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Press Release

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Alaska awards more than \$350,000 in Clean Water Actions Grants

Local governments and non-governmental organizations are the recipients of \$352,035 in Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) grants today. The ACWA partnership between the Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Fish & Game, and Natural Resources awarded 12 grants to assist the State in its clean water objectives. The grants focus efforts on waters in greatest need of protection and on restoration of waters that are considered polluted or impaired.

"These grants are an important part of conserving, protecting, and restoring Alaska's waters," said Michelle Bonnet Hale, Director of DEC's Division of Water. "We value the work of local governments and groups. The partnerships we have created will help us improve the quality of Alaska's water and protect the environment."

One of this year's projects will construct a rain garden at the Mat-Su Senior Service Center in Palmer. The rain garden will minimize storm water run-off by creating a natural system that mimics pre-development conditions.

A project in interior Alaska will improve water quality in the Chena River watershed by constructing green infrastructure at the Spruce Tree Montessori School in Fairbanks. The project will feature three ways to manage storm water by using the natural environment.

Another of this year's projects will allow the Anchorage Waterways Council and DEC to help reduce the amount of fecal coliform bacteria pollution entering area streams from dog waste. The project will make sure that dog owners have the necessary tools readily available to collect and safely dispose of waste.

ACWA grant funding comes from a combination of federal water quality grants with matching funds provided by the project proponent. For more information about ACWA and the list of priority waters and actions, see:
www.dec.state.ak.us/water/acwa/acwa_index.htm.

Below are summaries of the Alaska Clean Water Actions Grants for projects starting in July 2013 and finishing in June 2014. The summaries are arranged by region of the state and include the contact information for the group conducting the project.

Southeast Region

Auke Lake Water Quality Monitoring

Juneau Watershed Partnership (JWP), \$17,729

This project addresses an ACWA Protection priority. Auke Lake is a freshwater lake located approximately 12 miles north of downtown Juneau. Auke Lake is a popular site for motorized summer recreation. In 2012, JWP, in close coordination with DEC, collected limited petroleum hydrocarbon data to compare to the Alaska Water Quality Standards. This project collects additional petroleum hydrocarbon data. The data will be used to assess the summer pollutant loading to the lake primarily due to two-stroke engine use. To aid in the assessment, JWP will partner with the City and Borough of Juneau to conduct a recreational user survey designed to collect information on the motorized and non-motorized use on the lake. JWP will evaluate the water quality data and survey results and present them in a final project report. Contact: Nina Horne, (907) 586-6853.

Homeowner On-site Wastewater System Education Project

Ketchikan Gateway Borough Public Works, \$10,000

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. Ketchikan Gateway Borough seeks to minimize or prevent accidental discharges from the 1230 on-site septic systems in Ketchikan by promoting proper use and maintenance. Building on DEC's existing guidance, the Borough will create and distribute educational materials to all homeowners with basic information on how an on-site septic system works, how to properly use and operate on-site septic systems, and how to prevent failures. Information about the Borough's Mandatory Sludge Pumping Program will also be provided with the educational materials, including asking for feedback on the program. Helping homeowners understand how their system works will increase the likelihood of proper maintenance. The project will also provide Borough officials with critical information they can use to improve their mandatory program making it more effective. Contact: Teri Holderman, 228-6733.

Juneau Hydrography – Storm Water Mapping Project

Juneau Watershed Partnership, \$17,554

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. JWP, in cooperation with the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) and the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), will continue mapping storm water flow in Juneau. The project augments on-going efforts by CBJ and DOT&PF to map the storm water structures and flow direction for polluted waters in Juneau. The mapping information will assist in designing projects needed for restoration. Contact: Nina Horne, (907) 586-6853.

Ketchikan Creeks: Storm Water Quality Assessment

Aquatic Restoration and Research Institute, \$61,056

This project addresses an ACWA Protection priority. This project will evaluate water quality and the biotic community of Ketchikan, Hoadley and Carlanna Creeks to

protect salmon fisheries. Residential runoff from developed roads, parking areas, and commercial lots can deliver heavy metals, fine sediment, and excess nutrients to local streams. More rapid runoff from compacted soils and impervious surfaces can also impact the timing and magnitude of flow. Data collected will help resource managers understand if water quality impacts from pollutants exist and will assist in making effective and targeted decisions to protect these fisheries. Contact: Jeff Davis, (907) 733-5432.

South-Central

Clean Boating on Big Lake

Cook Inletkeeper, \$18,491

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority and continues a 2012 project. Big Lake is a popular recreational lake in the Mat-Su Borough and an important economic asset to the Big Lake community. In 2006, Big Lake was listed as impaired (polluted) from petroleum hydrocarbons. The source of the pollution is gasoline powered watercraft. Beginning in 2010, local community members and other stakeholders of Big Lake developed an Action Plan for reducing pollution in Big Lake through targeted public outreach and education. Using the Big Lake Action Plan as a guide, this project will address the goal of reducing pollution in Big Lake through a comprehensive educational clean boating campaign. This project has two objectives: to continue to implement the education campaign and to empower regional boaters to practice and encourage clean boating. A final report summarizing the project will be provided. Contact: Rachel Lord, (907) 235-4068 ext. 29.

Clean Boating on Little Susitna River

Cook Inletkeeper, \$18,247

This project addresses an ACWA Protection priority building on other efforts. The lower Little Susitna River is at risk of water quality impairment from petroleum hydrocarbon pollution and turbidity. This project continues the educational campaign on the impacts of petroleum and turbidity pollution to aquatic species and ways to reduce this pollution. The outreach campaign will build off DEC's current "*Fuel Out – Fish On!*" outreach message coordinating efforts with the work on Big Lake. In addition, one-on-one education of users of the lower Little Susitna River recreational fishery will be conducted. The goals of the project include improved water quality through a more educated boating public. A final project report summarizing results will be provided. Contact Rachel Lord, 235-4068 ext. 29.

Cottonwood Creek Septic Smart: Homeowner Outreach

Mat-Su Resource Conservation Development Council, \$17,555

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority. Cottonwood Creek is polluted from fecal coliform. This project will work with homeowners, local engineers, and septic system pumping services to develop a pumping co-operative to share costs where one street with several home septic systems can be inspected/serviced at once at reduced costs. The project will also include an education component, to raise awareness of septic systems' potential impact on water quality through education efforts. Contact: Marty Metiva, 373-1016.

Evaluate Scoop-the-Poop Stations in Anchorage

Anchorage Waterways Council, \$35,000

Water quality monitoring has shown that there is too much bacteria in Anchorage streams; people coming in contact with the bacteria can become ill. This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority for streams polluted from fecal coliform bacteria. Anchorage is a popular city for pets with approximately 65,000 dogs creating about 24 tons of dog waste every day. Many of these pets recreate on the hundreds of miles of trails within the city. This project will help to reduce the amount of pollution by helping to ensure pet owners have the necessary supplies and reminders to “scoop the poop”. The project will develop an inventory using GIS mapping of existing stations that span Anchorage’s seven watersheds. The condition of each station, as well as determine which stations are most frequently used. The project will prepare a final report that could be used by the Scoop the Poop Committee and the Municipality of Anchorage to determine where the most cost-effective improvements, such as additional stations, could be made. Contact: Cherie Northon, 272-7335.

Kenai River Bacteria Monitoring

City of Kenai, \$80,695

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority and continues 2012 work. Elevated levels of enterococci and fecal coliform bacteria have been measured in samples at the mouth of the Kenai River. This project will monitor and test for bacteria at two locations at the mouth of the Kenai River (one site on the North Beach and one site on the South Beach) and at one upriver location near the Warren Ames Bridge (River Mile 5) to see if the beach management improvements have reduced the bacteria levels. Contact: Rick Koch, (907) 283-8222.

Mat-Su Palmer Rain Garden Demo

Mat-Su Resource Conservation Development Council, \$34,500

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. Through partnerships, this project constructs a rain garden at the Mat-Su Senior Service Center. The rain garden will minimize run-off from post-construction development by creating a natural system that mimics pre-development conditions. The public will be educated on the benefits of low impact development through hands-on and on-site education. Contact: Marty Metiva, 373-1016.

Storm Water Runoff Control for Odiak Pond

Copper River Watershed Project, \$16,308

This project addresses an ACWA Protection priority. Odiak Pond receives storm water run-off. The inlet to the pond has been nominated to the State of Alaska’s Anadromous Waters Catalogue, because coho salmon spawn and rear in the pond. This project will construct a bioswale adjacent to one of the stream drainages to the pond. A historical stream channel will be re-established creating a vegetative buffer on the bank. The project will be used to demonstrate best management practices for the use of vegetative buffers that could be used elsewhere in Cordova. A best management practices manual will also be developed for Cordova. Contact: Kristen Carpenter, 424-3334.

Interior

Chena River – Our Living River

Tanana Valley Watershed Association, \$24,900

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority. The Chena River is Alaska's second largest producer of juvenile Chinook salmon that migrate to the Yukon River. The project will improve water quality in the Chena River watershed through reduction of un-filtered storm water run-off and education of local property owners. The project will construct three green infrastructure projects along the river and demonstrate to the local residents the benefits of using green infrastructure as a way to mitigate pollution and improve water quality. A Living Resource Guide will also be produced. The guide will serve to raise awareness of the importance of the river and provide practical ways to improve water quality. Contact: Jewelz Nutter, 322-2633.

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