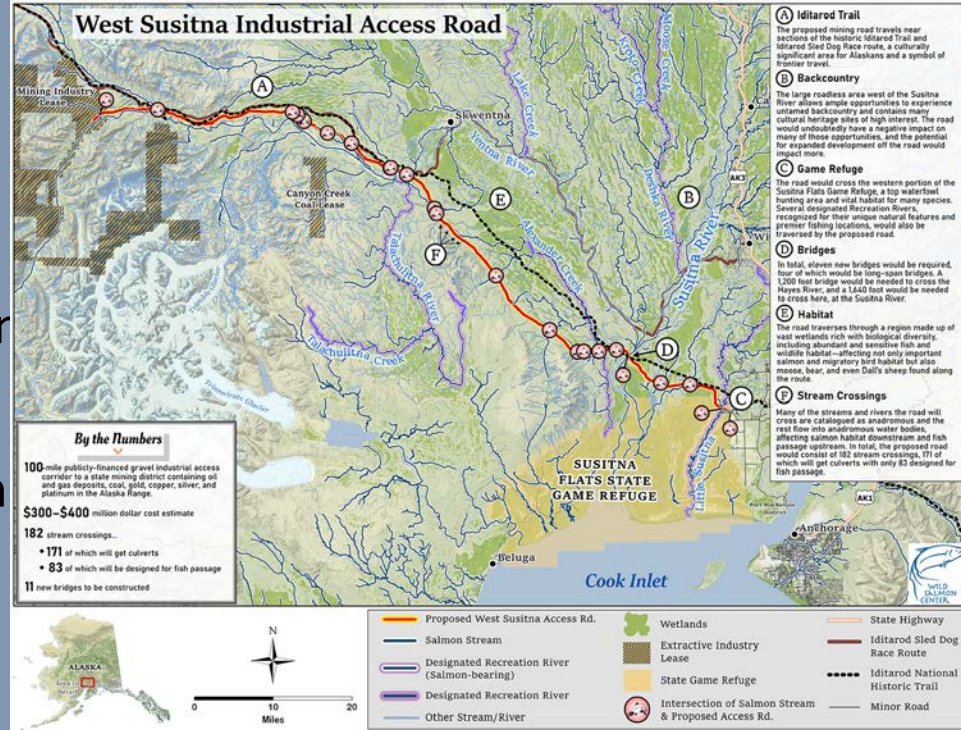
# West Susitna Access: Just What DO We Know?

- \$450 million estimated to build
- Trucks every 7.5 minutes
- Gravel surface
- 182 stream crossings
- 171 culverts
- Only 83 for fish passage
- 11 bridges, 1 complex



# West Susitna Access: Current Status

- May 2022: AIDEA submitted 404 Wetland permit to the Army Corp. of Engineers
- Deemed Incomplete after 1<sup>st</sup> submission
- September 23, 2022, permit application deemed complete
- Upcoming: Scoping



# West Susitna Access: What is the Proven Benefit For Alaskans?





# How can you stay involved?

Keep in touch with the Susitna River Coalition!

Contact us:

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[www.susitnarivercoalition.org](http://www.susitnarivercoalition.org)



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