



MAT-SU SALMON RESEARCH, MONITORING & EVALUATION PLAN FOR UPPER COOK INLET

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING DEPARTMENT PROJECT FACTS

Project Goal

Develop a strategic research plan that provides partners and governing agencies with information to identify research needed to manage, protect and improve Upper Cook Inlet salmon stocks for optimum benefits while maintaining biological productivity and diversity.

Project Scope

The Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission is working to reverse declines in Upper Cook Inlet salmon stocks which are at their lowest levels since statehood. The Northern District of Cook Inlet and the Susitna River system have the majority of the Stocks of Concern in Alaska (8 of 12) including king salmon and sockeye stocks.

Insufficient information and management goals have been impediments to effective management of both sport and commercial fisheries in Upper Cook Inlet. Information is lacking about the movement of northern bound salmon. In-season management goals (escapement), the “cornerstones” of sustainable salmon management, do not currently exist for most Upper Cook Inlet salmon stocks.

A fisheries research consultant will work with the Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and other stakeholders to develop a plan for salmon research in Upper Cook Inlet. The plan will address all freshwater watersheds inhabited by salmon originating within the Mat-Su Borough extending south into marine waters of Cook Inlet.

The plan will inventory past and ongoing salmon research studies, determine data gaps, identify areas where additional research is needed and create a prioritized strategic plan for Upper Cook Inlet salmon research in order to coordinate research efforts among all parties. A process for soliciting and selecting research projects will be developed. The plan will be used to select projects to be funded with these grant funds as well as with funds available in the future through state and federal sources.

Benefits

A comprehensive salmon research plan for Upper Cook Inlet has not been previously developed. The plan and prioritization will provide a framework for coordination of research projects and funding by various parties including the Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the various partners of the Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership.

Project Timeline

The planning project started in June 2014 and is scheduled to be completed by December 2016.

- Plan consultant hired 6/2014
- Data Gap Report 12/2014
- Stakeholder meetings 1/2015-3/2015
- Research Prioritization 2015
- Research Project Selection 2015-2016

Project Costs

The Mat-Su Borough was awarded a grant from the State of Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development in FY 2014 for \$2.5 million. The grant specified that \$900,000 would be used for fish passage projects to remove culvert barriers. The remaining \$1.6 million are to be used for fish research planning and projects.

Contact Information

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