

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. FWC 21-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION RECOMMENDING ASSEMBLY ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE 21-025 THAT PROVIDES FOR SUPPLEMENTAL WETLAND MITIGATION FOR LARGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THAT IMPACT WETLANDS AND DEGRADE SALMON AND OTHER FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT IN THE BOROUGH.

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WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) was created in February 2007 to represent the interests of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (Borough) in the conservation and allocation of fish, wildlife, and habitat; and

WHEREAS, Borough salmonid fish have seriously declined over the past 30 years; and

WHEREAS, the Cook Inlet contains 5 of the 13 salmon stocks of concern as of March 2021 for the state of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Borough has been the fastest-growing region of Alaska for years, and survey research indicates that Borough residents highly value salmon and other fish and wildlife and the economic benefits they create; and

WHEREAS, the economic impact from sport fishing in the Borough has historically been significant, with direct spending in 2017 of over \$57 million; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission has made positive strides in directing funds to local fisheries research and fish passage projects while encouraging

stakeholder groups to prioritize fishery needs in Upper Cook Inlet and its critical watersheds; and

WHEREAS, since 2001, the Borough's fish passage program has constructed over 100 fish passage culverts that have opened up 66 miles of stream and 6,224 lake acres of fish habitat representing a conservative investment of over 20 million dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has successfully worked with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Alaska Board of Fisheries to improve salmon returns and other fish and wildlife populations for the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Commission continues to support robust opportunities for sport, subsistence, commercial, and personal use fisheries in the Borough and recognizes the importance of restoring historic health to threatened fisheries and the associated wetlands that remain critical for supporting salmon and other fish and wildlife populations; and

WHEREAS, in May of 2019, the Commission passed resolution FWC 19-03 supporting the concept of requiring supplemental wetland mitigation for large development projects impacting wetlands; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes the need for new development that may sometimes impact wetlands while supporting the concept of avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating these impacts; and

WHEREAS, significant developments that require wetland protection or mitigation may not be fully addressed by other agencies and regulatory bodies resulting in lost ecological functions and a corresponding negative impact on local fisheries.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission recommends Assembly adoption of Ordinance 21-025 providing for supplemental wetland mitigation in addition to what other agencies and regulatory bodies may require to fully offset unavoidable wetland impacts to both protect and enhance the salmonid and other fish and wildlife populations as the Matanuska-Susitna Borough continues to grow.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2021.

  
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MIKE WOOD, Chair

ATTEST:

  
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TED EISCHEID, Staff

(SEAL)