

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

350 E. Dahlia Ave., Palmer, Alaska 99645

CHAIRPERSON

Terry Nininger

MSB STAFF

Brianne Blackburn

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Andy Couch

Howard Delo

Larry Engel

Randall Kowalke

Jim Sykes

John Wood

Mike Wood

Exofficio: Bruce Knowles

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION**AGENDA****Lower Level Conference Room****REGULAR MEETING****3 P.M.****February 15, 2018**

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- I. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL
 - II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
 - III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. January 18, 2018
 - IV. AUDIENCE INTRODUCTION/PARTICIPATION
 - V. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS
 - A. Staff (Brianne Blackburn)
 - VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
 - A. BOF Proposal Discussion: UCI Meeting Location
 - B. OP ED & Resolution
 - C. DEC Impaired listing of Little Su for Hydrocarbon & Turbidity
 - D. Governor Task Force Letter
 - E. FWC 2018 Meeting Schedule
 - F. FY2019 Budget
 - VII. MEMBER COMMENTS
 - VIII. NEXT MEETING – MARCH 15th at 3:00 pm
 - IX. ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES

I. NOMINATIONS

a. Chair

MOTION: Larry Engel moved that Terry Nininger serve as chair; Jim Sykes seconded; No objection. Terry Nininger is chair by unanimous vote.

b. Vice-Chair

MOTION: Larry Engel moved that Howard Delo serve as vice-chair; Andy Couch seconded; No objection. Howard Delo is vice-chair by unanimous vote.

II. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Meeting was called to order by co-chair Howard Delo at 3:02pm at MSB office in Palmer. Quorum was established with five members present: Andy Couch, Howard Delo, Larry Engel, John Wood, Randall Kowalke, Jim Sykes and Mike Wood.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Larry Engel made a motion to approve the agenda; Andy Couch seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. December 21, 2017

MOTION: Larry Engel made a motion to approve the minutes; Andy Couch seconded the motion. Discussion. Jim Sykes amended the motion to amended the last paragraph. Motion approved, as amended, by unanimous vote.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

- a. Bruce Knowles began a discussion regarding the next BOF meeting and location from Anchorage to Soldotna voting on Friday, January 19, 2018). Discussion ensued. Glen Haight @ ADF&G is the Executive Director of BOF – is the person to contact.
- b. Larry Engel received an email from ADF&G regarding Susitna River Sockeye Salmon Migration Project remaining funds. It was discussed how to spend \$6,600 remaining from original \$625,000 research grant. (a) train staff for fish scale aging; (b) purchase an automatic fish measuring board or (c) some other use. Discussion ensued.

MOTION: Jim Sykes made a motion that either (a) fish scale aging or (b) automatic fish measurer would be fine; John Wood seconded the motion; Larry Engel amended for the money to go to Coho Genetic Baseline Study; John Wood seconded. Ted Eischeid to write letter advising what money should be spent on and to have Larry Engel proof. Motion passed unanimously.

- c. Andy Couch discussed the DEC meeting he attended regarding the Little Susitna River comment opportunities are open until January 29th. The two concerns are hydrocarbons from boat motor use and turbidity. Discussion ensued. He will stay in the loop on future developments.

VI. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

A. ADF&G Projects

- a. Sam Oslund provided a handout regarding budget scoring on projects and stocking program is robust/growing. Shared a "Still Water Fishing" booklet published in 2009. Looking for \$11K - \$22K for stock lake program. Discussion ensued.
- b. Chrissy Decker provided information on invasive species program. Cottonwood Creek drainage focus (New MSB Project) see as a high priority; a huge emphasis is to contain Pike populations. Currently putting together plans for eradication – Rotenone projects take a year to finish permitting. Treating Anderson and Kings Lakes is about \$140K. Trying to contain Pike to Cottonwood Creek so they can't get into the Jim Creek system. Discussion ensued.

B. Nicholas Spriopoulos, Borough Attorney

- a. Open Meetings Act education. Provided handout with AS44.62.310 Government meetings public and AS44.62.312 State policy regarding meetings. Discussion ensued.

VII. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- a. Calendar – 2018 Meeting Schedule
 - i. Discussion ensued regarding dates and times – members to provide their available dates and times at next meeting
- b. NPRMC-Federal Salmon FMP-RFP
 - i. Discussion ensued regarding statements/questions produced by Larry Engel and Howard Delo.

MOTION: Andy Couch made a motion to appoint a sub committee consisting of Howard Delo, Larry Engel and Mike Wood that would develop content and send in by February 1st deadline and submit copy to borough manager; John Wood seconded. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

- c. Memorandum to MSB Mayor, Manager and Assembly Members

MOTION: Andy Couch made a motion to approve the Memorandum; Mike Wood seconded. Discussion ensued to remove “We further hope you will continue to support their work through your budget process, providing them with the ability and resources needed to provide their professional public relations support to all the various facets of the Mat-Su Borough government.” In the last paragraph and change “letter” to memorandum. Motion approved as amended by unanimous vote.

VIII. MEMBER COMMENTS

Howard Delo: How did the meeting the with Assembly and delegation go? Jim Sykes responded that it went very well and positive. Randall Kowalke agreed with Jim’s assessment. What happened with the proposal for ASB regarding Board term limits? Jim Sykes responded that it was introduced and. Randall Kowalke responded that he thought it was a solution in search of a problem and he will do what he can to kill it.

John Wood: Asked about the Governor’s Task Force. Suggested a more active role from the body to get this moving. Larry Engel suggested a letter should be sent to the Governor to pursue the FWC role.

MOTION: Randall Kowalke made a motion for John Wood to write a letter t Governor regarding the Task Force and to have Terry Nininger and Larry Engel to review; Andy Couch seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

John Wood: Also requested that he be able to contact each commissioner to get a history of the committee. Staff recommended that he contact the Borough attorney as this could be a violation of the Open Meetings Act.

Mike Wood: Welcome John. I will be on vacation February 1 – 10. There were 49,500 signatures collected on ballot initiative.

Jim Sykes: Thank everybody for a great meeting and appreciate all of your expertise.

Andy Couch: Hoping to get more done for this meeting. Mother is not doing well.

Randall Kowalke: Good meeting, thank you all.

Bruce Knowles: Meeting with doctor tomorrow. Sorry I haven’t been to meetings as much but my health hasn’t been good.

MOTION: Larry Engel made motion to adjourn; Mike Wood seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

IX. ADJOURNED at 6:20pm

Howard Delo, Co-Chair

ATTEST: _____
Karol Riese, Staff

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[illegible]

Project Title	Contractor	Contract #	Awarded	Budget Remaining	Notes
Fisheries Research Program Planning	R2		\$194,131.00	\$0.00	RM&E Plan completed May, 2015
Coho Salmon Genetics for Yentna River	ADF&G	16-004P-G	\$249,554.00	\$65,087.50	
Coho Salmon Genetic Stock Identification	ADF&G	16-004P-F	\$242,059.00	\$9,948.93	
Alexander Creek Invasive Pike Suppression	ADF&G	16-004P-K	\$125,000.00	\$42,195.83	
Conditions for Temperature Sensitive Streams	R2	16-004P-E	\$101,723.20	\$59,102.48	
Jim Creek Weir	ADF&G	16-004P-J	\$96,600.00	\$96,600.00	no bills yet
Shell Lake Sockeye Salmon Monitoring	CIAA	16-004P-C	\$84,707.00	\$0.00	
Fishing Depth of ESSN Setnets	KINTAMA		\$70,000.00	\$0.00	Completed Marcy 2016 (report available)
Pike Eradication in Cottonwood Creek	ADF&G	16-004P-H	\$63,430.00	\$15,477.61	
Juvenile Salmon Monitoring	ARRI	16-004P-B	\$60,000.00	\$3,814.01	
Econ Contributions of Sportfishing in Cook Inlet	ADF&G	17-051P	\$125,000.00	\$59,120.00	
Beaver Dams, Fish Passage & Stream Ecology	ARRI	16-004P-A	\$32,797.20	\$9,255.08	
Alexander Lake Elodea Eradication	DNR		\$49,481.94	\$0.00	May 2017 treatment
Subtotal			\$1,494,483	\$360,601.44	
Unencumbered remaining				\$34,792.70	

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Statewide Dungeness Crab, Shrimp, Other Miscellaneous Shellfish, and Other Supplemental Issues

March 6-9, 2018, Egan Civic and Convention Center, Anchorage

TENTATIVE AGENDA**NOTE: This tentative agenda is subject to change throughout the course of the meeting.**

This Tentative Agenda is provided to give a general idea to the public of the board's anticipated schedule. The board will attempt to hold to this schedule; however, the board is not constrained by this Tentative Agenda.

Deadline for SIGN-UP TO TESTIFY will be Tuesday, March 6, at 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 6, 8:30 a.m.**Morning****OPENING BUSINESS**

Call to Order; Introductions of Board Members and Staff
Board Member Ethics Disclosures

STAFF REPORTS**PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Oral Public Testimony, including Advisory Committee Reports**

Public testimony will continue until those who are present at the meeting are heard; the board will continue working through its agenda immediately upon conclusion of public testimony.

Afternoon**PUBLIC TESTIMONY: (cont.)****COMMENCE COMMITTEE WORK**

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Group 1: Statewide, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Chignik, Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Cook Inlet Shellfish, Southeastern Area Miscellaneous Shellfish (13 proposals)

Proposals 206-207, 217 (Statewide and Prince William Sound sport and personal use shellfish), 208-212, 229 (Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands commercial shellfish), 213-215 (Cook Inlet subsistence, commercial, personal use shellfish), Proposal 88 (Southeastern Area Miscellaneous Shellfish Sea Cucumber)

Wednesday, March 7, 8:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Group 1: (cont.)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Group 2: Supplemental Issues Finfish (7 proposals)
Proposal 236 (Dutch Harbor herring), Proposals 230-233, 237 (Yukon commercial and subsistence salmon), Proposal 238 (Rockfish sport)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Group 3: Prince William Sound Shrimp (11 proposals)
Proposals 216, 218 (Noncommercial), Proposals 219-227 (Commercial)

Thursday, March 8, 8:30 a.m.**COMMENCE FIRST DELIBERATIONS**

BOARD DELIBERATIONS on Group 1

BOARD DELIBERATIONS on Group 2

Friday, March 9, 8:30 a.m.**Morning**

BOARD DELIBERATIONS on Group 3

Afternoon

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

ADJOURN

AGENDA NOTES:

- 1) This agenda is TENTATIVE and subject to change during the meeting. A list of staff reports and roadmap will be available at the meeting. Schedule updates will be posted at the meeting. An audio of the meeting should be available at the Board of Fisheries webpage (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.main>) during periods when the board is on the record.
- 2) Testimony is expected to be limited to three (3) minutes for individuals and groups and ten (10) minutes for advisory committee representative and regional advisory council representatives. These times may be changed by the chair in order to manage the volume of the workload. Advisory committee and regional advisory council representatives may present reports either at the beginning or end of public testimony. The representative should notify the board secretary whether he or she prefers the beginning or end of public testimony.
- 3) BOARD COMMITTEES AND PUBLIC PANELS: The board has established a number of board committees to provide additional review of proposals. Board committees are comprised of board members. The board selects public advisors to the committees from a list of qualified and interested members of the public compiled by the committee chairs following the oral testimony portion of the

meeting. Advisory committee representatives are ex-officio advisors to all board committees and may move between board committees as they choose. The purpose of the committee process is to: 1) broaden public participation in the regulatory process; 2) provide another forum for stakeholders to discuss resolution of contentious issues; and 3) provide additional detailed information relative to proposals. Committee of the Whole will serve as the committee structure for this entire meeting. Under Committee of the Whole all board members will join and full audience participation is encouraged.

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Policy Regarding the Location of the Upper Cook Inlet Finfish Meeting

2018-###-FB

Month Day, Year

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) notes one of the most divisive issues it faces almost every year is not a regulatory subject, but rather where to hold the Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting. Boards since 1999 have chosen to hold this two-week long meeting in Anchorage. Other communities, principally Kenai/Soldotna, would like to host the meeting. While the board recognizes it cannot obligate future boards by its current decisions, it offers the following meeting schedule as a way to manage this ongoing issue.

The board recommends future boards rotate the Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting between the three principle communities of Kenai/Soldotna, Palmer/Wasilla, and Anchorage. This policy contemplates the meeting will rotate between these three communities throughout its 3-year meeting cycle. The board recommends holding the 2020 meeting in Kenai/Soldotna, the 2023 meeting in Wasilla/Palmer, and the 2026 meeting in Anchorage.

Adopted this ## day of Month 2018.

John E. Jensen
Chair, Alaska Board of Fisheries
Vote: #-#

Borough, Kenai, Soldotna Propose Full Local Board of Fish Meeting Again



Sponsored by: Administration

CITY OF KENAI

RESOLUTION NO. 2018 – 06

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENAI, ALASKA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF KENAI MAYOR TO SIGN KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 2018-001 REQUESTING THE ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES ADOPT A POLICY TO ROTATE THE UPPER COOK INLET FINIFISH MEETING BETWEEN THE THREE PRINCIPLE COMMUNITIES OF KENAI/SOLDOTNA, PALMER/WASILLA, AND ANCHORAGE.

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2018, the Kenai City Manager forwarded Joint Resolution No. 2018-001 to be considered by the Councils of the Cities of Kenai and Soldotna and the Assembly of the Kenai Peninsula Borough; and,

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Kenai Peninsula that the Board of Fisheries hold Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meetings on the Kenai Peninsula.

by Ashley Smith , February 6, 2018

The Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly along with Kenai and Soldotna City Councils are again considering a proposal to the state Board of Fisheries for a full local meeting in 2020.

This year's proposal for a reconsideration from Kenai Peninsula governments suggests that the Board adopt "a policy to rotate the Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting between the three principal communities of Kenai/Soldotna, Palmer/Wasilla, and Anchorage."

Board of Fisheries Member Alan Cain of Anchorage is also supporting the reconsideration with a draft policy that suggests "holding the 2020 meeting in Kenai/Soldotna, the 2023 meeting in Wasilla/Palmer, and the 2026 meeting in Anchorage."

Since 1999, the Board of Fisheries has denied holding an Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting on the Kenai Peninsula, despite many requests for a meeting closer to popular areas impacted by the Board's decisions. Board members have previously cited Anchorage as a more "neutral location" to meet.

Kenai Mayor Brian Gabriel said he was very disappointed last October(2017) when the Board of Fisheries members again voted to hold their 2020 UCI Finfish meeting in Anchorage. In an email he

wrote: *“Having the UCI meeting in Anchorage every 3 years for 21 years is disingenuous to the many folks on the Kenai, representing all user groups, that would like to participate in the public process.”*

The proposal was forwarded from Kenai City Manager Paul Ostrander to the Kenai Council, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly, and the Soldotna City Council on January 31. The Kenai City Council will consider Joint Resolution 2018-001 during their Wednesday, Feb 7 meeting that begins at 6:00 pm in the Kenai Council Chambers.

Did you know that one of the most critical laws that protect Alaska's salmon has not been updated in over 60 years? *Title 16 Fish Habitat Permitting to ensure habitat protection for fish and wildlife* has not been updated since it was written when Alaska had just become a state. Here at the Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission we believe that as our state changes and evolves, it is imperative that we ensure that our laws keep pace with the needs of the state. This Commission was founded a decade ago by the Mat-Su Borough with that purpose in mind – to utilize science-based standards and forward looking ~~polities~~policies to help ensure a balance between the critical fishing and wildlife resources of the region with other needs of the population, including responsible resource development. Our mission is to advise on issues of healthy habitat for fisheries, for wildlife, and recreation. Healthy habitat not only supports our fish and wildlife, but ensures clean water for our communities and key economic opportunities for Alaskans. Given ~~the~~ ongoing changes, future growth and evolving needs of our state, we believe it is important to look for opportunities to sharpen our tools and Alaska's fish habitat permitting law is one of them.

The Mat-Su Borough is home to roughly 15% of the state's population and covers over 25,000 square miles. In addition to encompassing the two major river systems, the Matanuska and Susitna, the borough also contains a multitude of lakes, rivers, and streams. As we all know, this is an ideal place to call home and in part that is because we share it with rich populations of salmon and wildlife. We want to keep it that way. Throughout our work as the Fish and Wildlife Commission, we have been committed to salmon conservation and sustainability, including working with ADFG and local interests to develop effective strategies for the conservation of populations of Mat-Su salmon, including king and sockeye salmon. Eight out of fourteen of the State's "stock of concern" for king and

sockeye salmon are in the Mat-Su. In addition to conserving critical salmon populations, we continue to work toward effective fishery management, supporting sport, personal, subsistence and commercial uses. Additionally, we are engaged in working to restore impacted areas of the Borough's salmon habitat through road improvement or culvert replacement, ~~for example~~. At the center of all of this work, we believe that clear science must provide the foundation for our actions when attempting to strike a positive balance between healthy fisheries, responsible resource development, and the needs of our state's population.

Currently, there are two efforts underway to modify our laws – one bill and one potential ballot initiative. As these tools are evaluated, we feel strongly that three fundamental priorities should be taken into consideration:

1) our policies for permitting activities that have the potential to impact Alaska's salmon habitat should be based on scientific standards, not special interests or politics. As currently written, Alaska's fish habitat permitting law is open and vague, ~~and~~ fails to clearly define proper protection of fish based on clear, accepted scientific criteria; 2) our government decisions should allow for public input, particularly if a development activity could have a significant impact on Alaska's fisheries; ~~and~~ 3) doing things right the first time is a lot better and cheaper than fixing mistakes after the fact.

Taking a proactive approach to updating Alaska's laws can help us avoid the long-term costs of restoration and mitigation. We have spent over \$8 million dollars on restoration in the Mat-Su, replacing culverts and restoring up to 100 miles of streams. This money is well spent, but we would better to avoid future costs by proactively protecting habitat for the long term.

Across Alaska, and especially in the Mat-Su, when we evaluate the needs of our growing population, we need to ensure that our laws and permitting requirements outline a clear standard so that responsible resource development protects our fisheries and enhances our communities and our economies. Based on our success and our failures in the Mat-Su, the Fish and Wildlife Commission believes that we can strike that difficult balance. In order to do so, we need to ensure that our laws and policies are effective. We encourage you to join us in holding all of our public officials to this goal and uphold Alaska's constitutional mandate: that fish and game are a right and privilege to be protected for Alaskans today and for future generations to come.

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Action:

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 18-____**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING LAWS AND PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS THAT OUTLINE A CLEAR STANDARD SO THAT RESPONSIBLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROTECTS OUR FISHERIES AND ENHANCES OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR ECONOMIES.

WHEREAS, the Mat-Su Borough has a vested interest in utilizing science-based standards and forward looking politics to help ensure a balance between the critical fish and wildlife resources of the region with other needs of the population, including responsible resource development; and

WHEREAS, the Mat-Su Borough is home to roughly 15% of the state's population and covers over 25,000 square miles. In addition to encompassing the two major river systems, the Matanuska and the Susitna, the borough also contains a multitude of lakes, rivers, and streams; and

WHEREAS, the Mat-Su Borough has spent over \$8 million on restoration in the Mat-Su, replacing culverts and restoring up to 100 miles of streams; and

WHEREAS, healthy habitat not only supports our fish and wildlife, but ensure clean water for our communities and key economic opportunities for Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, 8 out of 14 of the statewide stocks of concern for king and sockeye salmon are in the Mat-Su; and

WHEREAS, taking a proactive approach to updating Alaska's

DRAFT

laws can help us avoid the long-term costs of restoration and mitigation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly supports laws and permitting requirements that outline a clear standard so that responsible resource development protects our fisheries and enhances our communities and our economies. ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this - day of - , 2018.

VERN HALTER, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)



FACTSHEET

Little Susitna River

Petroleum Hydrocarbon and Turbidity Impairment December 2017

The Little Susitna River is located in southcentral Alaska in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (see Figure 1). The river supports popular king salmon and silver salmon sport fisheries.

Petroleum Hydrocarbon Impairment

Petroleum hydrocarbons above water quality standards have the potential to negatively affect aquatic organisms.

From 2007–2012 and again in 2014, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) sampled water in the lower Little Susitna River during the king salmon (May – June) and silver salmon fisheries (July – September).

- Water sampling was conducted at sampling sites distributed upstream to several miles downstream of the Public Use Facility (PUF) boat launch.
- The water sampling results show petroleum hydrocarbon exceedances, primarily in August, coinciding with greater use of motorized boats.
- Petroleum hydrocarbon concentrations greater than the state-allowed limit were found in 8.5 river miles.
- Surveys of boat use by motor type (carbureted 2-stroke, direct fuel injected 2-stroke, and 4-stroke) and horsepower were conducted at the PUF boat launch. This information was used in evaluating the water sampling results.
- The source of the petroleum hydrocarbons is from motorized boats.

Turbidity Impairment

Turbidity measures the cloudiness of the water and estimates the concentration of particles. While some turbidity occurs naturally, excess turbidity can have numerous adverse effects on aquatic life and other water uses by decreasing the light penetration for plants, decreasing the visibility of prey and predators for fish, and hiding navigation hazards for boats.

From 2007–2011, DEC conducted turbidity water quality sampling in the lower Little Susitna River during the king salmon (May – June) and silver salmon (July – August) fisheries.

Laura Eldred
Nonpoint Source Section
(907) 376-1855
laura.eldred@alaska.gov

DEC's Water Quality
Reports:
<http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wqsar/reports.html>

Alaska Water Quality
Standards, Chapter 70:
<https://dec.alaska.gov/comish/regulations/index.htm>

- Using water sampling equipment that stays in the river for long periods of time, DEC recorded turbidity values every hour during the study and calculated 24-hour average turbidity values.
- Because some amount of turbidity occurs naturally, a baseline turbidity level (called a natural condition) was determined by using a comparable reference site located upstream of motorized boating and other significant human activities. Downstream turbidity values were then compared to the natural condition and with the Alaska water quality standards.
- The baseline turbidity measurement also records natural events that may cause higher turbidity levels, such as heavy rainfall. Higher levels that might be recorded downstream from natural events are able to be compared to the same event occurring upstream.
- Turbidity values greater than the state water quality standards were found in 8.5 river miles.
- Surveys of boat use by motor type and horsepower were conducted at the PUF boat launch. This information was used in evaluating the water sampling results.
- Turbidity levels are higher in the Little Susitna River when motorized boats are present.

Conclusions

- Because fishing regulations to reduce petroleum hydrocarbons in the Little Susitna River went into effect in 2017, DEC is proposing to list the river as threatened for petroleum hydrocarbons until additional data confirms that the regulations are effective.
- Based on the sampling results and analyses, DEC is proposing to include the lower Little Susitna River on the state's list of impaired waterbodies for turbidity.
- The same river miles are affected by both petroleum hydrocarbons and turbidity: 7.5 river miles downstream of the Little Susitna River PUF boat launch to approximately 1 river mile upstream of the PUF boat launch for a total of 8.5 affected river miles.
- Timing of the impairment is during the peak activity of the salmon fisheries and associated high motorized boat use.
 - Petroleum Hydrocarbons — August (silver salmon fishery)
 - Turbidity — late May/June (king salmon fishery), late July/August (silver salmon fishery)

What's Next?

- DEC is seeking public comment on the 2014-2016 Integrated Water Quality and Assessment Report: <http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wqsar/waterbody/integratedreport.htm>.
- DEC is continuing a clean boating education campaign with resources and tools to assist boaters on ways to improve the river's water quality.
- Starting January 1, 2017, the Alaska Board of Fisheries restricted fishing from boats to 4-stroke or direct fuel injected 2-stroke motors only. Reducing the number of carbureted 2-stroke motors is expected to improve water quality.
- DEC is committed to analyzing options to reduce turbidity and will plan to re-sample the water quality to look for improvements.

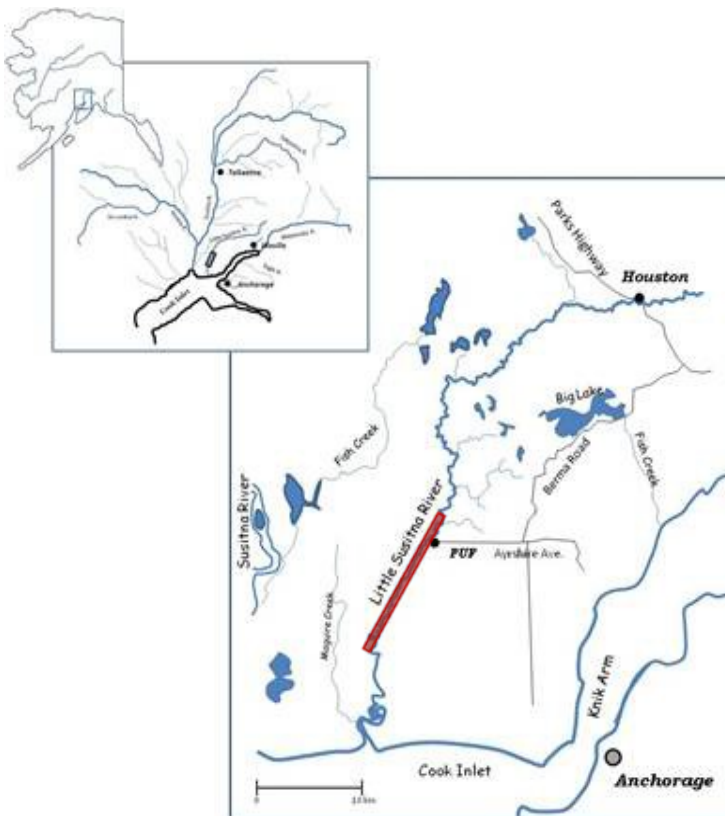


Figure 1. Location of the Little Susitna River in south-central Alaska with a red triangle identifying the area of water quality concern upstream and downstream of the State operated Public Use Facility.

Comments By Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee to DEC's Integrated Report Listing Little Susitna River as impaired for turbidity and hydrocarbons.

Salmon Productivity

It should be noted that the Little Susitna River is one of the most productive salmon streams in the Northern portion of Upper Cook Inlet, supporting runs of all 5 species of Pacific salmon found in Alaska. For decades Little Susitna River has supported one of Alaska's most significant freshwater coho salmon sport fisheries, and a heavily participated in king salmon fishery as well. In addition Little Susitna River chum salmon returns for the past few years have been some of the largest on record (as measured at the Little Susitna River salmon counting weir). Little Susitna River is also known for producing some of the largest-sized coho salmon in the Matanuska - Susitna Borough.

Use and Importance

The Little Susitna River Public Use Facility Boat Launch is likely the second most heavily used river boat launch site in the entire Northern Cook Inlet area (second only to Deshka Landing). As such this site and the surrounding Susitna Flats State Game Refuge support robust sport fisheries and hunting opportunities with substantial economic and social value. Therefore, as much as possible, these established uses and use levels should be maintained.

Accessibility or Lack of It

The Little Susitna River Public Use Facility is the only developed boat launch site in approximately the lower 60 miles of the Little Susitna River, and most sport fishing trips to this river consist of day use. Therefore it would be mostly unfeasible to provide for this established use level and use pattern along 60 miles of river — without the use of powerboats.

Glacial Implications

It should be noted that the Little Susitna River has a glacial component from Mint Glacier at its headwaters, and at times high levels of turbidity are naturally present in the river for up to 10 days or more at a time. This naturally occurring turbidity is present during and directly after the ice breaks up in the spring, as spring run-off swells water levels to new heights, and may occur throughout the summer and fall based on significant rainfall in the headwaters and / or along the lower river. Rising water levels naturally stir up the fine glacial particles along the stream that settle out during periods of lower and slower stream flows.

Water Standards

When considering acceptable turbidity levels for semi-glacial streams and areas under tidal influence which have large swings in naturally occurring turbidity levels, like the Little Susitna River and Kenai River, it may be more appropriate that acceptable turbidity levels be based on the 25 NTU standard used for saltwater, rather than the 10 NTU level used for clear-running freshwater streams. The naturally occurring turbidity of these two semi-glacial streams and their tidal areas may already swing above the 10 NTU standard and can stay that way for days at a time.

Concerning the assessment in the report that water above the 10 NTU standard may support less aquatic life or may be less productive for fish production: consider and reconsider that even with present turbidity levels the Kenai River is the very most productive salmon stream in all of Upper Cook Inlet Area, while the Little Susitna River is one of the very most productive salmon streams (of its size) and particularly in terms of coho and chum salmon production in the Northern portion of Upper Cook Inlet.

It should be noted that Little Susitna River salmon, as outgoing smolt, migrate and rear in intertidal portions of the river and continue on into Northern Cook Inlet where turbidity is even worse than the portion of Little Susitna River DEC has listed as impaired for turbidity. On their return migration to their upstream spawning areas the adult salmon of all species must migrate through these same waters where turbidity is considerably worse than in the area listed as impaired. Therefore it should be recognized that Little Susitna River salmon have already developed the ability to, not only survive, but thrive through such turbid water conditions.

Location of Impairment Area and Impact in the Little Susitna River

It needs to be noted that the area on Little Susitna River DEC has listed as impaired for turbidity is primarily an area that the salmon migrate through on the journey to upstream spawning locations. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game only measures salmon spawning escapements levels upstream of the area considered for impairment. ADF&G considers the primary spawning areas for both coho and king salmon to be upstream of the Parks Highway, nearly 40 miles upstream of the area considered for impairment. Impairment from powerboat use also has only been documented to occur in late May, June, late July and August, and in an area downstream of where most adult salmon spawn, and also downstream of miles of water where fingerling salmon rear.

Measurement Areas

It should be noted on the Little Susitna River and Kenai River that at least a portion of the areas listed for turbidity impairment on both rivers are significantly different than the upstream areas they were compared to. The control area on the Little Susitna River is about 30 miles upstream with much faster stream flows and more of a larger rock/ cobble bottom than a portion of the area listed as impaired. Specifically the area of the Little Susitna River from the natural gas pipeline crossing and downstream can be characterized as considerably slower stream flow with primarily mud or fine particle river bottom compared to the faster stream flow and cobble bottom at the far upstream control location. This difference in stream flow / bottom characteristics may partially account for different turbidity levels. On the Kenai River a similar pattern exists where most, if not all, of the area listed as impaired is significantly different compared to the upstream control area. As mentioned earlier intertidal areas (and especially on semi-glacial streams) may be more appropriately considered for turbidity impairment using the 25 NTU standard. The intertidal area, with its natural daily occurring changes in stream flow rates, serves to both settle out fine particle and then stir them up at other times during the tidal cycle.

Hydrocarbon Impairment —

It is interesting to see in the integrated report that DEC lists a portion of the Little Susitna River for hydrocarbon impairment, but also mentions a new fishing regulation / plan that may have

dealt with the impairment. DEC, however, makes the assumption that this portion of the river remains impaired for hydrocarbons. Before any additional regulations are formulated to further reduce hydrocarbon levels, the formerly impaired area should be sampled, once again, to determine if any, and if so, how much hydrocarbon impairment still exists.

Commercial Hydrocarbon and Motor Size Considerations

All commercial operators launching from Little Susitna River Public Use Facility are currently required to purchase a permit from Alaska State Parks before starting commercial activities. Permit stipulations require listing of motor size and type. If all commercial operators are currently using clean-burning motors with horsepower under a specific size, then now may be the appropriate time to establish those levels as a cap. This would not eliminate any current use pattern or users, but would help control turbidity and hydrocarbon impairments by keeping the current commercial use practices from escalating.

Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee
Herb Mansavage, Chair
teamshadowridge@gmail.com
907-841- 8921

**These comments were approved at our January 24, 2018 meeting with no objection by all 10 members present.

Please keep the Advisory Committee notified and in the process as this issue moves forward.

Comments Submitted by Andy Couch, Acting Secretary

February								March								April								May										
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
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4	5 6:00pm PC Mtg.	6 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	7	8	9	10		4	5 6:00pm PC Mtg.	6 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	7	8	9	10		8	9	10	11	12	13	14		6	7 6:00pm PC Mtg.	8	9	10	11	12				
														BOF Statewide Dungeness Crab, Shrimp, & Msc. Shellfish Meeting - Anchorage							NPFMC - Anchorage													
11	12	13	14	15 3:00pm FWC Mtg.	16	17		11	12	13 6:00pm Joint ASB Mtg. with School Board	14	15 3:00pm FWC Mtg.	16	17		15	16 6:00pm PC Mtg.	17 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	18	19 3:00pm FWC Mtg.	20	21		13	14	15 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	16	17 6:00pm FWC Mtg.	18	19				
18	19 MSB Holiday	20 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	21	22	23 BOF Deadline	24		18	19 6:00pm PC Mtg.	20 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	21	22	23	24		22	23	24	25	26	27	28		20	21 6:00pm PC Mtg.	22	23	24	25	26				
25	26	27	28					25	26 MSB Holiday	27 6:00pm Joint ASB Mtg. with PC	28	29	30	31		29	30							27	28 MSB Holiday	29	30	31						

June								July								August								September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	6	7	8	9		8	9	10	11	12	13	14		5	6	7 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	8	9	10	11		2	3 MSB Holiday	4 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	5	6	7	8
10	11	12	13	14	15	16		15	16	17	18	19	20	21		12	13	14	15	16 6:00pm FWC Mtg.	17	18		9	10	11 6:00pm Joint ASB Mtg. with School Board	12	13	14	15
17	18	19 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	20	21	22	23		22	23	24	25	26	27	28		19	20	21 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	22	23	24	25		16	17	18 6:00pm ASB Mtg.	19	20 6:00pm FWC Mtg.	21	22
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[illegible]



Matanuska-Susitna Borough
FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

February 15, 2018

Assembly Members
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E. Dahlia Avenue
Palmer, Alaska 99645

RE: FY2019 Budget request for Fish and Wildlife Commission

Dear Assembly members:

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) is a nine-member, all-volunteer commission appointed by the Borough Mayor and Assembly to advise on fisheries and wildlife issues and advocate on behalf of Borough priorities to the Board of Fish and the Board of Game. In the past, the FWC has been requested to provide information to legislative committees in Juneau, attend fisheries meetings in Kenai, and participate in the Board of Fish and Board of Game meetings in the region. These meetings have required expenditures by the Borough for travel expenses including mileage, plane fare, lodging, and meals.

The Planning Department provides valuable staff support to the commission and has covered commission expenses in the past including research contracts, publication costs and travel expenses.

We respectfully request allocation of funding for the commission in the FY2019 budget (\$10,000) so we can continue to work on behalf of the citizens of the Mat-Su to protect fish and wildlife resources and habitat for the benefit of our community and maximum utilization by all user groups.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Terry Nininger, Chair

cc: Mayor Vern Halter
Borough Manager John Moosey
Planning Director Eileen Probasco