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Service Announces Final Decision on Karluk Lake Nutrient Enrichment
Selects Current Management to Conserve Salmon Populations and Habitat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge today released its Environmental Assessment and announced its final decision regarding a special use permit request by the Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association (KRAA) to conduct nutrient enrichment in the Karluk Lake watershed. The Service evaluated KRAA's proposal and selected the Current Management (No Action) Alternative as the best way to conserve the abundance of natural salmonid populations and their habitat for continued human and wildlife use.

"Karluk sockeye salmon stocks are within their historic levels and will likely continue to vary over time in response to many environmental factors, including lake, river, and marine habitat, as well as human factors such as escapement goals and harvest," said Geoffrey Haskett, Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska. "The Service will continue to work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage this valuable resource."

Karluk Lake is the largest lake in the Kodiak Archipelago, and its watershed supports all five species of Pacific Salmon, with 23 genetically distinct populations of sockeye salmon. Protecting the variability of salmon populations in the Karluk watershed provides a more reliable fishery for people and wildlife.

The Service worked with the applicant and a planning team to identify issues surrounding aquatic productivity and the need for nutrient enrichment, as well as the potential impacts to Refuge resources from the proposed action. The Service reviewed the best available science and considered Federal laws, regulations, policies, the 2008 Kodiak Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), and public input. The Refuge used criteria from the CCP to evaluate the need for fishery restoration in a minimal management area and determined that restoration was not needed.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires an Environmental Assessment be done on a proposed action, including alternatives, to evaluate potential impact to the human environment. The Environmental Assessment evaluated KRAA's proposal and three alternatives, including the No Action alternative. The Service released a draft Environmental Assessment for a 60-day public review, with a request for any additional information, corrections, or alternatives. Changes in response to the public review were incorporated in the Final EA, where appropriate.

Copies of the Environmental Assessment can be found on the Kodiak Refuge website:
www.fws.gov/refuge/Kodiak.

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