

# MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH Fish & Wildlife Commission

350 E Dahlia Ave., Palmer, Alaska 99645

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*Ex officio:* Jim Sykes

## Special Meeting

February 8, 2024

### [Supplemental Handout – Table of Contents](#)

- 1 = KZ Comments to SSC
- 10 = Correspondence re: Eklutna Dam
- 11 = Rec Rivers Plan Letter
- 13 = Rec Rivers Plan Summary of Changes
- 21 = 2023 FWC Memo re: weir funding
- 23 = 2023 FWC Reso re: weir funding
- 26 = 2024 ADF&G Funding Projects

Physical Location of Meeting: Assembly Chambers,  
DSJ Bldg, Palmer.

Remote Participation: See agenda.

Planning and Land Use Department - Planning Division

<http://www.matsugov.us> • [planning@matsugov.us](mailto:planning@matsugov.us)

My name is Kendra Zamzow and I live on the lands of the Ahtna Dene people in Alaska.

I am a member of and here on behalf of, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish & Wildlife Commission, an advisory body to the Borough. We ask you to maintain the status quo of one 12-hour drift gillnet period per week in the EEZ in the latter part of July. These restrictions will maintain the “conservation corridor” that lets salmon move to northern Cook Inlet streams to spawn. These salmon directly benefit Northern District setnet, personal use, and sport fisheries.

**[slide 1 Fish Ck abundance]** Here is data of sockeye abundance at Fish Creek, one of the few personal use fishing areas. Red lines show when the Conservation Corridor was established or strengthened. Abundance has stabilized and there have been more harvest opportunities (above gray shading). This is a hopeful indicator that the corridor is working. **[slide 2 delisting Su reds]**

I am not a statistician. I worked through the SAFE report tables and feel that some clarity is needed. There is a need to clarify assumptions used in determining the OFL because it is used to determine the ABC and whether overfishing is occurring. **[slide 3 values needed to determine overfishing]**

For aggregate coho **[slide 4 table of SAFE method OFL different from 439,000]**

(upper table) the OFL of 439,00 that was used is different from the method the SAFE report describes for determining an OFL

(lower table) The Tier 2 OFL also indicates how important it could be if escapement for indicator stocks accurately reflected actual escapement

While the corridor appears to have helped sockeye, coho are in decline. Using the OFL of 439,000 for coho, overfishing has not occurred. But using another way to assess overfishing could be a comparison of the EEZ catch over a generation to the Potential Yield in the EEZ over a generation, which shows overfishing may be occurring, and this is what we are hearing from in-river users, but this relies on unreliable escapement numbers.

Escapement for coho is based on only two weirs in the Susitna River drainage, to cover the Susitna, Matanuska, and Knik systems. **[slide 5 – distance from EEZ to Susitna drainage]** There is a lag time between when fish pass through the EEZ and when they arrive at weirs. Having only one 12-hour opening per week provides more time to respond to information that is coming in.

To reiterate the importance of maintaining the corridor, **[slide 6 of coho caught inside, outside corridor]**

Many of the values that go into SAFE report tables and assessments are necessarily estimates. It will take time to develop good data on catches in the EEZ and time and funding to develop indicator stock escapement numbers. It is for this reason that we request caution in setting the ABC and TAC in the first year of management. If Kenai – bound salmon make it through the EEZ, they may still be caught in the harvest zones; if Northern bound salmon do not make it through the EEZ, there are no opportunities. This affects not only user groups but beluga, bears, and ecosystems that benefit from the marine nutrients salmon bring.

Run timing needs to be considered **[slide 7]**. Here the open box highlights mid to late July.

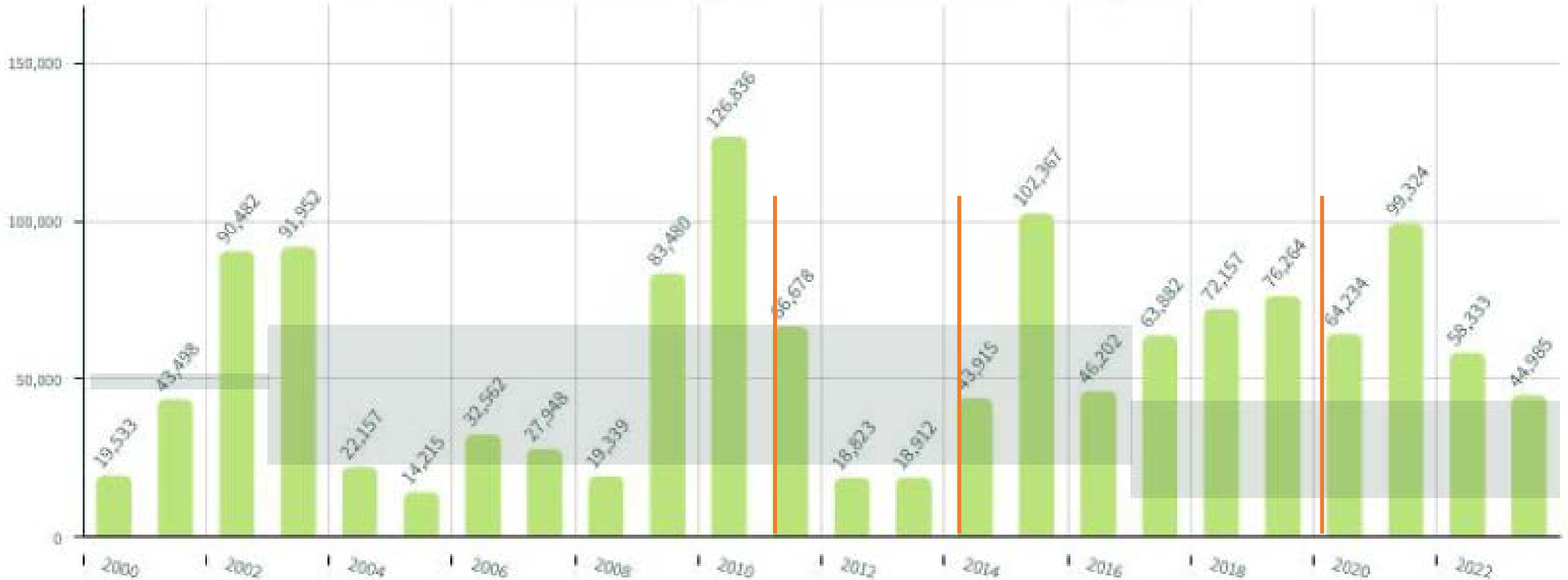
In closing, the uncertainty and potential threat posed by new EEZ management cannot be understated. We ask that you act with precaution in mind, given the newness of the management system and lack of data. Continuing to have a single 12-hour fishing period per week will allow more time to review data and respond between openers than with two 12- hour periods.

Maintain the 150-fathom net length instead of increasing it to 200 fathoms.

Consider extending the single 12- hour fishing period per week to encompass early August to help restore the coho stocks.

Tsin'aen (thank you).

# Fish Creek Sockeye Abundance Estimates



\*Source: ADF&G



## Stock of Concern

Susitna sockeye was designated a stock of concern in 2008; 12 years later, in 2020, as a result of regulatory changes enforcing the Conservation Corridor, they were delisted.

It Takes Fish to Make Fish, 2024. p7

*"Fishing at a rate to fully harvest the most abundant stocks would likely result in overfishing on these weaker or less abundant salmon stocks ...the State has reduced the number of drift gillnet fishing periods in Cook Inlet EEZ waters after July 15 to minimize mixed stock harvests."* – Amendment 16

Because there are only *indices* of abundance, not actual escapement numbers, overfishing cannot be determined using Tier 2 – SAFE, p15

**Aggregate coho, Tier 2: requires harvest numbers (EEZ and non-EEZ), run size, escapement**

*Because the estimated harvest rate in the EEZ over the most recent generation (FEEZ ) of 0.09 was higher than the estimated MFMT of 0.05, it is the NOAA SAFE Team's assessment that overfishing would have occurred during 2023; however, this is the result of missing spawning escapement data -- SAFE, p44*

**Aggregate coho, Tier 3: requires harvest numbers (EEZ) and OFL**

*Because the cumulative harvest for this stock across the most recent generation (82K) would be below a recommended 2023 OFL of 439K coho salmon, it is the NOAA SAFE Team's assessment that overfishing would not have occurred during 2023. -- SAFE, p44*

Overfishing:  
Tier 3 based on OFL and generation harvest in EEZ

Tier 2 based on run size, escapement, and all harvest

ABC based on OFL and buffer

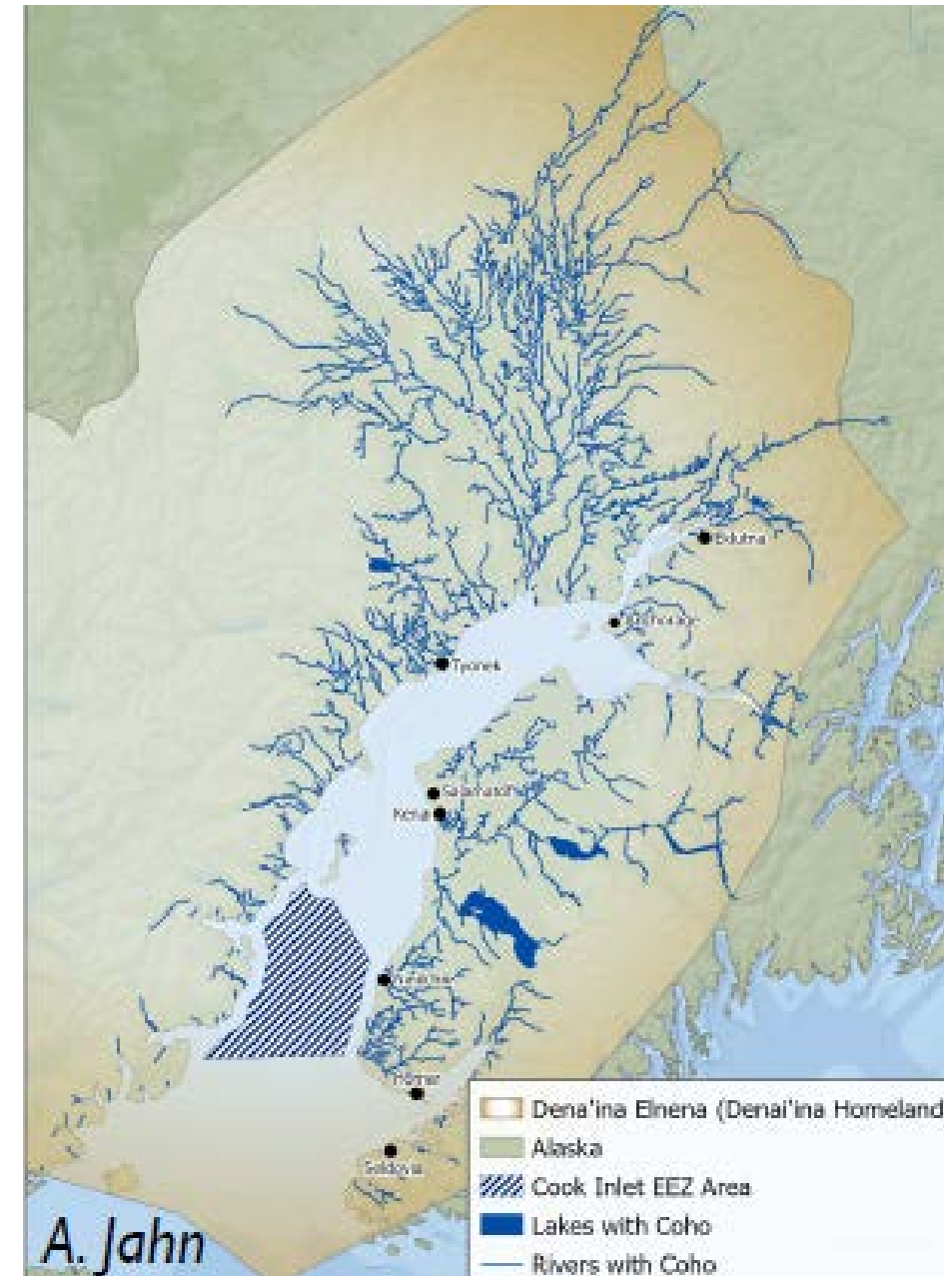
<b>Aggregate coho</b>	SAFE report, Tier 3, Table A8.2	SAFE report <b>METHOD</b> (EEZ max historical catch *4 – sum of prior 3 years of EEZ catch)
<b>Year</b>	<b>OFL</b>	<b>OFL</b>
2013		274,542
2014		259,959
2015		241,886
2016		317,092
2017		273,763
2018		267,826
2019	439,384	263,105
2020	439,384	337,976
2021	439,384	365,355
2022	439,384	380,705
2023	439,384	357,688

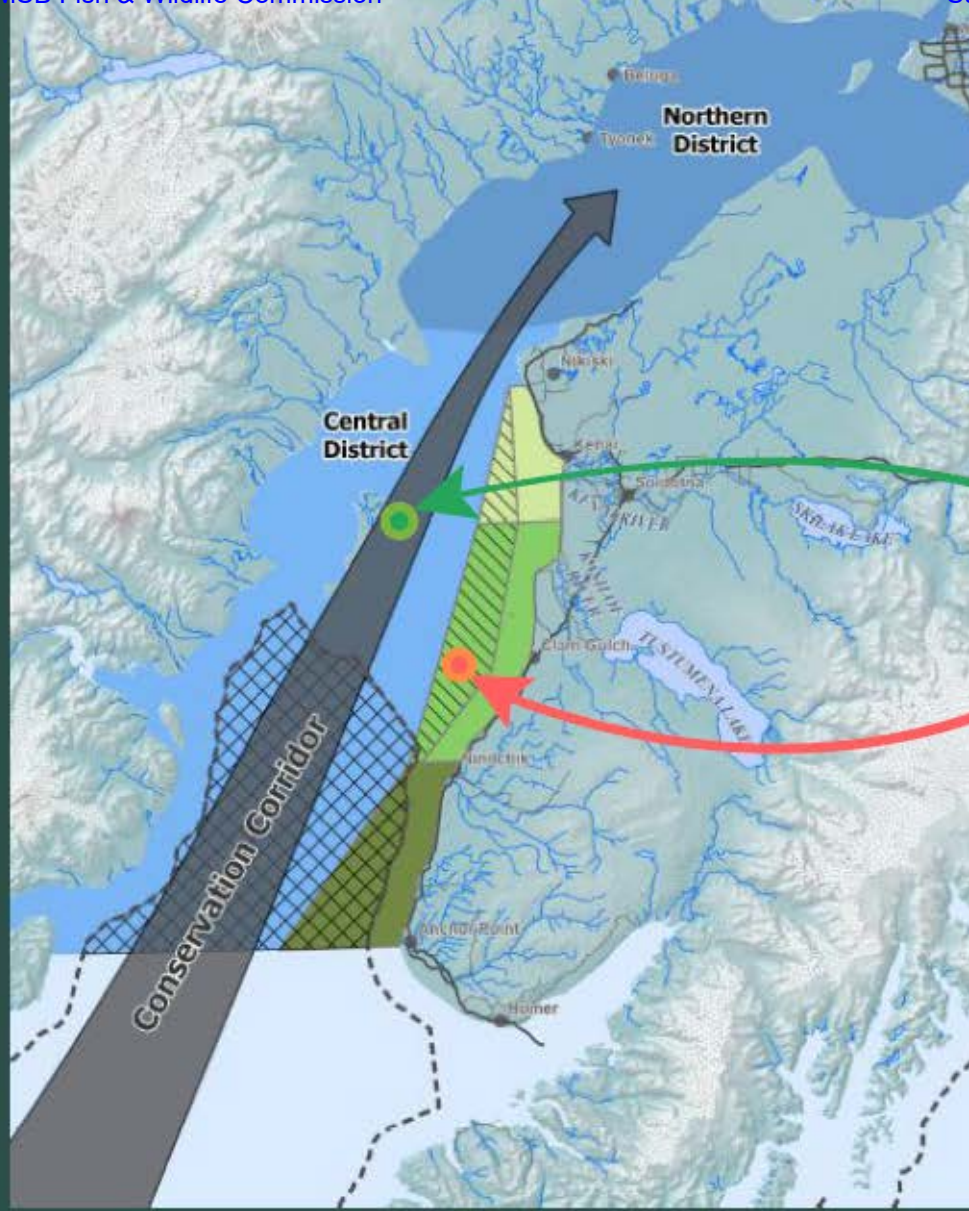
	Run size	OFL_pre	OFL to ABC_buffer	ABC_pre	Average run size of prior 4 years	Average EEZ catch of the prior 4 years
<b>2024 (Tier 2)</b>	253,080	31,798	15%	<b>4,878</b>	237,151	<b>20,829</b>
<b>2024 (Tier 3)</b>	NA	357,688	10%	<b>35,769</b>		

Lag time between when salmon pass through the EEZ and when they reach Susitna River, Matanuska River, and eastside rivers.

More weirs would help build reliable escapement indices.

More time between openers would provide more time for managers to respond to information.





From 2014-2019, drifters harvested an average delivery of 53 coho in the Conservation Corridor, versus 10 coho in the Harvest Zone, during the critical period from July 16-31.\*

53 coho harvested per delivery

10 coho harvested per delivery

Data reinforces the importance of preserving the Corridor for northern-bound salmon passage, especially coho and sockeye.

\*Source: ADF&G





Northern drainages are generally the largest producers of coho, chum, pink, and chinook salmon, whereas the Kenai Peninsula rivers dominate sockeye salmon production.

If escapement based on indicator stocks accurately reflected total escapement, overfishing as the sum of EEZ catch and Potential Yield over a generation indicates potential overfishing occurring

Adapted from SAFE report, January 2024 Draft, p73-74

Aggregate coho

Table A7.1 Tier 2 historical table, Table A7.2 ARIMA pre-season table, and Table A8.2 Tier 3 OFL and ABC

	SAFE report, Tier 3, Table A8.1	SAFE report, Tier 2, Table A7.1	As $\Sigma$ EEZ catch in a generation > Potential Yield over a generation?
<b>Year</b>	<b>Cumulative EEZ catch</b> (sum of past 4 yrs)	<b>Potential Yield EEZ</b> (after escap. and non-EEZ harvest)	<b>Subject to overfishing?</b>
2011	153,940	10,432	FALSE
2012	151,949	29,720	FALSE
2013	224,339	125,270	TRUE
2014	198,005	48,652	FALSE
2015	233,914	57,720	FALSE
2016	232,138	31,209	FALSE
2017	198,784	110,842	FALSE
2018	226,047	60,781	FALSE
2019	210,919	33,735	FALSE
2020	177,900	0	FALSE
2021	134,455	23,670	TRUE
2022	98,040	9,772	TRUE
2023	83,317	10,881	TRUE

**From:** [Chennery Fife](#)  
**To:** [Maija DiSalvo](#)  
**Cc:** [Lacie Olivieri](#); [Marc Lamoreaux](#); [Carrie Brophil](#)  
**Subject:** Eklutna Public Comment deadline + materials  
**Date:** Thursday, February 1, 2024 2:22:53 PM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-1sdtv4dw.png](#)  
[FAQ - Eklutna Draft Fish and Wildlife Program.pdf](#)  
[Community Alternative - Remove Eklutna Dam - To Share.pdf](#)

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

Dear Maija and Lacie,

I know you have a lot going on with Board of Fish proposals. I am not sure of the protocol, but I would like to see the FWC submit a comment letter to the power companies regarding their [Fish and Wildlife Draft Program](#) by the comment deadline of February 19. The [letter](#) they submitted to Samantha Owen in October does not show up in the public comments section of [Eklutnahydro.com](#). The FWC has supported Eklutna River restoration, and now is the time to submit those comments formally during this public comment period. We would love to see the Commission go further and ask for dam removal to align with the vision of the Native Village of Eklutna - information about the Community Alternative is attached.

I am also attaching an FAQ that shares another side of the story from what was presented at the public meetings a couple weeks ago. If there is a way to get the FAQ and Community Alternative to the FWC members and put this on the next agenda, that would be great.

Comments can be emailed to [info@eklutnahydro.com](mailto:info@eklutnahydro.com) and are due February 19. I am happy to help with talking points, and Marc and Carrie at NVE, cc'd here, are amazing resources.

### **Chennery Fife**

South Central Alaska Engagement Manager

Trout Unlimited

*she/her*

720-828-2901 (Google Voice number for calls and texts)

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

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



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**From:** Maija DiSalvo <Maija.DiSalvo@matsugov.us>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2024 1:31 PM



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Natural Resources  
DIVISION OF MINING, LAND & WATER  
Resource Assessment & Development Section

550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1050  
Anchorage, AK 99501-3579  
Main: 907.269-8534  
TTYL 711 or 800-770-8973  
Fax: 907-269-8915

January 5, 2024

Subject: Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan Issued for Public Review and Comment.

Dear Interested Community Members and Organizations,

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has released the Public Review Draft (PRD) of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan for public review and comment. Following the public review period, DNR intends to adopt the plan with any changes that may result from the input received. Once adopted, this plan will serve as the basis for the management of these recreation rivers for the next 20 years. This plan affects approximately 241,000 acres of state-owned land and waters designated in 1988 by the Alaska legislature as recreation rivers under the Recreation Rivers Act (AS 41.23.400-41.23.510). The primary purpose for the establishment of the six recreation rivers is their maintenance and enhancement for recreation. The six rivers are:

- ❖ Little Susitna River
- ❖ Deshka River (Kroto Creek / Moose Creek)
- ❖ Talkeetna River
- ❖ Lake Creek
- ❖ Talachulitna River
- ❖ Alexander Creek

The original Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan was completed in August of 1991. Much has changed in the 30+ years since the original plan was adopted that needs to be recognized and addressed. In response, DNR initiated a plan revision process. Through this planning process, DNR is working to find alternatives with the greatest benefits for all Alaskans. Public involvement is essential to ensure that future actions are not only consistent with the agency mission and the enabling legislation, but also present a shared vision for the future of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers. Your written comments are encouraged during this public comment period. The PRD is available online; on USB flash drive by request; and reference copies will be available in print format at public libraries in Talkeetna and Wasilla. **Comments on the PRD must be received by March 5, 2024 by mail, email or through the website provided below.**

To review or download an electronic version of the PRD or to submit comments online, visit: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/mgtplans/susitna-revision/>. Comments can also be emailed to [recreationrivers@alaska.gov](mailto:recreationrivers@alaska.gov) or mailed to:

Recreation Rivers Management Planning  
550 West 7th Ave, Suite 1050  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3579

To facilitate your review, public meetings have been scheduled in the communities indicated below and virtually during this comment period. Representatives from the Division of Mining, Land & Water will be present at these meetings to answer questions you may have about the plan. You are welcome to attend any of the scheduled meetings.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Talkeetna Public Library 24645 Talkeetna Spur Road Talkeetna, AK 99676	Tuesday, January 30, 2024	5:00 - 7:00 PM
Robert Atwood Conference Room (104) Robert B. Atwood Building 550 West 7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Anchorage, AK 99501	Wednesday, January 31, 2024	12:00 - 2:00 PM
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams (see project webpage for info on how to join)	Wednesday, January 31, 2024	5:30 - 7:00 PM
Wasilla Library Large Multi-Purpose Room 500 North Crusey Street Wasilla, AK 99654	Thursday, February 1, 2024	5:15 - 6:45 PM

For additional information or to request a USB flash drive, contact:

Rob Earl, Land Use Planner  
Email: [recreationrivers@alaska.gov](mailto:recreationrivers@alaska.gov)  
Phone: 907-269-8533

Scan the QR code to be taken to the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan webpage:



*The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aides, services, or special modifications to submit a comment or participate in a meeting, should contact a person indicated above or contact the state TDD number (907)269-8411 seven days (7) in advance of meetings to arrange accommodations.*



# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024

This document is a summary of the major plan changes but is not inclusive of all of the changes to the plan. Please consult the plan text for details.

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction & Background

### Description of the Planning Area

- Figures updated.

### Resources and Uses in the Area

- Removed this section because it was duplicative of information contained in Chapters 2 & 3.

### Why this Plan was Developed

- Text updated to reflect current conditions.

### How this Plan was Developed

- Updated text to reflect current planning effort.
- Clarified planning process outline.

### Planning for State & Borough Land

- Removed section. Information contained elsewhere in plan.

### Summary of Plan Implementation & Modification

- Removed section. Information contained elsewhere in plan.

### Summary of Changes to Major Plan Proposals

- Removed section. This section was developed as part of the original planning effort to address issues relevant to creating the original plan.

# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024



## CHAPTER 2: Areawide Land & Water Management Policies

### Regulations

- Updated to include current regulations.

### Public Use Sites & Special Management Areas

- Updated figures.

### Riparian Management Areas

- Clarified language on Water Quality.

### Upland Development

- Updated language under Unauthorized Cabins to meet current DNR practices.
- Updated language under Utilities to meet modern best management practices.

### Shoreline Development

- Updated Management Guidelines to meet modern best management practices.
- Updated Types of Development to meet modern best management practices.
- Updated the Floating Docks section to allow for specific lake conditions (such as low water levels) to be considered when permitting docks. Also updated section to meet modern best management practices.
- Removed existing Erosion Control Projects, Docks, Ladders, Walkways... section on developments that existed before the original 1991 was adopted.
- Updated Stream Crossings section to meet modern best management practices.

### Recreation

- Updated Management Guidelines to include promulgated regulations.
- Updated Volunteers section to include more potential volunteer opportunities.
- Updated Crowding and Use Limits section to reflect current conditions.

# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024



### Fish & Wildlife Habitat

- Updated Management Guidelines to include current language on U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidance on bald eagles.
- Added a section on Invasive Species Concerns to address issues with the aquatic invasive plant Elodea and invasive northern pike.
- Removed the section on Grazing to reflect current conditions.

### Commercial

- Updated Management Guidelines to include promulgated regulations.
- Removed In-kind Services & Accounting for Revenues sections to reflect current DNR practices.
- Updated the Lodges section to reflect current conditions.
- Updated Commercial Camps section to include promulgated regulations and to reflect current DNR practices.

### General Access

- Updated Management Guidelines to include promulgated regulations and to reflect current DNR practices.

### Boat Access

- Updated Erosion and Other Environment Impacts section to reflect recent studies on the effects of jetboats on fish.
- Updated Regulations and Personal Watercraft sections to include promulgated regulations.

### Upland Access

- Updated Management Guidelines section on Large Vehicle Use in Winter to include promulgated regulations.
- Updated Roads and Both Types of Vehicular Trails section on Protection of Hydrologic Systems to reflect modern best management practices and minimize slope instability.
- Updated Trails section to reflect the current route of the Iditarod Race Trail.
- Updated the Off-Road Vehicles section to reflect language of promulgated regulations.





# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024

- Removed mention of the Coastal Management Program from the section on Access to Private Land and Mining Locations. This program no longer exists.

### Air Access

- Updated Management Guidelines to reflect current conditions.

### Water & Solid Waste

- Included additional language in the Litter section on signage at access points for educational purposes.
- Updated Wastewater Disposal Systems section to reflect current regulations.
- Updated Fuel Storage section to meet modern best management practices.
- Updated Instream Flow section to reflect current conditions and DNR practices. Instream Flow Reservations have been established for all river corridors except the Talachulitna River and Alexander Creek. Recommendations to file reservations for these two rivers are included.
- The Water Discharge from Mining Operations section was updated to meet current Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation requirements.

### Forestry

- Updated Management Guidelines to include promulgated regulations and to reflect current DNR practices.

### Subsurface Resources

- Updated Management Guidelines – Mining to reflect current Mineral Closing Orders and a Leasehold Location Order within the corridors. Also updated information on permitting to reflect current DNR practices.
- Map updated.
- Removed Reclamation of Mine Sites section. Not needed. Already regulated by statute.

### Materials

- Updated Existing ADOT/PF Pits section to reflect current materials sites.

### Land Status

- Updated Land Acquisition section to reflect current Proposed Additions.

# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024



- The Classifications, Mental Health Trust Lands and University Lands sections were all updated to reflect current conditions.

### Heritage Resources

- Updated Management Guidelines to reflect promulgated regulations.
- Updated route of Iditarod National Historic Trail.

### Education

- No major updates needed.

### Enforcement

- Updated to reflect promulgated regulations.

## CHAPTER 3: Land & Water Management Policies for Each Management Unit

### Changes throughout the Chapter

- Updated data to reflect current conditions. Examples include: land status, river characteristics, fisheries, sport fishing, special regulations, wildlife, camping, access, development, public use sites, special management areas, among others.
- Technical changes to align management direction with current regulations.
- Removed section on Borough Land classifications. This plan only applies to state land.
- Added sections on subsistence for river corridors.
- Updated all maps.

### Little Susitna River Management Unit

- Updated Boating Restrictions section to remove the proposed South Big Lake Road no-wake area since this extension did not occur.



# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024

### 1a. Lower Little Susitna River Subunit

- Updated Boating Restrictions section to remove the proposed South Big Lake Road no-wake area since this extension did not occur.
- Removed section on Big Lake Road Extension since this extension did not occur.
- Renamed and updated the Additions and Deletions from Recreation Rivers section to Overlap between Management Unit & Nancy Lake State Rec Area section.
- Removed the Nancy Lake Creek Bridge public use site. This is no longer a proposed addition.
- Removed the Special Management Area for the proposed South Big Lake Road Extension since this did not occur.

### 1c. Upper Little Susitna River Subunit

- Removed section on grazing to reflect current use in the subunit.

## Deshka River Management Unit

- Added information on warming water trends.

### 2i. Upper Moose Creek Subunit

- Updated subunit information to reflect the removal of the Upper Moose Creek proposed addition. This includes the K'da Lake Special Management Area.

## Talkeetna River Management Unit

### 3a. Lower Talkeetna River Subunit

- Removed Boat Launch and Campground Public Use Site and Sheep River Public Use Site.

## Lake Creek Management Unit

- Added information on the migration of the mouth of Lake Creek due to a large flood event.
- Updated information on Special Regulations for rainbow trout fishing.

# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024



### 4a. Lake Creek Mouth Subunit

- Added information on the migration of the mouth of Lake Creek due to a large flood event.

### 4e. Chelatna Lake Subunit

- Added a Public Use Site at Snowslide Creek.

## Talachulitna River Management Unit

### 5e. Judd Lake Subunit

- Updated Judd Lake Public Use Site to contain shorelands and water column only. Most of the land is now in private or borough ownership.

## Alexander Creek Management Unit

- Added a Special Regulations section. Alexander Creek has been designated special management waters.
- Added a section on Invasive Species to address issues in the corridor with Elodea and northern pike.
- Removed Boating Restriction related to the proposed addition at the mouth of Alexander Creek. Land ownership has changed and this is no longer a proposed addition.

### 6a. Lower Alexander Creek Subunit

- Updated Management Intent to reflect the closure in the Chinook salmon fishery due to impacts from northern pike. Removed information on the proposed addition to the mouth of Alexander Creek. No longer a proposed addition.
- Updated Management Guidelines to remove section on Addition to the Recreation River. No longer a proposed addition due to change in land ownership.
- Removed Alexander Creek Mouth and Granite Creek Public Use Sites. These were within the removed proposed addition.

### 6b. Upper Alexander Creek Subunit



# Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

## Public Review Draft – Summary of Changes

January 2024

- Updated Management Intent to reflect the closure in the Chinook salmon fishery due to impacts from northern pike.

### 6d. Sucker Creek Subunit

- Added a section on Invasive Species Concerns to address issues in the corridor with Elodea and northern pike.

## CHAPTER 4: Implementation

### Areas Recommended for Designation as Recreation Rivers

- Removed some proposed additions due to changes in land ownership and use. Retained recommendations to:
  - Correct overlap between Nancy Lake State Rec Area and the Recreation Rivers Corridor.
  - Proposed addition at Mouth of Prairie Creek.

### Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, & Amendment

- Technical changes to align management direction with current regulations.

### Other Recommendations

- Removed recommendations for Susitna Area Plan Update and Statewide Boating Safety Legislation. These recommendations were completed.

### Future Additions

- Removed some proposed additions due to changes in land ownership and use. Retained recommendation for proposed addition at Mouth of Prairie Creek.

### Fishing Regulations

- Removed section on Fishing Regulations. No longer a recommendation by Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

### Agency Implementation Responsibilities

- Updated implementation responsibilities for each agency based on current and future actions. Added a section for Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH**

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Pete Probasco

Rob Yundt

Kendra Zamzow

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

4/20/2023

**RE: Position on adequately funding fish weirs and genetic testing for better in-season management**

Earlier last January, at the special joint MSB Assembly and State Delegation meeting, two Matanuska - Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commissioners, Mike Wood and Andy Couch, discussed a Commission priority to fully fund Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) salmon counting weir projects. Over the past three years our Mat-Su area weirs have only been partially funded, or in a couple cases, not funded at all. At that time we also mentioned the need for restarting a coho salmon genetic testing program — which we have since received a cost estimate from ADF&G.

With the recent announcements of extremely low 2023 forecasted Chinook (king) salmon returns throughout Upper Cook Inlet and the necessary emergency closures and restrictions to commercial and sport fisheries we need to continue monitoring king salmon stocks. From an economic standpoint, for both commercial and sport fisheries, solid monitoring and in-season management of Mat-Su sockeye salmon and coho becomes even more of a priority. Given these needs, we would request consideration of the following funding needs from the State of Alaska:

**Northern Cook Inlet Salmon Weir / Coho Salmon Genetic Testing Budget Needs**

Weirs listed in alphabetical order — costs provided by ADF&G:

**Chelatna Lake** — At the head of Lake Creek, this would count a sockeye salmon population with the largest spawning escapement goal in the Susitna River drainage. This project has been unfunded for the past 3 years. Cost to fund the full sockeye salmon run— **\$60,000**.

**Deshka River** — This currently counts a Chinook salmon population with the largest escapement goal within the Susitna River drainage — and also counts the early portion of a Coho salmon population with the **ONLY** coho salmon spawning escapement goal in the entire Susitna River drainage. Cost to extend project from August 15 — September 15 which would count the full coho run, and allow in-season management throughout the coho salmon return — **\$40,000**.

**Fish Creek** — Is currently funded to primarily count sockeye salmon escapement during the month of July. Cost to extend the Fish Creek project from July 31 — September 30 in order to count the entire

sockeye salmon and coho salmon returns (both of which have established ADF&G spawning escapement goals) thereby allowing in-season management for both species throughout the season —**\$25,000**.

**Jim Creek** — This project has currently been unfunded for the past 3 years. Cost to re-install the project from July 15 — September 30, which would count the entire coho salmon return which has an ADF&G established spawning escapement goal (McRoberts Creek), and therefore allow in-season management throughout this timeframe —**\$55,000**.

**Coho Salmon Genetic Testing of Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Harvest** — This project was first established using money the legislature provided the Matanuska - Susitna Borough for salmon project funding in Upper Cook Inlet. The project has already established Upper Cook Inlet coho salmon genetic baselines, and provided four years of commercial harvest sampling results, but has been unfunded since 2016. Similar to current sockeye salmon genetic testing, coho salmon genetic testing allows the department to determine total run size, harvests rates, and productivity of specific coho salmon stocks within Upper Cook Inlet, thereby providing for better scientific management of these economically important salmon stocks. **\$300,000**.

**SubTotals: Weirs: \$175,000 -- Genetic Coho Salmon Testing: \$300,000**

**Grand Total: \$475,000**

Adequately funding these projects will improve salmon management for fisheries impacting the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the fastest growing region of Alaska. Economic studies completed in 2007 and 2017 show significant positive impacts of fisheries on the Mat-Su economy. These projects matter to the citizens of Mat-Su, Alaskan businesses, and our outside visitors.

Thank you.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Wood, Chair

CC: MSB Planning Division Manager Kim Sollien

MSB Planning Department Manager Alex Strawn

MSB Manager Mike Brown

MSB Assembly via MSB Clerk

ADF&G Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang

Bill Stoltze, MSB

Reference: Resolution FWC 23-02, passed by the MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission on 4/20/2023.

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH****FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. FWC 23-02**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION REQUESTING FULL FUNDING FOR ADF&G SALMON-COUNTING WEIR PROJECTS IN NORTHERN COOK INLET FOR SALMON STOCKS WITH ESTABLISHED SPAWNING ESCAPEMENT GOALS, AND FUNDING ADDITIONAL GENETIC STUDIES OF COHO SALMON IN UPPER COOK INLET .

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WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Valley's salmon resources have provided food security, throughout centuries, for area residents, since the start of the Mat-Su's area's written history; and

WHEREAS, estimates derived from the State's economic study of Alaska sport fisheries valued the Northern Cook Inlet Management Area (Knik Arm, Susitna River drainage, and West Cook Inlet drainage) sport fisheries as generating \$141 million in direct spending, supporting 1,180 sport fishing related jobs, and supplying \$9.2 million in local, state, and federal taxes in 2007, demonstrate significant economic impact gained from Northern Cook Inlet sport fisheries; and

WHEREAS, a follow up economic study commissioned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough using the same contractor and similar methodology as the State study 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 – including Jim and McRobert's Creek coho salmon, Fish Creek sockeye and coho salmon, Little Susitna River Chinook and coho salmon, Deshka River Chinook and coho salmon, Chelatna Lake (Lake Creek) sockeye salmon, Judd Lake (Talachulitna River) sockeye salmon, and Larson Lake (Talkeetna River drainage) sockeye salmon; 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, the Mat-Su Borough's diversity of significant salmon stocks and harvest locations can provide sustained fishing and harvest opportunities even when specific stocks and locations go through periods of lower production, and this diversity should be valued and maintained for the benefit of Alaskans.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission respectfully requests Mat-Su area Legislators, along with Governor Dunleavy, diligently work to restore full funding for each of the above listed weir projects, measuring each established salmon spawning escapement goal, throughout the entire season, as necessary to fully evaluate goal level achievement, and provide for more active inseason management, that both conserves sustained yield of each identified salmon stock, while also maximizing benefit for the people.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission this 16th day of March, 2023.



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Mike Wood, Chair

ATTEST:



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Ted Eischeid, MSB Staff

**From:** [Oslund, Samantha A \(DFG\)](#)  
**To:** [Maija DiSalvo](#)  
**Cc:** [Andrew Couch](#)  
**Subject:** FW: List of funded Mat-Su ADF&G projects  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 2:36:57 PM

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

Hey Maija,

Sorry I just forgot to add you to this email, please see below.

Sam Oslund

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**From:** Oslund, Samantha A (DFG)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 2:36 PM  
**To:** Andrew Couch <fishing@fish4salmon.com>  
**Cc:** Decovich, Nick A (DFG) <nick.decovich@alaska.gov>; Miller, Matthew G (DFG) <matt.miller@alaska.gov>; Dye, Jason E (DFG) <jason.dye@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** List of funded Mat-Su ADF&G projects

Hi Andy, please see below I think I have all the funded projects listed. Nick Decovich can chime in if were missing anything.

- NCI King escapement Surveys
- Deshka King salmon weir
- Fish Ck weir into September
- Little Su coho weir
- Little Su King salmon weir.
- Deshka Coho weir
- Jim Creek weir
- Susitna River Chinook Abundance
- Lake Creek Sonar
- Alexander pike suppression
- Pike monitoring
- Fall rotenone projects

Let us know if you need anything further.

Sam Oslund