



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Fish Habitat Partnership at work in Alaska

Local efforts protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish habitat in the last frontier

A way of life...

Alaska's fish feed our forests, wildlife, and people. Commercial and recreational fisheries are worth billions of dollars annually to the State's economy and produce 80% of the world's supply of wild sockeye, Chinook, and coho salmon. Resilient fish populations—and the habitats they depend on—are critical to the continued vitality of Alaska's economy and a unique way of life valued by many.

...worth protecting

Alaska is currently the only state without any fish listed on the Endangered Species Act; however, localized declines are occurring and populations are vulnerable to the same stressors that have caused declines in other regions. Partnerships that strategically protect Alaska's intact habitats and restore degraded habitats can help make the most of limited resources.

Recognized partnerships operating in Alaska

1. Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership
2. Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership
3. Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership
4. Western Native Trout Initiative



Candidate Partnerships in (or of relevance) to Alaska:

5. Salmon in the City (Anchorage, Alaska)
6. Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership
7. North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership
8. Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership



The need for active partnerships

Active and diverse partnerships are essential to achieving fish habitat conservation, due to Alaska's remoteness and other challenging project logistics.



Awards

The U.S. Department of the Interior honored the Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership with its Partners in Conservation Award ♦ The Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded "Outreach and Educational Achievement in Support of Fish Habitat Conservation" for its work associated with the Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership



"Reds heading to redds" in southwest Alaska by Todd Radenbaugh (2011 Alaska Fish Photo Contest).

Southwest Alaska

Protecting Fish Habitats - Bristol Bay is home to the largest, most resilient sockeye salmon stock complexes in the world. Oil and mineral development in Southwest Alaska pose a potential threat to the region's largely

Snapshot

intact fish habitat. The Southwest Partnership represents a diverse group of tribal, non-governmental, private, local, State, and Federal partners. The Partnership is actively working to protect intact salmon habitat, watersheds, and cultural and national heritage resources while maintaining access to regionally-important fisheries. For example, this partnership recently received a U.S. Department of the Interior "Partners in Conservation Award" for securing a conservation agreement protecting 21,000 acres of private in-holdings inside Wood-Tikchik State Park—the nation's largest—from land use activities that might degrade sensitive fish habitats. Its "2011 Southwest Alaska Salmon Science Symposium: understanding habitat and the science of sustainability" is helping identify regional research needs related to salmon resiliency to focus the partnership's future work.

Restoring fish passage - Of the hundreds of road culverts surveyed in the Mat-Su Borough, 65% impede salmon migrations. While overall salmon numbers remain strong in the 24,000 square mile basin, localized habitat degradation and salmon declines along the heavily populated southern border of the Borough spurred local partners to form the Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Partnership. Recently, the Mat-Su Borough matched \$51,155 in NFHAP funds with \$52,000 to restore passage at the Weltin Way-Wasilla Creek stream crossing and revegetate its banks with native plants. This project improved access to 15 miles of Wasilla Creek for native anadromous fishes.

Matanuska-Susitna Basin

Snapshot

Kenai Peninsula

Restoring streambank and in-stream habitat - Known for its world-class sport fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities, the Kenai Peninsula is one of Alaska's premier

Snapshot

destinations. Increasing population growth and development, and climate change, are high interest fish habitat issues in this region. The Homer Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, matched \$9,100 in NFHAP funds with \$34,825 to address water quality and habitat degradation associated with the Watermelon Trail off-road vehicle crossing at Beaver Creek. A tributary to the Anchor River, Beaver Creek is catalogued as an anadromous stream and provides important habitats for salmon and char. The project relocated the crossing to a clear span bridge at a new location and restored the stream bank at the original crossing.

Kenai Peninsula pink salmon by Kentaro Yasui (2011 Alaska Fish Photo Contest).

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