

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH Fish & Wildlife Commission

350 E Dahlia Ave., Palmer, Alaska 99645

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VACANT

VICE CHAIR
Andy Couch

MSB STAFF
Ted Eischeid
Maija DiSalvo



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Larry Engel
Tim Hale
Peter Probasco
Mokie Tew
Kendra Zamzow
Ex officio: Jim Sykes

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

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Regular Meeting

09/28/2023

Pg. = Item:

- 1= Agenda
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- 15 = Email Correspondence: Eric Booton, TU-Eklutna River Mitigation
 - 17 = Attachment: ADN article, Eklutna River
 - 23 = Attachment: Letter to CEA Board of Directors
- 25 =NPFMC October 2-10 Meeting Agenda
- 27 = Resolution FWC 23-04 on State Legislative Fishery Protection Priority
- 31 = October Board Of Fisheries Meeting Notices
- 33 = FWC BOF Planning Document
- 35 = Draft Questions for special 2023 ADF&G Fishing Season Meeting

Physical Location of Meeting: Lower Level Conf. Room, DSJ Bldg, 350 E. Dahlia Ave., Palmer.

Remote Participation: See attached agenda.

Meeting Documents: Can be found on the FWC website: [Matanuska-Susitna Borough - Fish & Wildlife Commision \(matsugov.us\)](http://www.matsugov.us)

Planning and Land Use Department - Planning Division

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MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission
AGENDA

Edna Devries, Mayor

VACANT – Chair

Andy Couch – Vice Chair

Howard Delo

Larry Engel

Tim Hale

Peter Probasco

Mokie Tew

Kendra Zamzow

Jim Sykes – Ex officio member

Ted Eischeid – Staff

Maija DiSalvo – Staff



Michael Brown, Borough Manager

PLANNING & LAND USE DEPARTMENT

Alex Strawn, Planning & Land Use Director

Kim Sollien, Planning Services Manager

Jason Ortiz, Development Services Manager

Fred Wagner, Planning Officer

Lower Level Conference Room

Dorothy Swanda Jones Building

350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer

September 28, 2023
REGULAR MEETING
4:00 p.m.

Ways to participate in MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings:

- IN PERSON: Lower Level Conference Room
- REMOTE PARTICIPATION:

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I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. May 18, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes
 - B. June 1, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes
- VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*three minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing*)
- VII. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS
 - A. Staff Report
 - B. Chair Report
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - A. North Pacific Fisheries Management Council/NOAA Fisheries in Cook Inlet
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. FWC Resolution on State Legislative Priorities for Fisheries.
 - B. Board Of Fisheries Meetings and Planning
 - A. Work Session, Oct. 12-13
 - B. Hatchery Committee, Oct. 14
 - C. Upper Cook Inlet Finfish, Feb. 23-March 7, 2024
 - D. BOF Work Plan
 - B. Special ADF&G Fishing Season Summary Meeting Planning
 - C. Special ADF&G Game Season Summary Meeting Planning
 - D. Waterbody Setback Advisory Board
 - E. FWC Chair Election
- X. MEMBER COMMENTS
- XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: October 19, Lower Level Conference Room
- XII. ADJOURNMENT

Disabled persons needing reasonable accommodation in order to participate at a MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting should contact the borough ADA Coordinator at 861-8432 at least one week in advance of the meeting.

MSB FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION**Regular Meeting: May 18, 2023****Minutes**

DSJ Building, Lower Level Conference Room //TEAMS Remote Participation

*Minutes prepared by Ted Eischeid, Planner***I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 4:02 PM by chair Mike Wood.

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTPresent:Andy Couch: ACHoward Delo: HDLarry Engel: LEPete Probasco: PPKendra Zamzow: KZMike Wood: MWJim Sykes: JSAbsent:

Rob Yundt

Excused:

Tim Hale

Quorum established.

MW read the Land Acknowledgement:

*We acknowledge that we are meeting on traditional lands of the Ahtna and Dena'ina people, and we are grateful for their stewardship of the land, fish, and wildlife throughout time immemorial.***III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA****Moved by HD; seconded by LE .****PP amendment NPFMC to immediately after Audience Participation; LE.****Motion passed without objection.****IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE****V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. April 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Moved by LE; second by HD

Corrections: NONE

Motion passed without objection.**VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (three minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing):**

1. Maija DiSalvo, Staff
2. Bill Stoltze, MSB
3. Neil Dewitt
4. Alex Strawn, Staff
5. Stephen Braund, Northern District Set Netters Association.
6. Melissa Heurer, Susitna River Coalition
7. Gabe Kitter

VII. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS

A. Staff Report – Waterbody Setback OR 23-049 – Alex Strawn

Prepared OR 23-049, a revision requested by Mr. Tew, after OR 23-003 was tabled.

Summarized OR 23-049: see red p. 53;

Allows people to build within 75', but not within 25'; does not apply to septic; only applies to lakes, not streams where 75' setback is retained;

Requires developer to hire a qualified professional, to create plans and specifications, subject to review by MSB, has requirements to treat runoff;

p. 56: eliminated D in old ordinance; closes the "commercial building loophole".

Discussion:

PP: p. 56, meaning of F1... "mandatory landuse permit..."? AS: This addresses a change from 2011.

PP: how enforced? AS: no robust history of enforcement, but it does provide an avenue for compliance.

HD: I understand an ordinance that allows for an avenue to compliance for illegal structures, but don't understand the need for new construction component? AS: IM doc says 75' alone as a buffer is not enough, you need a riparian buffer; what this does, if you are closer than 75', you must actually create and implement a plan to treat runoff, which is more robust than a simple setback. HD: It sounds like allowing closer construction would encourage construction closer than 75', and that concerns me.

HD: what penalties are involved? AS: \$150/300/500 per day is typical for land use violations; HD: has this ever been done? AS: with junk violations, yes.

MW: Point of order, maybe discuss comments on agenda item.

AC: Concurs with HD, but this does provide a path to compliance for noncompliant structures.

PP: What is the financial burden to MSB? AS: none anticipated, accomplished with present staff; other permit processing would be slowed down.

LE: This issue has really bothered me, the history of the changing goal posts, the lack of enforcement, etc. This history does not give me confidence in this new proposal; AS: the many setback violations has also bothered me; if we fully enforce present code, we'd have to write over 750 citations, which would result in a huge backlash; LE: just seems to me that the current violations should be held accountable somehow.

HD: do you have qualified staff to review engineering plans? AS: yes, we do have civil engineers in Public Works who could review any permit applications received;

PP: One thing missing is the maintenance component; AS: it does, see F3 on p. 56.

HD: what would happen if this only applied to present noncompliant structures and not allow new construction?

B. Staff Report – Ted Eischeid

1. Waterbody Setback update
2. NPFMC Update – Work Group
3. BOF Update – FWC Booklet Work Group
4. SHP SC Update
5. ADF&G Game Season Summary Meeting June 1 at 5 PM, Assembly Chambers.
6. Mileage expense reports due by June 1 for the July 2022-June 2023 fiscal year.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. NPFMC – North Pacific Fisheries Management Council

AC moved to approve comments on blue p. 17 of supplemental handout; PP seconded.

Discussion:

AC wanted some changes;

PP moves add verbiage to last paragraph on page 1, last line, reworking the sentence by adding after the word “Kenai” this verbiage by substitution for the remainder of that sentence: “and Kasilof rivers and the associated areas; other Upper Cook Inlet streams are significantly different in character and fish productivity than the Kenai, affecting the ability to rebuild stocks of concern and affects what can be sustainably harvested.”

AC seconds.

Amendment passes unanimously.

PP moves: On the second paragraph, Comment p. 1, handout page 17, the section subtitled “Conservation Corridor development, to strike the last sentence that says: “The Central District drift fishery drives Northern District fisheries.” ; HD second.

Amendment passes unanimously.

AC moves to amend first paragraph, last sentence, strike “ ...are important subsistence users. HD second.

Amendment passes unanimously.

JS moves to change title from NFMS to NOAA; AC second.

Amendment passes unanimously.

Motion passes unanimously to present comment statement as amended.

2. ADF&G Game Season Summary Meeting Planning.

PP moved to accept. AC second agenda on p. 15/16.

Motion passes without objection.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Waterbody Setbacks draft OR 23-049

AC: any public comment?

Melissa H: some concern this won't stop future violations; with present violations we need strong enforceable rules; I hope the FWC will make stronger recommendations to the PC.

MW: I have a hard time giving violators a free pass;

LE: Should we support this new Ordinance?; I don't support it as written;

KZ: I like the new resolution as a solution to noncompliance, but not to apply to new construction which I would say should still require 75' setback and a buffer.

PP: I appreciate the work AS and staff has done; but the recommendations the FWC made in RS FWC 23-01 were not followed much; I would recommend that we rewrite a RS FWC 23-03 and oppose draft OR 23-049 and suggest the Assembly postpone this work, form a working group, and make this better.

MW: I feel draft OR 23-049 is moving too quickly, agree with PP and KZ;

AC: RS FWC 23-01 point 1 and 6 highlighted;

LE: This is an important issue that we need to continue to work on.

KZ: New section F... just add word "existing" in front of "structures" would make this better.

LE: Moved changes to RS FWC 23-03 See blue p. 24: second line, replace "supports" with "opposes"; Add after the second line: "Be it further resolved the FWC recommends a work group be formed to work on this issue including Assembly members, PC members, MSB staff, and FWC members; AC second.

Motion passes unanimously.

PP: the FWC member MW or KZ testify before the PC on June 5th; AC seconds.

Motion passes without objection.

2. BOF 2024 Planning

Bill Stoltze would like to volunteer to help the BOF work group.

Volunteers: LE, HD, AC.

Moved: by PP that LE, HD, AC, help with BOF Booklet; LE seconded.

Motion Passes.

3. FWC Interface with Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership

PP will sit in for the remainder of 2023; AC would like to serve as an alternate;

X. MEMBER COMMENTS

1. PP: congratulates MW on BOF appointment.
2. LE: Thanks Ted and Maija's work supporting the FWC.
3. HD: Thanks many FWC members; concerned about FWC members who consistently miss meetings, especially our Assembly representatives - their political guidance is needed. Is this something we want to communicate to our Assembly representatives?
4. AC: appreciates everything.
5. Ted: Got a new Lab puppy today, his name is Seamus.
6. MW: miss seeing everyone; I was confirmed by the BOF by the Legislature; once I know more from BOF on what to do I'll let you know what's up.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, June 1, 5 PM, Assembly Chambers, Rear Half.

XII. ADJOURNMENT
Moved by PP, second LE.
Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting stands adjourned at 6:06 PM

Mike Wood, FWC Chair

Dated

ATTEST:

Ted Eischeid, Planning Division Staff

Dated

MSB FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION**Special Meeting: June 1, 2023****ADF&G Game Season Summary Meeting****Minutes**

DSJ Building, Lower Level Conference Room //TEAMS Remote Participation

Minutes prepared by Ted Eischeid, Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:07 PM by chair Mike Wood.

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Present:

Mike Wood MW

Andy Couch AC

Howard Delo HD

Larry Engel LE

Pete Probasco PP

Kendra Zamzow KZ arrived at 5:09 PM

Absent:

Rob Yundt RY

Jim Sykes JS

Tim Hale TH

Quorum established.

MW read the Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that we are meeting on traditional lands of the Ahtna and Dena'ina people, and we are grateful for their stewardship of the land, fish, and wildlife throughout time immemorial.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by LE; seconded by HD .**Motion passed without objection.**

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. INTRODUCTIONS/Opening Statement

a. FWC

MW made an opening statement.

b. ADF&G

Todd Rinaldi- Area Manager

Tim Peltier- Regional supervisor

Chris Brockman- Acting Palmer Biologist

Rick Merizon- Director

- VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*three minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing*):
1. Jessica Winnestaffer, CNV

VII. PRESENTATIONS

A. Staff Report – Ted Eischeid

1. Draft OR 23-049 Update (PC and Assembly dates).
2. Pending FWC membership changes: Yundt resignation, Tew application
3. My Summer Schedule/Plans
4. Mileage Forms of 2022-23 Fiscal Year Due by June 15.

B. ADF&G

1. Game Season Highlights:

AC: How much pressure on small game hunting? RM: based on our statewide surveys, 3-4 days of annual targeting on average, but with a big range in effort; for waterfowl our effort mirrors national effort, average of 2-3 days, with some hunters putting in bigger efforts.

2. Emerging Issues Summary:

VIII. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. FWC/ADF&G Dialogue on Mat-Su Wildlife/Game

HD: Looking at some the data, you like to see a minimum bull/100 cow ratio of 20+... is the predator control program in GMU 16 going to be reinstituted? TP: we have some low numbers, but that is not surprising given the hard winters; we are looking at twinning rates to inform our decisions; some of our data shows that the losses are happening in the summer, which suggests bear predation as a factor rather than wolf predation;

MW: impact of coyotes on moose calves?; CB: Coyotes are effective predators on calves, but we just don't have the coyote numbers to make a major impact on moose; coyotes have had impact on sheep calves in some areas like GMU 20A;

PP: on GMU 14 and 16... data differences?; TR: some long term datasets, but they aren't statistically robust, so only useful for trend analysis; we are trying to incorporate more robust datasets; I can get the FWC more detailed data sets if requested.

KZ: how do you derive population estimates from observations, especially for GMU 14? CB: explained the process, use a stratified process; KZ: do you look at habitat as well? CB: yes.

LE: for GMU 14A, a large number of the public judge the health of Moose population by what they see driving across the Palmer Hay Flats, and the numbers seen there has decreased over time; what kind of an explanation is there for this apparent historic decline in the Flats? CB: the habitat on the Flats has matured since the 1964 earthquake; they are mostly concentrated along Wasilla Creek and Rabbit Slough away from the road; likewise, brush has matured and makes it more difficult to see the moose; Similarly, Mt. Baldy has seen similar changes in moose populations; mainly a distribution thing, that changes over time; its not that they aren't there, it's a distribution thing; a habitat and distribution thing;

PP: in 2023 GMU 14 experienced a deep snow year... what have you observed in terms of moose winter kill? CB: I'm not too concerned about excessive moose winter kill. We had some winter kill, but mostly among the calves of the year/yearlings;

HD: Since this was a pretty good snow year, wouldn't a high road kill trigger a special targeted hunt? TP: we've had a problem recently with the TPS system and the data they provide; we've gone from specific detailed information to generalized automated data; also not getting data on a regular basis;

MW: Regarding GMU 13 moose, I see a lot of railroad/moose mortality; saw a lot of dead moose on the Chase rail trail section; what specific parameters and where are you looking for data? TR: The railroad is supposed to be reporting numbers and providing a mitigation plan for moose losses. TP: just got some railroad moose numbers of 177 - that is actually on the low side historically; TR: there is a threshold of moose kill that is supposed to trigger a railroad mitigation plan, but ...; as far as wolves in 13E we do have a public wolf predator control program; the department is not going to allow predator control where ACs won't allow antlerless hunts to correct ratios; TR: we are interested in working with the railroad to address these issues; the FWC could be helpful in that regard.

PP: followup, a good question to ask the railroad for better mitigation? CB: the FWC could have a better result lobbying the railroad than ADFG would have; we are having a hard time having this conversation with the railroad and holding them accountable to their mitigation plan;

AC: if we going to have a targeted hunt, it would make sense to cover some of the areas with high railroad moose mortality; CB: we have the flexibility in 14A/14B to do that; we have more of an issue with railroad mortality in 14B versus 14A.

HD: small game discussion, at MP 247 on the Richardson ran into a large group of snowshoe hares... must have been 100+ hares in a brush opening along the road; are we expecting a peak in hares in about 5 years? RM: yes, pretty consistent 8-10 year cycle, with the peak moving from north to south; expect the peak in 2027-2028; lynx cycle is strongly correlated with and follows the hare cycle (reference: see L. Keith research). HD: is grouse wing data still being used? RM: yes, wing database was originally very useful for grouse management. HD: are you seeing consistent chick survival trends over the years? RM: no, the chick survival is correlated with post hatch weather conditions during the first 2-3 weeks after hatch; HD: do you do much with waterfowl? We do some, but its mostly federal.

PP: tell me more about sheep management and research? TR: we actually have some good sheep research going on; also have some good wolf/moose research going on; many of our recent research projects are in the mature, writing phase; we currently have a lot of research money, but a lack of staff to do the research and associated projects;

MW: you said the unpredictable weather keeps you up at night and the impact on wildlife populations; I have seen changes in snow cover that probably impact our game species; how with the department adapt to these climate changes? TR: the next 20-30 years will be a challenge for game management, especially with how variable the weather has become; species using ecotone edge habitats will be most affected, while opportunistic species will do better;

LE: comment on why moose regulations have become so complex over time? CB: because of the

public process and BOG decision has led to greater regulatory complexity; and there are a lot more hunters in certain areas and that has an impact;

HD: on sheep, your answer suggests weather is an issue with sheep populations; one of the department's biologists once said there were disease issues with certain populations. Please discuss; CB: we have discovered MOV (*Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*) in some sheep, but it doesn't seem to be a mortality factor;

MW: white-fronted geese in Su Refuge seem to know exactly when to leave prior to Sept. 1... ; on the bear baiting question, I appreciate your answer on the different roles of ADFG and BOG, but is there anything about bear baiting you'd like to know more about? TR: we'd like to know the GPS coordinates of bear baiting sites.

AC: it looks like the Mat-Su in general focuses on moose, is that accurate? CB: in general that's accurate, but you need to take the data with a grain of salt; our harvest tickets don't always provide useful information, especially for species like black bear.

HD: a philosophical question, looking at the makeup of the FWC, we have a lot of expertise but weighted towards fisheries; the difference I see between BOF and BOG involves money (BOF) and emotion (BOG); would you tend to agree with that analysis? RM: I started in fisheries before wildlife, I would argue that BOF can be very emotional, especially when it comes to people's livelihoods; in Palmer BOG the meetings were very emotional; TR: BOG is dealing with a lot of charismatic megafauna, and the BOG is mostly made up of hunters, guides, and is not necessarily representative of the public at large.

IX. FINAL COMMENTS

a. Members of the Public

Jessica Winnestaffer: no comment.

b. ADF&G

RM: thank you for this dialogue, looking forward to future talks.

TR: pleased that FWC seems concerned about needless loss of moose due to collisions; anything we can do with FWC to reduce this would be appreciated; the DOT put lights on KGB that improved moose survival there, someone from MSB convinced them, and that was appreciated.

c. FWC

KZ: Thank you for being there; I am following climate change issues closely, esp. on migratory birds.

LE: I saw some red fox on the drive in to Anchorage;

PP: thank you guys for your excellent work.

AC: we seem to focus on fish a lot, so this was appreciated.

HD: thank you very much; especially the frankness of the discussion.

MW: thank you, and I learned so much. We do get fish focused, but wildlife are so important; maybe in the future the FWC could have a meeting with the railroad to discuss wildlife mitigation; this is probably my last meeting as FWC meeting. I hope you continue to get the support and the staff to continue your good work.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, September 28, 4 PM, LLCR.

XI. ADJOURNMENT
Moved by PP, second LE.
Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting stands adjourned at 7:03 PM

Andy Couch, FWC Vice Chair

Dated

ATTEST:

Ted Eischeid, Planning Division Staff

Dated

From: [Eric Booton](#)
To: [Theodore Eischeid](#)
Cc: [Nelli Williams](#); [Carrie Brophil](#); [Marc Lamoreaux](#)
Subject: Eklutna Hydroelectric Project update for FWC?
Date: Thursday, September 21, 2023 12:40:37 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-nhzswdop.png](#)
[As effort to restore Eklutna River inches toward decision, disagreements remain over how far plan should go - Anchorage Daily News.pdf](#)
[Joint Letter to CEA Board 091323.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello Ted,

I know the FWC has in the past expressed interest in receiving updates on the mitigation of the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and efforts to return wild salmon to the Eklutna River. Following multiple years of field studies and an ongoing technical working group process, there is much to be updated on.

Currently, project owners are in the process of creating a draft mitigation plan that is anticipated to be released at the end of October. Once the draft mitigation plan is released, it is unlikely that it will change much before being finalized.

The solution preferred by project owners has been met with broad criticism - attached is a recent ADN article and joint letter from the Eklutna River Restoration Coalition with additional info.

Things are beginning to move quickly and there are several items we believe may be important to the FWC. If the FWC is interested, myself and staff from Native Village of Eklutna's Land & Environment Department would be happy to provide an update.

Marc and Carrie, please add anything I missed!

Best,

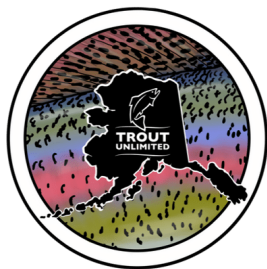
Eric Booton

Angler Engagement Manager & Eklutna Project Manager

Trout Unlimited | Eric.Booton@tu.org

Dena'inaq elnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu

I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina.



Anchorage

As effort to restore Eklutna River inches toward decision, disagreements remain over how far plan should go

By Alex DeMarban

Updated: 16 hours ago

Published: 16 hours ago



Water is released from the a dam on the upper Eklutna River on Sept. 22, 2021 near Eklutna Lake. (Loren Holmes / ADN)

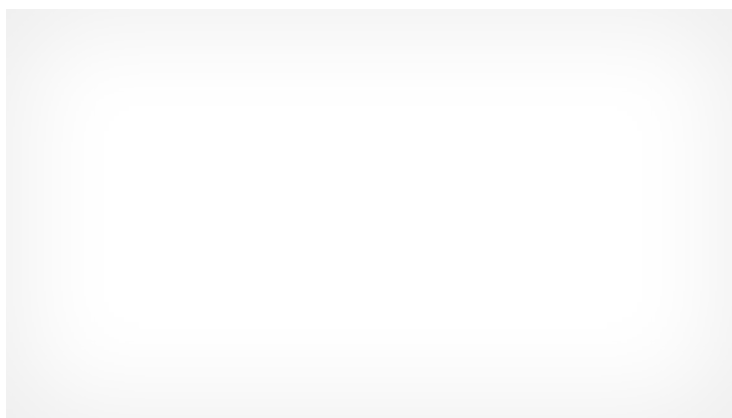
Electric utilities in the urban heart of Alaska are proposing to restore water to the long-dammed Eklutna River. That could bring salmon back to the waterway for the first time in nearly a century.

But questions about how to replenish the 12-mile-long river are driving a debate between the utilities that would primarily rely on existing infrastructure and an Alaska Native village that has chosen a replacement dam as its preferred option.

The discussion is part of a long-awaited analysis to reduce the environmental harms of the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project, built by the federal government in 1955. The system provides the cheapest electricity in Southcentral Alaska. But an earthen dam at

As effort to restore Eklutna River inches toward decision, disagreements remain over how far plan should go - Anchorage Daily Ne...
Eklutna Lake dries up most of the river.

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The federal government sold the project to the utilities in 1997, leading to today's analysis.

The owners, the Chugach and Matanuska electric associations and the municipality's [Anchorage Hydropower Utility](#), are set to release a draft proposal for a fish and wildlife program next month, which would include a plan from the utilities to reduce the project's impacts on fish and other animals.

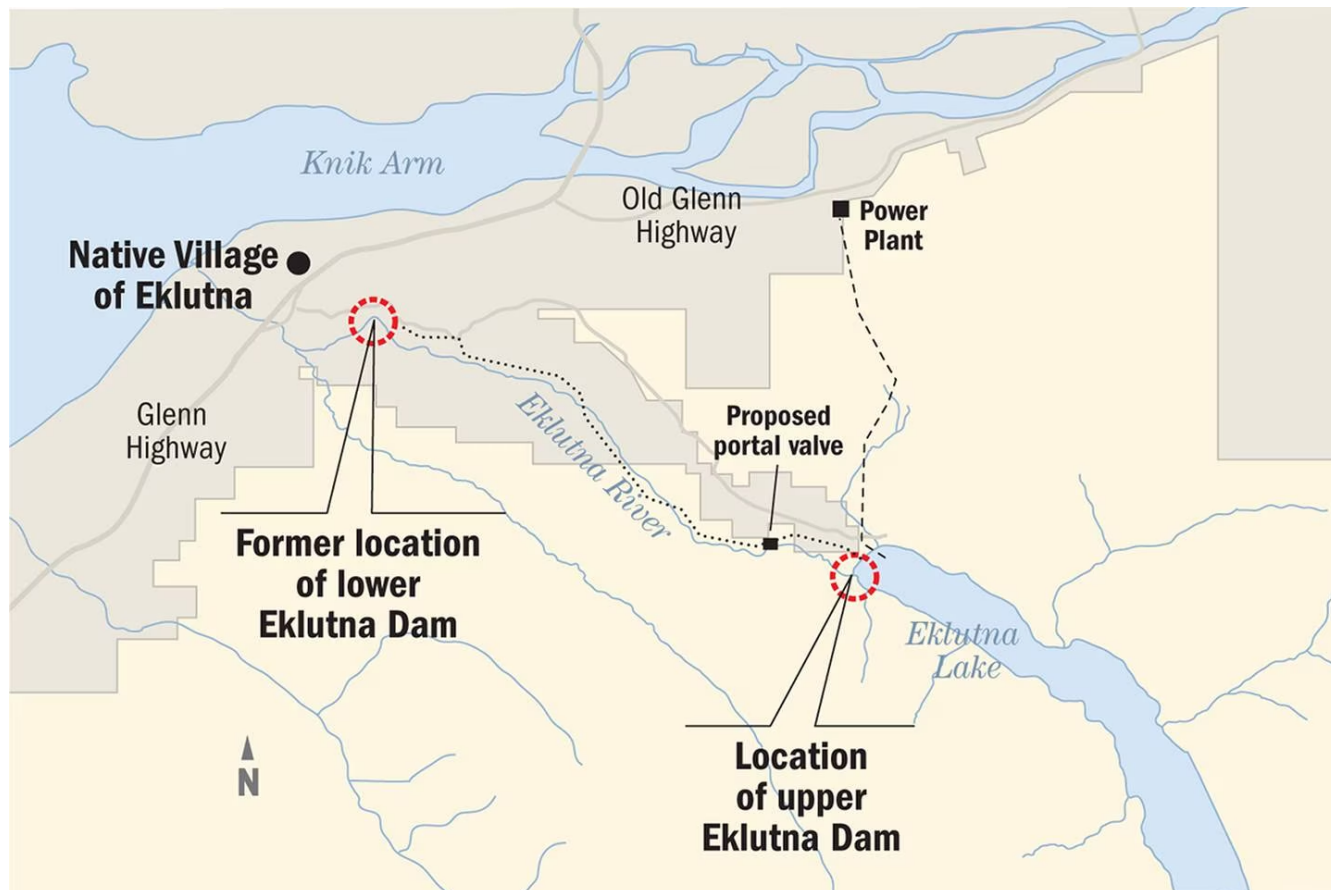
The utilities have said they prefer to release water a mile downstream of the dam. That would leave 1 mile of the river dry. The utilities would tap into the pipe that delivers Anchorage's drinking water, installing a portal valve to divert flow without diminishing Anchorage's legally protected water.

It's the most economical of several alternatives they've analyzed, after four years of [meetings](#) with interested parties, utility representatives say. It will provide miles of new habitat that could benefit four species of salmon: kings, silvers, chums and pinks.

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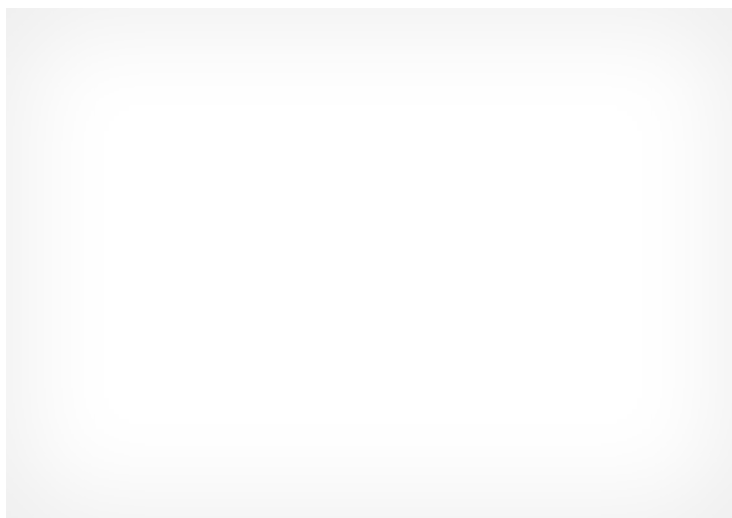
But they say that their preferred alternative largely would not benefit a fifth salmon species, sockeye, which typically rely on lakes for rearing.

As effort to restore Eklutna River inches toward decision, disagreements remain over how far plan should go - Anchorage Daily Ne...



The Alaska departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game also support the alternative for the portal valve, the utilities say. A Fish and Game representative said some sockeye would return to the river, but in limited amounts.

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The utilities' preferred alternative balances the lake's uses, said Samantha Owen, who is managing the effort for the utilities through her employment with engineering firm McMillen Inc.

It "achieves a lot of great mitigation and habitat gains for fish while avoiding major impacts to the hydro project," she said.

[Earlier coverage: [With no dam to stop it, the Eklutna River is temporarily reborn. Many people hope to keep it alive for good.](#)]

The village of Eklutna, near the river's mouth 25 miles northeast of downtown Anchorage, wants the river fully restored so all salmon species can reach the lake and tributaries above it.

As effort to restore Eklutna River inches toward decision, disagreements remain over how far plan should go - Anchorage Daily Ne...
The Native Village of Eklutna [prefers](#) the construction of a new dam, with features that would allow fish to enter the lake, said Aaron Leggett, the tribe's president.

The effort marks a historical opportunity to address a long period of cultural neglect, he said.

"Our people have paid a price for development in our traditional homeland, and this is the first time we've come to ask for something in return" when it comes to a major project, he said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and [National Marine Fisheries Service](#) also [prefer](#) the proposal for a replacement dam, with a phased implementation that allows water to be returned to the Eklutna River as soon as possible, by using the portal valve, while planning and construction of a new dam takes place, according to letters from the agencies.

Conservation groups that have been involved in the process [also share](#) the tribe's preference for a replacement dam. And Alaska Democratic U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola supports the village's efforts, she said in a May [letter](#) to the Chugach Electric Association.

The release of a draft proposal for a fish and wildlife program will lead to public comment in January, and a final decision by the governor next year. Water could return to the river as early as 2027.

Divisions over the dam

When Congress approved the sale of the hydroelectric project, a [1991 agreement](#) called for today's analysis.

A [divestiture report](#) also indicated that an original hydropower dam installed on the lower river in 1929 may have eliminated the sockeye salmon. That privately owned dam, like the federal dam that followed it, was designed to provide power to a growing Anchorage.

The report cited the loss of the sockeye run as a main driver for requiring today's analysis, along with impacts to fish and wildlife more broadly.

The utilities say they're following the legally binding agreement, which does not mention sockeye salmon.

"The divestiture report provides important context for Congress, but the project owners are following the 1991 agreement to the letter," Owen said.

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That lower dam was blown up and [removed](#) in 2018, a \$7.5 million effort led by Brad Meiklejohn, a senior Alaska representative for The Conservation Fund. The removal occurred in partnership with the village of Eklutna.

Meiklejohn said he'd like to see the full river restored. He said the analysis has been led by the utilities, and is biased toward their preference. "This is barreling toward an outcome that won't benefit the public interest," he said.

The utilities say a replacement dam will be costly. They roughly estimate that construction alone will run about \$115 million, according to a [slideshow](#) of the alternatives. The tribal government also wants a sizable flow of water, so much of Eklutna Hydroelectric's cheap power will need to be replaced with more expensive energy.

The utilities say the tribe's preferred alternative would cause electric rates to jump nearly 4% at Chugach Electric and a bit more at Matanuska Electric. Anchorage property taxes would increase about \$4.50 for every \$100,000 of a home's value, they say.

The portal valve the utilities install at Anchorage's water pipe would cost a fraction of that, they say.

Leggett, with the Eklutna tribal government, said he believes the utilities' construction estimate is tens of millions of dollars too high. The Alaska Native village corporation, Eklutna Inc., the largest landowner in Anchorage with 90,000 acres, works in

As effort to restore Eklutna River inches toward decision, disagreements remain over how far plan should go - Anchorage Daily Ne... construction and land development. Eklutna-owned lands could potentially be used to take dirt that arises from construction, helping lower costs, he said.

Leggett said bringing back all the salmon could have widespread benefits, boosting local fishing and tourism and helping counteract struggling salmon counts in Cook Inlet that have hurt commercial fishermen.

Leggett said the village believes it can find funding for a new dam, such as from federal opportunities or other grants.

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"We're not the first one to take out a dam and have it replaced, and we believe with partnerships that we can make it happen," he said. "No one thought we could find the \$8 million to take out a deadbeat dam but we made that happen."

'A balancing act'

Ron Benkert, Fish and Game's regional habitat supervisor, said salmon have been documented farther upriver since the original dam's removal.

Benkert said Fish and Game prefers the portal valve, but with a slightly higher water flow than the utilities prefer.

Water flow in most of the river will bring back salmon over time, he said. Some sockeye salmon will return to the river, but since they typically rear in lakes, their presence won't be at levels the tribe would like to see, he said.

Benkert said the agency is trying to support salmon while protecting the hydropower capacity of the lake. The hydroelectric project provides about 6% of the utilities' power, enough for about 25,000 homes, the utilities say.

[\[What the Alaska-rooted deputy Interior secretary has to say about those canceled ANWR leases\]](#)

Fish and Game also believes the lake might not have the nutrients to support salmon like it did a century ago. Meltoff from the Eklutna Glacier seems to have created more turbid waters in the lake, hurting the food web, he said.

Landlocked sockeye salmon, known as kokanee, now occupy the lake, he said. They're believed to be descendants of sockeye that entered the lake before the original dam installation. Those kokanee only grow 4 inches, about half their potential, suggesting along with studies that nutrients in the lake are low, he said.

"It's not the same as it was 100 years ago," he said.

Benkert said returning salmon will support more bears and raptors and improve the ecosystem in other ways.

"It's an exciting thing to be able to turn back the clock a little bit and start thinking about providing habitat for fish as well as the infrastructure that we need as a society for power and water," he said. "It's a balancing act and a compromise."

Meiklejohn, with The Conservation Fund, said if returning salmon could reach the lake to spawn, they'd bring nutrients, making it more productive in the future.

"There was a reason those sockeye went there in the first place," he said. "They had a reason to believe they could survive, and they survived 100 years there without even getting to the ocean."

Do you have additional ideas for coverage on this topic? Do you have questions? Do you see an error? What's missing? Are you involved in the story or affected by it and have additional thoughts about it? Let us know here.

Do you have additional ideas for coverage on this topic? Do you have questions? Do you see an error? Are you involved in the story or affected by it and have additional thoughts about it? Let us know here.

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Your contact info:

September 12, 2023

Board of Directors

Chugach Electric Association

5601 Electron Way

Anchorage, Alaska 99518

RE: Eklutna Hydro Mitigation

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board,

We are writing to encourage you to increase your engagement with the Eklutna hydroproject mitigation process. We are grateful for your interest in the topic to date and we request your direct involvement in the process at this critical juncture.

Here are the reasons we feel strongly that the Board's action is needed:

- The Eklutna Hydroelectric Project Owners (CEA, MEA, and MOA) are set to release a Draft Fish and Wildlife Program in October 2023.
- This Draft represents a position statement of CEA and, hence, the CEA Board.
- The Draft will identify the AWWU Portal Option as the Eklutna Owners' Preferred Alternative.
- The AWWU Portal option would leave ~1 mile of dry riverbed, fail to reconnect Eklutna River to Eklutna Lake, and will not mitigate the principal harms identified in the 1991 Agreement ("loss of a Sockeye salmon run.")
- The two federal signatories (FWS and NOAA Fisheries), the Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc., Trout Unlimited, the Alaska Center, and The Conservation Fund agree that Eklutna River must be connected to Eklutna Lake for fish passage and continuous water flow.
- The Eklutna Owners and their consultants (McMillen) have not attempted to reconcile the differences between the parties as is required by the 1991 Agreement. We think this should be done prior to the release of the Draft Fish and Wildlife Program.
- Cost estimates prepared by McMillen are unreliable. For instance, Eklutna Inc. estimates that the Replacement Dam construction costs, providing fish passage, to be tens of millions of dollars less than the figure asserted by McMillen. We believe an independent financial analysis should be conducted of the leading alternatives.
- Significant concerns have been raised about whether and how an AWWU Portal would affect safety, stability, and operations for Anchorage's drinking water system. Periodic

maintenance of the AWWU system requires regular shutdowns that would result in fish strandings. We believe that the AWWU Portal option should be reviewed by an independent engineer for issues of safety, integrity, and feasibility.

- It is our collective opinion that the analysis by McMillen significantly understates the potential spawning and rearing habitat for sockeye salmon and other species in Eklutna Lake and its tributaries, dramatically skewing the cost/benefit analysis.
- Approximately 2/3rds of the Eklutna system would benefit from restored fish passage and require no further restoration. This includes the entirety of Eklutna Lake and its tributaries, which would be the most productive habitats in the system.
- McMillen asserts that the existing landlocked salmon in Eklutna Lake are malnourished because of inherent low primary productivity. It is likely that the lack of marine nutrients that would be imported by returning salmon is depressing this productivity and holding these fish back.
- The fundamental issue of environmental justice to the Eklutna Dena'ina has been substantially devalued in the 1991 Agreement process.

Many of these deficiencies in the 1991 Agreement process to date can and should be addressed before the release of the Draft Fish and Wildlife Program. Our request has been echoed by the federal resource agencies. Please see the letter, attached here, from NOAA Fisheries for an in-depth analysis of the 1991 Agreement process.

This is the only opportunity in our lifetimes to demonstrate that Eklutna hydro power can co-exist with salmon and make amends for nearly a century of cultural and environmental neglect.

We encourage the Board of Directors to get more directly involved now rather than waiting until April 2024. With your input we recommend that the Draft Fish and Wildlife Program include fish passage and continuous flow of water between Eklutna River and Eklutna Lake.

Sincerely,

The Native Village of Eklutna
Eklutna Inc.
Trout Unlimited
The Alaska Center
The Conservation Fund

**NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL****NPFMC Council/AP October 2023 - 266th****October 2-10, 2023**

Council, October 5-10, 2023; Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska; 8am-5pm

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81451130091>

Meeting ID: 814 5113 0091

Or join by phone: Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location): US: +1 346 248 7799 or +1 408 638 0968 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782

Advisory Panel, October 3-7, 2023; Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska; 8am-5pm

Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88671612019>

Meeting ID: 886 7161 2019

Or join by phone: Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location): US: +1 346 248 7799 or +1 408 638 0968 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782

Public comment:

Please submit written comment for the Council and Advisory Panel by clicking on the 'Comment Now' links next to the relevant agenda item, below. **The comment period will open on September 8, 2023, and the deadline for written comments is Friday, September 29 at 12pm AKT.** Submitted comments will be reviewed then visible online after the deadline closes, as per the Council's [comment policy](#).

The AP and Council will also take in-person and remote oral testimony during the meetings. During the meeting, you will be able to click on the applicable 'Sign-up' link next to each agenda item below, and indicate whether or not you'll be testifying remotely or in person.

The AP and the Council meeting will be broadcast on zoom. If you intend to give oral testimony remotely, you must be connected to the meeting, either through zoom on your device or using a call-in phone number above. **All information provided through the eAgenda or during testimony is part of the public record.** We are recording the meeting and will post the recordings shortly after the meeting is over.

If you'd like to receive text alerts on Council timing, text the word "NPFMC" to the number 1-833-237-1598.

Related meetings:

Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), October 2-4, 2023; [AGENDA](#)

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

A1 Approval of Agenda

B. REPORTS

B1 Executive Director's Report (including IRA funding proposal) (oral)

- B2 NMFS Management Report (including Salmon FMP Secretarial amendment (T), NEPA changes) (oral)
- B3 NOAA General Counsel Report (oral)
- B4 AFSC Report (oral)
- B5 ADF&G Report
- B6 USCG Report
- B7 USFWS Report
- B8 North Pacific Fisheries Commission Report (oral)
- B9 North Pacific Research Board Report (oral)
- B10 Public Comment on B1 through B9 agenda items
- B11 SSC Report
- B12 AP Report

C. MAJOR ISSUES / FINAL ACTION ITEMS

- C1 C1 BSAI Crab specifications – review SAFE report; adopt ABC/OFLs for BBRKC, Tanner crab, snow crab, PIBKC; BSAI Crab Plan Team report; (SSC only) Ecosystem Status Report preview
- C2 C2 Observer 2024 Annual Deployment Plan – Review; PCFMAC report
- C3 C3 BSAI/GOA Groundfish – Proposed specifications, Plan Team reports, discussion paper on GOA DSR/other rockfish
- C4 C4 Chum salmon bycatch – Preliminary review
- C5 C5 Crab facility use caps – Initial Review
- C6 POSTPONED: Area 4 Vessel Use Caps – Initial Review

D. OTHER ISSUES

- D1 D1 Bering Sea Local Knowledge/ Traditional Knowledge/ Subsistence information Protocol and Onramps – Final action to approve protocol and/or onramps
- D2 D2 BSAI Crab Program Review – Review workplan
- D3 D3 IFQ Program Review – Review workplan

E. STAFF TASKING / COMMITTEES

- E1 E Committees, New Business, and Tasking - Review (including Ecosystem Committee, Enforcement workshop reports)

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. FWC 23-04

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION REQUESTING ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF A STATE LEGISLATIVE FISHERY PROTECTION PRIORITY REQUEST FUNDED AT \$2.5 MILLION TO SUPPORT FISHERIES IN THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH.

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Valley's salmon resources have provided food security, throughout centuries, for area residents; and

WHEREAS an economic study commissioned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough estimated Northern Cook Inlet Management Area sport fisheries as generating \$57 million in direct spending, supporting 474 sport fishing related jobs, and supplying \$5.9 million in local, state, and federal taxes in 2017, and continues to demonstrate significant, but a declining economic impact gained from Northern Cook Inlet sport fisheries; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII Sections 2, 3, 4, and 15 of the Alaska State Constitution directs the legislature to provide for utilization, development, and conservation of all renewable natural resources (specifically including fish), reserved to the people for common use, for the maximum benefit of its people, and maintained on the sustained yield principle; and

WHEREAS, large ocean-run salmon return to spawn throughout the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has established salmon spawning escapement goals and salmon counting weir projects to better manage some of Northern Cook Inlet's larger and more economically and socially significant salmon spawning stocks; and

WHEREAS, State of Alaska genetic studies indicate these salmon stocks as a whole contribute to salmon harvests off of Kodiak Island and along the Alaska Peninsula, from Central and Northern District Upper Cook Inlet commercial fisheries, to at least two subsistence fisheries, multiple personal use fisheries, and some of the largest sport fisheries in Northern Cook Inlet freshwaters - further documenting the community significance of these salmon stocks fisheries dispersed throughout a vast part of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, previously funded coho salmon genetic studies of Upper Cook Inlet commercial harvest has resulted in better management of this resource by ADF&G, and additional genetic studies should be funded to further refine coho salmon management in Upper Cook Inlet; and

WHEREAS, in FY2014 the State of Alaska awarded the Matanuska-Susitna Borough a \$2.5 million capital fund allocation for local fisheries and fish protection (passage, acquisition, research), whereupon the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission sponsored a Strategic Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Upper Cook Inlet that identified several information gaps in local fisheries management, with some of these gaps addressed by funded projects from this allocation; and

WHEREAS, not all projects in the gap analysis were funded and additional fish passage and research projects await further funding in this area of Alaska that remains the fastest growing region with over 15% of the state's population.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission respectfully requests the Assembly forward to the state a Fishery Protection legislative priority for obtaining an additional \$2.5 million allocation to continue funding critical projects identified in the 2015 Gap Analysis.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission this 28th day of September, 2023.

Andy Couch, MSB FWC Vice Chair

ATTEST:

Ted Eischeid, MSB Staff

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board of Fisheries**

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
(907) 465-4110
www.adfg.alaska.gov

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS OF THE
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES**

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) will meet for a two-day Work Session on October 12-13, 2023, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Egan Civic and Convention Center, 555 W. 5th Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska. No regulatory action will be taken at this meeting.

Agenda topics may include: election of officers, agenda change requests, petitions, meeting organization and establishment of committees for the 2023/2024 meeting cycle, review of locations and dates for future meetings, informational reports, and/or administrative issues that may come before the board. The board may choose to go into executive session. The board may also take up items under a miscellaneous business agenda. Oral public testimony will not be taken at this meeting.

Written comments are due no later than September 27, 2023 and may be submitted electronically through the board's webpage at www.boardoffisheries.adfg.alaska.gov, mailed to: Boards Support Section, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526, or faxed to: (907) 465-6094. Written comments can also be submitted during the meeting. A live video stream is intended to be available on the board's website at www.boardoffisheries.adfg.alaska.gov.

The meeting agenda and any other meeting documents, including agenda change requests, will be available prior to the meeting on the board's meeting information webpage at

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.meetinginfo&date=10-12-2023&meeting=anchorage>

If you are a person with a disability who needs a special accommodation to participate in these public meetings, please contact Art Nelson at (907) 267-2292 by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 to make any necessary arrangements.

For more information about the meeting, contact Art Nelson at (907) 267-2292.

Art Nelson, Executive Director
ADF&G Boards Support Section

August 31, 2023
Date

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board of Fisheries**

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
(907) 465-4110
www.adfg.alaska.gov

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS OF THE
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES**

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) will meet for a one-day meeting of the board's Hatchery Committee on October 14, 2023 beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Egan Civic and Convention Center, 555 W. 5th Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska. *Note: this is the day following the board's October 12–13, 2023 Work Session. No regulatory action will be taken at this meeting.*

Agenda topics for the Hatchery Committee meeting may include staff presentations on hatchery production levels, research, and discussions of board authority on hatchery-related matters.

Written comments are due no later than September 29, 2023 and may be submitted electronically through the Board's webpage at www.boardoffisheries.adfg.alaska.gov, mailed to: Boards Support Section, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526, or faxed to: (907) 465-6094. Written comments can also be submitted during the meeting. A live video stream is intended to be available on the board's website at www.boardoffisheries.adfg.alaska.gov.

Oral public testimony will not be accepted at this meeting, however there will be an open forum discussion (moderated by a BOF Member and similar to the board's Committee of the Whole process), wherein members of the public in attendance are called upon for the BOF to hear a range of input and opinions. No public sign-up is required.

The meeting agenda and any other meeting documents will be available prior to the meeting on the board's meeting information webpage at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.meetinginfo&date=10-14-2023&meeting=anchorage>

If you are a person with a disability who needs a special accommodation to participate in these public meetings, please contact Art Nelson at (907) 267-2292 by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 to make any necessary arrangements.

For more information about the meeting, contact Art Nelson at (907) 267-2292.

Art Nelson, Executive Director
ADF&G Boards Support Section

August 31, 2023
Date



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Fish & Wildlife Commission

Planning and Land Use Department

Planning Division

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-7833 • Fax (907) 861-7876

www.matsugov.us • planning@matsugov.us

Board Of Fisheries 2024 FWC Draft Planning Document:

Task Table 1

Task	Target Date	Note 1	Note 2	Complete Date
Develop Initial FWC Goals	Nov. '22- Jan. '23			January 2023
FWC BOF Budget	Jan. '23	Currently: \$49,073.36. Submit budget request to MSB Planning.	Work to increase by \$10K - \$15K	Final request to MSB by 2/1/23
Identify Allied Groups	Dec. '22 – Feb. '24			Ongoing
Develop FWC BOF Proposals	Dec. '22 – March '23			Submit April 1, '23
Extend BOF Project Funds	April – May '23	Current project expires 6/30/23.	Extend current project to 6/30/24.	6/1/23
BOF Member Education	Summer '23	Develop/offer field trips for BOF and stakeholders	Involve Salmon Habitat Partnership	August '23
FWC BOF Media Development	June '23 – Feb. '24	Booklet Website StoryMap	Need a FWC Work Group Prior to 6/1/23	Final Booklet Printed Dec. '23

Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community

Ted Fischeid, Planner II

Supporting [Environmental Planning](#) and the MSB [Fish & Wildlife Commission](#).

Ted.Fischeid@matsugov.us Ph. 907.861-8606, MSB Cell 795-6281

Task	Target Date	Note 1	Note 2	Complete Date
BOF Consultant Hired	July – Aug. '23	RFP developed, publicized, consultant hired.		August '23
BOF Outreach Plan	Develop June – Oct. '23; Deliver Nov. '23-Feb. '24	Identify key target groups; develop content messaging; deliver program.	Print Social media Presentations Workshops	Ongoing
ID Partners for sharing onsite resources	Summer '23	Onsite meeting room; printing resources.		May '23 FWC reso in support.
BOF Proposal Review & Recommendations	Fall '23	FWC Committee		Dec. '23
After Action Summary Report	March '24	Internal report	Community summary press releases	March '24
Strategy Reflection for BOF '27	April – May '24			May '24

Approved by FWC at their 10/20/22 meeting.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

350 E Dahlia Ave., Palmer AK 99645 Ph.907.861-8606

CHAIRPERSON

VACANT

VICE CHAIR

Andy Couch

MSB STAFF

Ted Eischeid

Maija DiSalvo

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Howard Delo

Larry Engel

Tim Hale

Pete Probasco

Mokie Tew

Kendra Zamzow

Ex officio: Jim Sykes**MSB FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION****Memorandum**

21 September 2023

Draft Questions to date for 2023 ADF&G Fishing Season Summary Meeting**Group A: LE-**

1. Mat Su chinook salmon stocks have been a conservation concern for many years. What factors do you believe are causing this decline and what other than harvest restrictions might be employed to correct this issue? Please provide 2023 escapement counts for Mat Su chinook salmon stocks.
2. Last year, at our request, you provided unfunded research priorities for Cook Inlet commercial and Mat Su sport fish management. Are these still your priorities? If not, please provide updated research priorities for both divisions.

Group B: AC-

1. What is the Department's best estimate for the amount of Northern Cook Inlet sockeye salmon caught by the drift fleet for each opening in 2020, 2021, 2022, and if available 2023?
2. Using historical data, considering harvest by all other Upper Cook Inlet user groups under current fishing regulations, and with the department's current escapement goal ranges — how many Northern District set nets may realistically be fished throughout the July 20 — August 10 timeframe, if the management objective was to provide a reasonable chance of attaining at least the mid-point level of each Northern Cook Inlet sockeye and coho salmon spawning escapement goal range, while at the same time providing a full season (June 25 — September

30) of harvest opportunity with a low probability of emergency inseason restriction after August 10 for any Northern Cook Inlet user group on most years.

3. During the past 25 years, are there any fishing seasons that achieved at least the mid-point level of each Northern Cook Inlet sockeye salmon and coho salmon spawning escapement goal? If so, which year(s) did this occur?
4. If there are fishing seasons, during the past 25 years, where at least the mid-point level of each Northern Cook Inlet sockeye and coho salmon spawning escapement goal range was attained — Did this ever occur without inseason emergency restriction (to any Northern Cook Inlet user group after August 1)? If so, which year(s)?
5. What is the Department's best estimate for the amount of Northern Cook Inlet coho salmon caught by the drift fleet for each opening in 2020, 2021, 2022, and if available 2023? Please discuss the department's best data for drift coho harvests after August 1 through season's end by emergency order.

Group C: AC-

1. During the 2023 sockeye season ADF&G did not install or staff the Judd Lake sockeye salmon weir project. What happened with the funding for that project? Since Commercial Fish did not operate Judd Lake weir in 2023 — would it be willing to fund and staff each of the 3 Susitna sockeye weir projects (Chelatna Lake, Judd Lake, and Larson Lake) in 2024?
2. Would you please provide 2023 Northern District season total Chinook, sockeye, and coho salmon harvest numbers for each commercial statistical area?
3. Does ADF&G intend to staff either Little Susitna River Public Use Facility or Susitna Landing on a similar schedule as occurred prior to this year during the 2024 season? Please explain.
4. How many Chinook salmon would ADF&G estimate were harvested from the Eklutna Tailrace/ Knik River sport fishery in 2023? From the Ship Creek sport fishery in 2023?
5. How many coho salmon would ADF&G estimate were harvested from the Little Susitna River sport fishery and Deshka River sport fishery in 2022? And in 2023? What is an average sport fishery coho salmon exploitation rate for Little Susitna River? for Deshka River?

6. What is the reported permit days of effort, sockeye harvest, and coho salmon harvest from the Fish Creek and lower Susitna River personal use fisheries in 2023?

DRAFT