





## MSB FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

### January 16, 2020 – Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; ESTABLISH QUORUM

Meeting was called to order at 4:08 PM

Present: Mike Wood, Andy Couch, Howard Delo, Larry Engel, Dan Mayfield, Tam Boeve, Amber Allen.

Absent: Robert Chlupach, Bruce Knowles (excused).

**Quorum established.**

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION:** Larry Engel moved to approve the Agenda; Andy Couch seconded.

**Discussion:** No Discussion

**Motion approved unanimously.**

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 19, 2019

**MOTION:** Andy Couch moved to approve the Minutes; Howard Delo seconded.

**Discussion:** **Andy Couch had changes on pages 2, 3, and 5**

Omit Andy Couch's comment at the end of page 2;

Substitute the word "guides" in place of "they" in Doug Vincent-Lang's second comment;

Change the wording of Howard Delo's comment (1<sup>st</sup> comment) from "We are proposing a number" to "There are a number...";

Add "Point" before "E" and correct word "wikd" to say "You would" in the 4<sup>th</sup> David Vincent-Lang's comment;

David Vincent-Lang's 1<sup>st</sup> comment is not complete [Relistened to Audio: insert "test net" before the word "data"; after the word "data" delete "from the" and insert in its place "to a certain extent."

Correct Mike Wood's comment at the end of the page by changing "weir" to "wheel".

**Motion approved as corrected unanimously.**

IV. AUDIENCE INTRODUCTIONS & PARTICIPATION (3 min./person, chair's discretion)

Stephanie Nowers - Assembly

Bill Stoltz

On the Phone:

Mac Minard

Rick Green, ADF&G

Meagan Krupa - presenter

V. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

a. Staff report

Ted Eischeid provided updates on Letter from Mr. Moosey to BOF regarding Kodiak Finfish BOF meeting; Wetland Ordinance update; BOF process overview; and procedures for electing Chair/Vice-Chair.

b. Presentation/Dialogue: Meagan Krupa

Meagan Krupa provided a presentation on Krupa et al published paper: Public Process and the BOF.

**Discussion:**

Dan Mayfield asked where the paper was sent?

Meagan Krupa stated that it has been sent to some people in sportfish but mostly it has been by word of mouth. If you have any suggestions of who would like to read this paper, she is open for suggestions.

Mike Wood: does the resource benefit from this process or not?

Meagan Krupa:

Howard Delo: The process is night and day different – are you talking about outcome? How would you suggest the board handle differently from Bethel and Cook Inlet.

Meagan Krupa: Most of the proposals in the arctic come from AC's. In the arctic it is a smaller group; in CI you have high complex; CI has a lot of individual proposals and they are failing.

HD: You just itemized the differences but how can the board eliminate the redundancies. Do you have any literal changes or are you looking at people need to get their act together a little better.

MK: Suggestion: If you are going to submit the same proposal – you need to document that something has changed. A little bit more consideration – working with the ACs and utilizing them better.

AC: Definition of winning. There are a lot of proposals that are somewhat similar; the BOF make take up one proposal and then adopt concepts from another; Is the proposal taken up by the board the winner or loser?

MK: It is something that is very difficult to track. The definition of winning – it is very difficult for me to define this. I have spoken with many people regarding the BOF process and no one could give a definitive process.

Mac Minard: Am I to understand the success and failure was for a span of time between 1960 and 2016?

MK: Yes.

AC: A lot of the AC members would say “The Board never hears what we say”; are you talking about the submittal process?

Meagan Krupa: All of the groups are successful – Upper Cook Inlet AC falls last across the board. The entire process is not something we measured but it deserves a review.

Mac Minard: I do not know where you account for the cultural norms. The decision making model is different – it may not be geography but cultural norms. What are your thoughts on that?

Meagan Krupa: Yes.

Mike Wood: Where would you lump UCIDA, KRSA, etc.?

Meagan Krupa: I think they rank, out of the five public categories, they ranked 4<sup>th</sup>.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Elect chair and vice chair for 2020.

**MOTION: Howard Delo moved to nominate Mike Wood for Chair; No other nominations.**

**Motion approved unanimously that Mike Wood hold the position as Chair of MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission for the upcoming term.**

**MOTION: Larry Engel moved to nominate Howard Delo for Vice-Chair; No other nominations.**

**Motion approved unanimously that Howard Delo hold the position as Vice-Chair of MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission for the upcoming term.**

2. BOF Proposals to Support/Oppose

**MOTION: Andy Couch made a motion to support all the MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission Committee: BOF Proposals highlighted with “green” in the handout of their committee work that showed a unanimous committee vote to support that proposal; Howard Delo seconded.**

**Discussion:** Discussion ensued to the process the MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission should take on the BOF Proposals to support/oppose.

**Motion to amend: Amber Allen made a motion to amend Proposal 215; Andy Couch seconded.**

**Discussion:** Discussion ensued to determine the benefit to amend Proposal 215 to include the comment attached to it, “barbless hooks should be consideration a conservation option”; Andy Couch seconded.

HD: will have to RC this into the management plan.

AC: can't support the amendment, to avoid jumbling it up.

MW: No problem submitting this as a RC, as a selection the FWC proposal committee;

**Amber Allen withdrew her amendment.**

Discussion ensued on the main motion.

**AC: Amendment by adding a comment that much information was left out of proposal 205/ HD seconded.**

**Amendment Approved unanimously**

---

**Main Motion as amended passed Unanimously.**

**AC: Moved we support 195 / HD seconded.**

AC spoke to his motion; ADFG wanted to know where FWC falls on this issue, so this does that.

HD: This concept has been around, how do we get a smooth closure – the 1% rule was designed to address this. He supports 195.

AC: 195 is specifically for the set net fishery;; it could force drifters to move if the set net fishery shut down.

MM: This is the set net proposal and we want to consider to look hard at this, going to 2% and going to July 31 rather than Aug. 7. The August date is pretty important. If you want an effective trigger it needs to be 2%.

MW: To MM, what's the importance of us taking a position on this? Some would say this messes up their set net fishery. Won't this shut down east side set netters for a few fish for us?

AC: the only value I see in the set net % is it could move the drift fleet; maybe could affect some coho.

HD: might want to support 194 and 195, that we support the concept of changing the dates.

**AC: withdraw motion – Motion pulled.**

**AC: Approve support for green divided proposals, 234-238; HD second.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

[stike comment at end, "51 hours for 234}

**Andy Couch: Support the proposals with divided majority opposition (yellow/red)/ Second HD**

**Withdrawn by AC without objection;**

**Dan Mayfield: MOTION to support remaining recommendations to opposed items of the committee and submit as a RC/ Andy Couch second.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

3. BOF Booklet Update

**Howard Delo made a motion to approve the booklet with minor corrections to get to printer; Dan Mayfield seconded**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

4. MSB Wetland Legislation/Mitigation Update

Update briefly discussed

5. Final preparation discussion for BOF UCI Finfish Meeting in ANC Feb. 7-19

Discussion ensued on how the MSB FWC will work with KRSA.

VII. MEMBER COMMENTS

DM:

Ted: talked about the importance of telling a story.

Howard Delo: When on BOF an Alaskan native testifier shared a poem, and it had a big impact.

When final booklet is done I can autograph p. 8. For BOF meetings we need to know everyone's cell phone number.

Larry Engel: Agrees with putting the personal message in, and the new booklet reflects the personal message strategy; would like us to use this booklet in a variety of venues, like to legislators, CoC, ACs, --- considering doing in house printing.

Andy Couch: BOF is looking better now for us than he has ever seen in a long time; like the Kodiak decision to pass fish to UCI; the minutes that DVL where he asked for our opinions on certain issues; many BOF members are good... New process where you can sign up to testify on certain days rather than “pot luck” process from the past.

Mike Wood: Thank you for voting me as chair for another year; very excited to be here now, and several things have aligned in our favor, especially good BOF members; our FWC has done a good job basing decisions of science and not politics; our word has finally gotten out because we have stuck to our storyline; and a lot of people are working better together now to get fish up here; the booklet is a great tool that I intend to share it; Su-Hydro still a threat down the road; appreciates the FWC.

Tam Boeve: Presenting to several CCs, and the BOF message really resonated with a lot of people; would like copies of booklets.

KR:

VIII. NEXT REGULAR MEETING – February 27, 2020 – AGENDA AND PRESENTATION IDEAS

- 1. BOF Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting review.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

**Meeting adjourned at 6:48PM.**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ted Eischeid, Planner II Staff

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated



# MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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

### Staff Report – FWC – 27 February 2020

1. My reflections on the BOF experience and looking forward
2. Packet Review: Business item – Assembly presentation
3. Packet Review: BOF Gratitude Resolution
4. Packet Review: Business item – BOF thank you letters
5. Packet Review: Business item – Moose Range habitat resolution
6. Update: Governor's Conservationist of the Year Award will be announced at the 29 February SCI Banquet in Anchorage.
7. Feedback request: How much detail to minutes?

*Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community*

*Ted Eischeid, Planner II*

*Supporting Environmental Planning and the MSB Fish & Wildlife Commission.*

*[Ted.eischeid@matsugov.us](mailto:Ted.eischeid@matsugov.us) Ph. 907.861-8606, Cell 795-6281*



**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. FWC20-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION EXPRESSING ITS GRATITUDE TO THE MANY PARTIES INVOLVED IN HELPING THE COMMISSION WITH ITS EFFORTS AT THE 2020 STATE BOARD OF FISHERIES UPPER COOK INLET.

---

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

WHEREAS, the Fish and Wildlife Commission has been effective in representing these interests to political leaders, government regulators, and boards of fish and game; and

WHEREAS, a key component in the Commission's advocacy has been seeking partnerships with allies who support scientific fisheries management; and

WHEREAS, this work has been buttressed by research that the Fish and Wildlife Commission has directed using a state funds grant; and

WHEREAS, the Commission embarked on a mission at the state Board of Fish Upper Cook Inlet finfish cycle to advance proposals representing the interests of the borough's citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Commission was very successful in getting the Board of Fisheries to pass proposals that will result in more salmon in Matanuska-Susitna Borough water bodies; and

WHEREAS, these successful efforts will have a direct positive impact on the Borough's economy and support the high quality of life for Borough residents; and

WHEREAS, it took working with many partners to achieve these successful outcomes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission expresses its gratitude to these entities for their assistance in the 2020 Board of Fisheries Upper Cook Inlet finfish work:

- a. Matanuska-Susitna Borough staff from the Planning Department, Public Affairs Department, Information Technology Department, and Manager's office;
- b. Matanuska-Susitna state legislative delegation
- c. The Governor's office and staff
- d. The Matanuska-Susitna Assembly
- e. Individuals who testified on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Commission
- f. Mac Minard, Northwestern Resource Consultants
- g. Kenai River Sportfishing Association
- h. Northern District Set Netters Association of Cook Inlet
- i. Alaska Department of Fish & Game

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission  
this 27th day of February, 2020.

---

MIKE WOOD, Chair

ATTEST:

---

TED EISCHEID, Staff

(SEAL)



**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. FWC20-02**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION IN SUPPORT OF WASILLA CREEK HABITAT RESTORATION AND WASILLA CREEK HEADWATERS TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MATANUSKA VALLEY MOOSE RANGE.

---

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

WHEREAS, salmonid fish populations using Matanuska-Susitna Borough rivers and streams have seriously declined over the past 30 years; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough contains 8 of the 16 salmon stocks of concern as of April 2019 for the state of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission has made positive strides in directing funds to local fisheries research, habitat restoration, and fish passage projects while encouraging stakeholder groups to prioritize fishery needs in Upper Cook Inlet and its critical watersheds; and

WHEREAS, the MSB was a founding member of the Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership, organized in 2005 and recognized by the National Fish Habitat Partnership as one of 19 fish habitat partnerships in the country, and continues to have a representative

on the Steering Committee. Since 2006, the Partnership has awarded nearly \$2 million for more than 70 science, conservation and restoration projects to improve fish habitat in the Mat-Su; and

WHEREAS, the MSB has worked with a variety of partners to improve fish passage by replacing culverts that block fish passage. As of 2013, 110 culverts have been replaced with funds totaling roughly \$8 million from federal, state and local sources. In 2013, the Assembly unanimously approved an ordinance (OR 13-083) to require all new culverts installed along anadromous streams to be designed and constructed to allow for fish passage; and

WHEREAS, Fish passages culverts have been installed on roadways crossing Wasilla Creek by the Mat-Su Borough and the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities at a significant cost of several million dollars, in order to enable salmon to reach the Wasilla Creek headwaters in the Moose Range. The headwaters of Wasilla Creek are home to many species of salmon, and vital to their life cycle as the location for spawning, rearing and development for the first years of the salmon's life before it migrates downstream to the ocean; and

WHEREAS, the Commission continues to support robust opportunities for sport, subsistence, and personal use fisheries in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and recognizes the importance of restoring historic health to threatened fisheries and the associated wetlands that remain critical for supporting salmon

populations; and

WHEREAS, this project will restore habitat damaged by overuse of recreational vehicles in wetlands, and redirect recreational trails away from wetlands, and educate the public on wetland values for fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, over the past decade the motorized activities involving off-road vehicles and all-terrain vehicles, has caused significant damage to Wasilla Creek headwaters, its small tributaries and the adjacent wetlands and making the streams inaccessible or impassible to some salmon, which results in the premature and unnatural death; and

WHEREAS, redirection of the trails away from the wetlands and streams, as required by the Moose Range Management Plan, along with new approved stream trail crossings will allow for streambank restoration and allow the wetlands to revegetate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission supports the Wasilla Creek habitat restoration and Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trail improvements in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range to both protect and enhance the salmonid populations in the Wasilla Creek Headwaters.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Fish and Wildlife Commission this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

—  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MIKE WOOD, Chair

ATTEST:

—  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TED EISCHEID, Staff

(SEAL)

# Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trail

Matanuska Valley Moose Range

Project Management Plan

January 2020



Capital Projects Department



## Stakeholders:

Stakeholder	Interest	Communication
Community Development Department	Local Government, Bond Project Originator, Adjacent Land Manager	Internal comm. Channels – formal reviews with interdepartmental routing
Mat-Su Borough Fish Commission	Fish Habitat	Formal reviews with board of commissioners
Alaska Department of Natural Resources	Land Co-Manager	e-mails and memoranda via PM and DHs
Alaska Department of Fish & Game	Land Co-Manager, Fish Habitat Regulator	e-mails and memoranda via PM and DHs
U. S Fish & Wildlife Service	Grantor for Restoration	e-mails and memoranda via PM and DHs, grant agreement
Fishhook Community	Local Interest, Users	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
Soapstone-Buffalo Mine Community	Local Interest, Users	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
South Colony Road Service Area #16	Wendt Road Maintenance	Internal Communications with Board and Local Representatives
Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation	User Group, Potential Funding	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
Mat-Su Trails Council, Inc.	User Group	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
Mat-Su Valley ATV Club	User Group	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
Mat-Su Salmon Partnership	Local Interest, Fish Habitat	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
Hunting Community	User Group	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers	User Group	Public Outreach – mailers, ads
Mat-Su Ski Club	User Group	Public Outreach – mailers, ads

Maintenance Responsibilities to be determined.

## Scope:

The Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trail Improvements project is one of the nine (9) trails to be reconstructed, improved and/ or relocated as part of the 2016 Recreational Bond package approved by Mat-Su Borough voters. The Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trails are in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range north of Palmer, Alaska. Wasilla Creek is an anadromous stream with significant numbers of salmon in various stages of their life cycle. The Moose Range is on State land co-managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) in accordance with the Management Plan adopted by DNR and ADF&G in 1986. Coordination and cooperation with DNR, ADF&G and other agencies will be essential to project success. Potential cost sharing and grant opportunities may allow for expansion of the scope of work.

The scope of the work as envisioned by the Borough includes the following:

- Replacement of five (5) existing trail bridges used by off-road vehicles, which cross Wasilla Creek and several of its tributaries. One new bridges and three (3) stream fords will be constructed to facilitate

size and loading for ATVs, side-by-sides (SBS) and snowmachines. Existing bridges at bridge sites #4 and #5 will remain in place for non-motorized use. See overview map for stream crossing locations.

- Relocation of the summer trail that crosses through the wetlands, which is currently violating the rules of the Moose Range Plan in the vicinity of stream crossings #1 and #2. Removal of bridges #1 and #2 completely and restoration of damaged streambanks and wetlands.
- Improving multi-use motorized trails in degraded areas by hardening or rerouting\*
- Install new signage for route finding\*
- Deterrence of trail traffic away from wetlands
- Trailhead kiosk and signage

\*Depends on availability of additional funds through other grants and volunteer organization.

## **Schedule and Work Breakdown Structure:**

The project schedule for construction will depend on the level of cooperation from the State of Alaska, the permitting and public processes and the availability of additional grant funds (AKSSF, Pittman-Roberts). More information will become available following the execution of a memorandum of understanding with the State.

A tentative schedule assuming existing \$270,000 funding follows:

- 🕒 Winter 2019 – Project kick-off with MSB, ADF&G, DNR, USFWS
- 🕒 Execute Memorandum of Understanding with DNR
- 🕒 Winter 2020 - Public Involvement – Open House at Gov't Peak Recreation Area
- 🕒 Spring 2020 –Complete design of proposed improvements
- 🕒 Summer – Advertise for bids, and award construction contract
- 🕒 Fall 2020 to Summer 2021– Construction

## **Cost:**

Budget: \$150,000 from MSB rec bonds directed to bridges and trail improvements.

\$120,000 from NFHAP Grant (\$30,000) and MSB match for streambank restoration and bridges

\$10k grant for public involvement received from MSTPF used to partially fund consultant contract. Other potential grant funds from ADF&G and the AKSSF. No ROW is anticipated for this project, however, a land use permit from DNR will be required.

## **Project Team:**

### MAT-SU BOROUGH

- 🕒 Mike Campfield, P.E., Environmental Engineer, Project Manager (907) 861-7719
- 🕒 Cindy Corey, Administrative Assistant (907) 861-7725
- 🕒 Marie Hulse, Corvus Design, Public Involvement Lead (Consultant) (907) 222-2859

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Franklin Dekker, USFWS (907) 271-3764

STATE OF ALASKA

- Clark Cox, Regional Manager, DNR – MLW (907) 269-7470
- Cliff Larson, DNR – MLW (907) 269-8508
- Gino DelFrate, ADF&G
- Todd Rinaldi, ADF&G, Wildlife Biologist, ADF&G (907) 861-2105
- Jonathan Kirsch, Habitat Biologist, ADF&G (907) 861-3203
- Sam Ivey, Sports Fishing, ADF&G

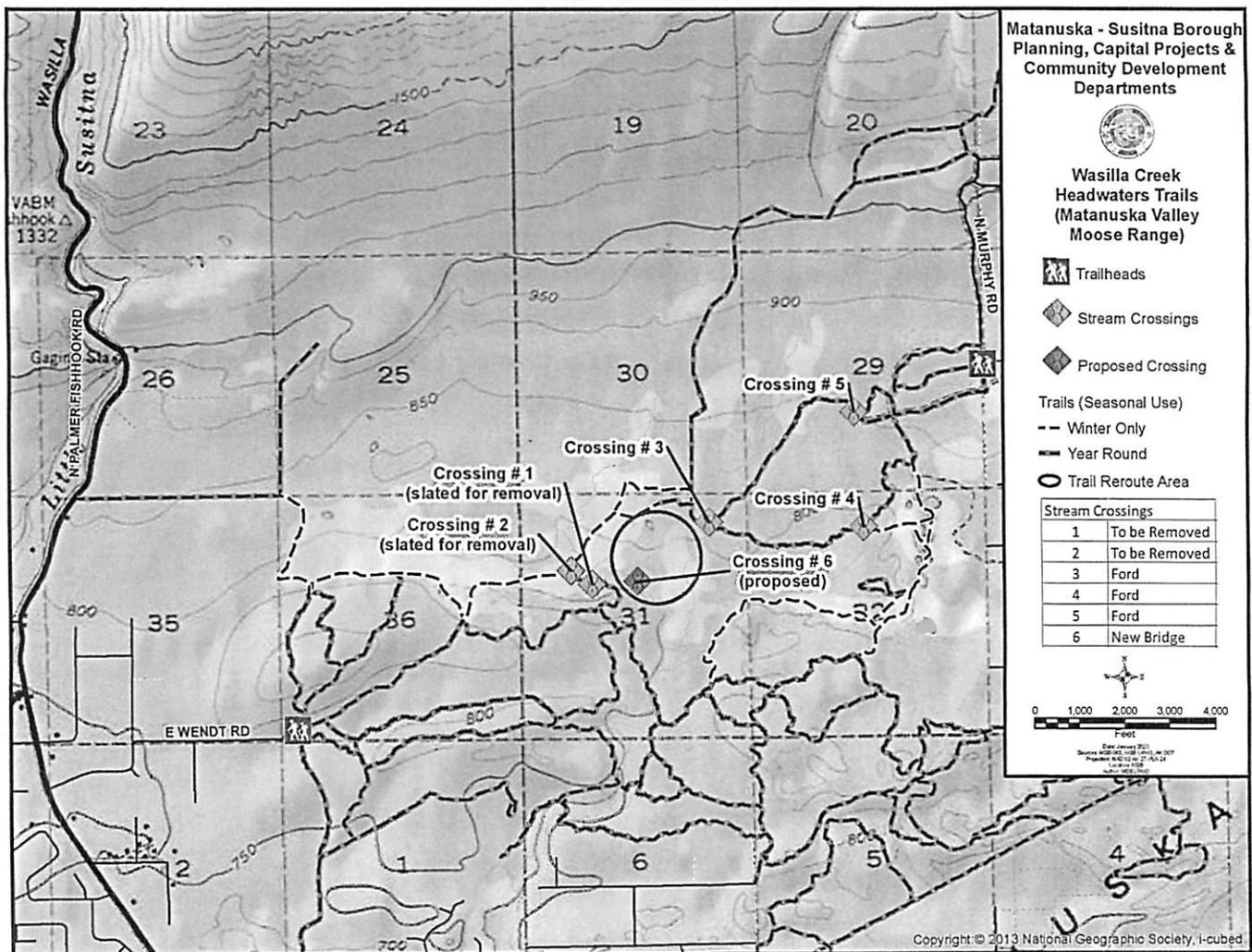


Figure 1 – Project Overview Map



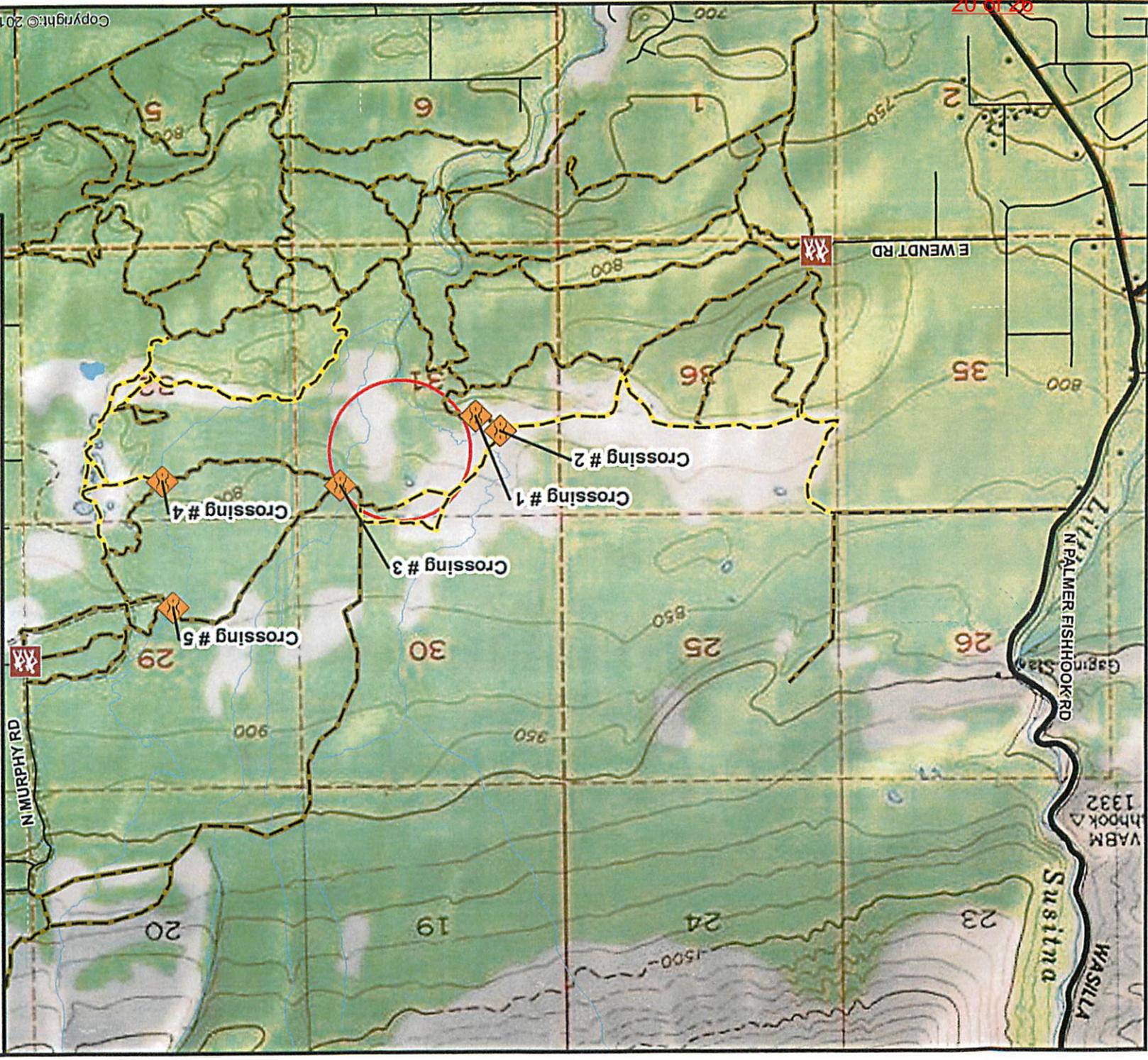
Wasilla Creek  
 Headwaters Trails  
 (Matanuska Valley  
 Moose Range)

- Trailheads
- Stream Crossings
- Trails (Seasonal Use)
- Winter Only
- Year Round
- Trail Reroute Area

Stream Crossings	
1	New Bridge
2	TBD
3	Ford
4	Ford
5	Ford



Date: January 2010  
 Source: GIS, MNR, AK DOT  
 Geographic Data: AK PL 21  
 License: MNR  
 Public: MNR LIND





**Memorandum of Understanding Between  
The State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources,  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
and The Matanuska-Susitna Borough**

## **OBJECTIVES**

The primary objectives of this agreement are to coordinate the management of the lands within the Matanuska Valley Moose Range as outlined in the management plan, to restore degraded riparian and wetland habitat for the benefit of salmon, and to encourage and develop appropriate recreational access through sensitive fish and wildlife habitat areas.

- 1) To coordinate land management activities for the benefit of fish and wildlife habitat
- 2) To leverage Federal, Local and Private habitat restoration and recreation funding
- 3) To prevent future access closures in the Moose Range due to habitat degradation from off-road vehicle (ORV) use

## **Background**

### **Salmon Habitat**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) has taken significant actions over the years to protect fisheries and fish habitat throughout the Borough. In 2007, the Assembly created the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Sportsman's Committee, which was later renamed the MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission. This commission has successfully advocated for increased resources for the Mat-Su to improve fisheries management in Upper Cook Inlet over the past several years.

The MSB was a founding member of the Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership, organized in 2005 and recognized by the National Fish Habitat Partnership as one of 19 fish habitat partnerships in the country and continues to have a representative on the Steering Committee. Since 2006, the Partnership has awarded nearly \$2 million for more than 70 science, conservation and restoration projects to improve fish habitat in the Mat-Su.

MSB has worked with a variety of partners to improve fish passage by replacing culverts that block fish passage. As of 2013, 110 culverts have been replaced with funds totaling roughly \$8 million from federal, state and local sources. In 2013, the Assembly unanimously approved an ordinance (OR 13-083) to require all new culverts installed along anadromous streams to be designed and constructed to allow for fish passage.

In 2013, MSB requested capital funding from the State of Alaska and was awarded a \$2.5 million grant for fisheries protection. This grant funding was used to replace culverts that are barriers to fish and to conduct fisheries research to improve fishery management in Upper Cook Inlet.

Clearly, the MSB believes salmon are a highly valued resource in the Mat-Su and the MSB is working hard to do its part to protect and restore their habitat.

### **Trails and Recreation**

Trails and recreation are highly valued by Mat-Su residents. The MSB understands that recreation is part of the culture in Mat-Su. The MSB Land Management Department is committed to ensuring that as the population grows, recreational assets also grow to meet the needs of the diverse community. The MSB manages more than 50,000 acres of land open for recreation and maintains over 800 miles of multi-use summer and winter trails.

In 2016, the MSB updated the Recreational Trails Plan with the primary goal *to work cooperatively with community councils, cities, the State of Alaska, businesses, property owners, and trail advocacy groups to provide a system of trails throughout the Borough to enable the public to engage in outdoor recreation activities and to ensure future preservation of trails.*

Dog mushing, snow machining, ATV riding, hiking, biking, skiing, trail running, bird watching and dog walking, hunting, fishing and more are activities enjoyed by Mat-Su residents on the more than 15,400,000 acres of public land in the MSB.

The value for recreation was expressed by residents in financial terms in 2016 when Mat-Su voters passed the largest recreation bond in state history. The \$22 million recreation bond initiative included upgrading, restoring, and/or creating 9 new trail systems and remodeling a number of public recreational facilities. The western Moose Range, Wasilla Creek Headwaters project was listed as one of the 9 trails systems identified for funding.

The western Moose Range was nominated for funding because MSB recognizes with population growth in the Fishhook area, the Moose Range trails were becoming more and more popular and as such there was an increasing need to manage better and to enhance appropriate access to prevent habitat degradation. Though the MSB does not own land in the Moose Range, the MSB recognizes the area is a valuable community asset worthy of care.

The Mat-Su Borough residents' two loves, salmon and trails, converge in our proposed Matanuska Moose Range Wasilla Creek Trail and Stream Crossing Improvement project.

### **Matanuska Moose Range Management Overview**

The Moose Range is on State land and is co-managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) in accordance with the Management Plan adopted by DNR and ADF&G in 1986.

The MSB is interested in assisting DNR and ADF&G in the management efforts to ensure this valuable community asset remains open for recreation and continues to provide high-quality habitat for fish and wildlife.

Recognizing the need for increased management of the Moose Range as population increases, ADNR stated in the Moose Range Management Plan- *Public use is expected to increase within the Moose Range as the human population increases and access to adjoining private lands is restricted. Whether the use is by hunters, trappers, wildlife viewers, firewood cutters, persons fishing, snowmachiners, and/or hikers, there will be times when certain uses will need to be restricted to protect sensitive habitats for fish and wildlife resources. Within the Moose Range, such habitat includes: moose winter range, moose breeding areas, Dall sheep lambing areas, riparian lake and stream habitats, stream banks and waterfowl nesting areas.*

The Plan also states that: *The recreational needs of local communities should, in part, be provided for by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The Department of Natural Resources will work with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to ensure that the demand for recreational opportunities is met on either state, borough or other land where appropriate.*

Following the guidelines in the Moose Range Management Plan, in an effort to be responsive to the community needs for additional multi-use recreational lands in the Mat-Su and a commitment to protect and restore important salmon habitat the MSB is proposing the Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trail Improvements project.

#### **Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trail Improvements project**

The Wasilla Creek Headwaters Trails are in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range north of Palmer, Alaska. This area has historically been used for multi-use recreation and hunting by the local community of Fishhook and Buffalo Mine/Soapstone. As the population has increased in these three communities, so have the number of people enjoying this area for recreation. With this additional usage, wetland and riparian habitat has been degraded and trails have spread out across the landscape, especially in wetland areas.



Photo: summer 2019 Moose Range trails in the wetland complex of Wasilla Creek Headwaters.

In an attempt to protect community recreational access in the Moose Range and restore habitat, the MSB proposes to relocate a portion of the main trail that leads to the Wasilla Creek Wetlands Complex, to create 5 appropriate stream crossings at key trail / creek channel locations, and to restore damaged riparian buffer vegetation along Wasilla Creek and the surrounding wetlands. This effort will support trail users desire to utilize the trails and to move throughout the Moose Range Trail system while protecting the sensitive salmon habitat near the popular trails.

### Scope of Work

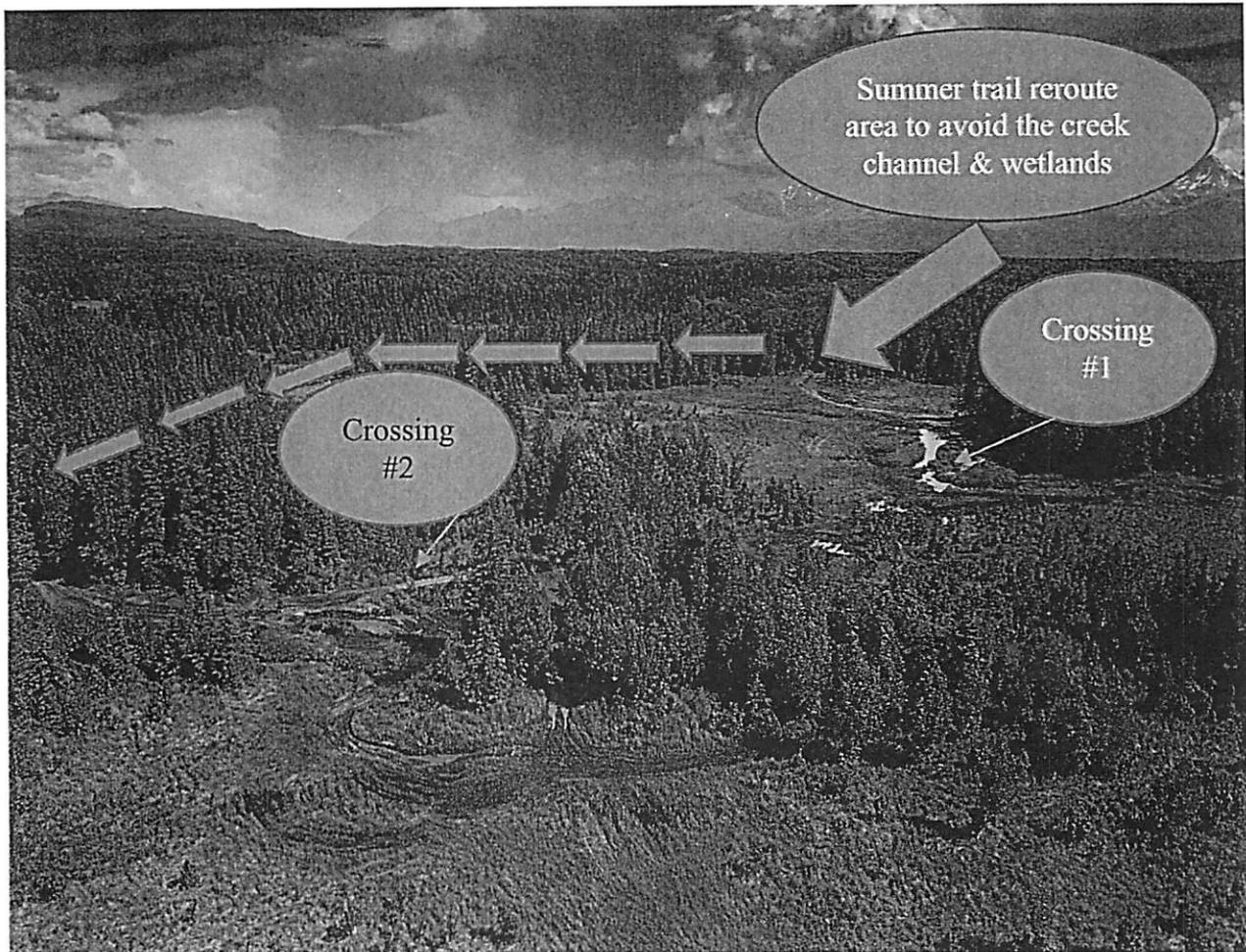
After discussing limitations and constraints with agency stakeholders from ADF&G, DNR, and USFWS we are currently proposing installing low-water crossings (aka fords) at crossings 3, 4, and 5, and a trail reroute and a single new bridge to address crossings 1 and 2. (please see the attached map)

Low water crossings would provide a harder substrate for vehicle travel, easier vehicle entrance and egress that minimizes bank erosion and a stable channel shape for stream function. A new bridge is proposed along the Crossing 1 & 2 reroute due to erodible soils in that area.

Streambank restoration would occur at crossings 3, 4, and 5 following low water crossing construction. Streambank, stream channel and wetland restoration at crossings 1 and 2 would occur in subsequent years after trail user habits shift to using the new reroute.

### Funding

MSB Bond Project Funds	\$150,000 from 2016 Recreation Bonds
USFWS Funds	\$120,00 from NFHAP grant (USFWS) and MSB match
MSTPF Funds	\$10,000 from Mat-Su Trails and Parks for Public Involvement



**Crossing 1 & 2**

- Summer Trail Reroute to minimize wetlands (winter trails will be open in winter)
- New bridge crossing
- Streambank, channel and wetland restoration with bioengineering in subsequent years

**Crossing 3**

- Install low water crossing
- Restore streambank and channel with bioengineering

**Crossing 4**

- Install low water crossing
- Restore streambank with bioengineering

**Crossing 5**

- Install low water crossing
- Restore streambank with bioengineering

**Additional scope of the work items for the future:**

- Improving multi-use motorized trails in degraded areas by hardening or rerouting.
- Install new signage for route finding

- Trailhead area improvements, including kiosks and restrooms.
- Parking improvements at Wendt Road