



**DEC NEWS**

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## **For Immediate Release**

### **ACWA awards \$900,000 in grants to protect and restore Alaska's rivers, streams and lakes**

**March 19, 2004**—ACWA is awarding over \$900,000 in grants to fund water protection and restoration projects throughout Alaska. The ACWA partners, Alaska Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Fish and Game and Natural Resources together have awarded millions of dollars in grants to help achieve the state's goal of healthy water quality, water quantity and aquatic habitat. ACWA (Alaska Clean Water Actions) ensures that available resources are focused on the State's areas of greatest need for protection and stewardship, and coordinates State efforts to clean up lakes and streams with pollution problems.

"Over the past decade, we have identified many rivers, streams and lakes damaged or threatened by pollution. We know what actions will restore and protect those waters and requested proposals that will get the job done," emphasized DEC Commissioner Ernesta Ballard.

EPA Region 10 Administrator John Iani added support for the grants. "This is a good package, DEC partners in the ACWA program are working together to address Alaska's most threatened and polluted waters," Iani said. "The grants are a good mix of stewardship, protection and clean-up."

ACWA received 20 grant applications and 19 were funded. "The quality of the grant applications was very good," notes Jonne Slemons, Program Manager for the Non-Point Source Pollution program. "Through this method of solicitation, we were able to focus funding on the 'next steps' that will move us closer to our healthy water objectives. This assures funds are directed to waters in greatest need which is a primary function of ACWA."

Applicants were also able to apply for multiple-year funding. Funds were available for stewardship and protection projects that begin in April and will end in June of 2004.

More funding was available for projects that will begin in July of 2004 and run through June of 2005. This unique opportunity allowed groups to begin work early this spring and possibly bridge into the next funding year, helping to make use of the entire field season, and create a more comprehensive project.

Grants awarded are balanced between protection of unimpaired waters and restoration of waters that are considered polluted or impaired. Additional grants were awarded for stewardship projects. This balance will ensure that the needs of Alaska's waters are met. Funds that were not awarded through grants will be offered as contracts in a future request for proposals.

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For more information about ACWA and the list of priority waters and actions, log onto our website at [http://www.state.ak.us/dec/water/acwa/acwa\\_index.htm](http://www.state.ak.us/dec/water/acwa/acwa_index.htm).

A full list of projects is attached.

Projects receiving funding this year are:

### **Southeast Region**

**Duck & Jordan Creek Watershed Recovery**, (Juneau) Mendenhall Watershed Partnership, \$53,390

Duck and Jordan Creeks are in need of recovery due to water quality concerns with sediment, residues, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform, and altered flows. These were formerly productive streams but have had significant declines in salmon returns in recent years. This project will continue restoration of Duck and Jordan Creeks through remediation actions, public education, and water quality-monitoring to develop and monitor the implementation of best management practices. Contact Clayton Burrows, 907-586-6853.

**Mendenhall Watershed Priority Stewardship**, (Juneau) Mendenhall Watershed Partnership, \$11,126

This project will help Alaska towards one of its priority stewardship needs to develop a model Waterbody Recovery Strategy that communities can use to protect their local watershed. The project will prioritize future stewardship actions within the Mendenhall Watershed. Contact Clayton Burrows 907-586-6853.

**Pederson Hill Creek Watershed Assessment**, (Juneau) Mendenhall Watershed Partnership, \$19,842

Pederson Hill Creek is a priority water in need of recovery, with fecal coliform being a primary water quality concern. Coliform bacteria contamination has been well documented since 1985. This project will update the watershed assessment for Pederson Hill Creek in order to prepare a TMDL and recovery strategy for Pederson Hill Creek. Contact Clayton Burrows 907-586-6853.

**Granite Creek Recovery TMDL Implementation**, City and Borough of Sitka, \$24,850

Sitka will continue the restoration of Granite Creek, for which long-term pollution problems have been identified. Since 2001, with the help of ACWA grants, the City of Sitka has developed a TMDL and restoration strategy and has begun cleaning up the creek. This project implements unfinished tasks in the multi-year Action Plan of the Strategy/TMDL that will result in consistently meeting water quality standards. Environmental benefits include fully restoring water quality through: 1) constructing new road and stormwater drainage improvements, 2) establishing stable and functional stream buffers, 3) verifying effectiveness of numerous sediment controls (ponds, check dams, swales, turbidity controls) through regular water quality monitoring, 4) preparing development guidelines for future growth in the watershed, 5) industrial operator education, 6) environmental audits of compliance with lease terms and 7) maintenance of existing pollution control systems. Contact Mark Buggins, (907) 966-2256.

**Swan Lake Restoration**, City and Borough of Sitka, \$13,600

Sitka will continue to rehabilitate Swan Lake, a priority water in need of protection, by implementing its Watershed Recovery Strategy, TMDL, and Stormwater Control

Strategy. Sitka developed and began this work with the help of previous ACWA grants. This project includes dredging of debris, preparing and distributing a brochure of Best Management Practices for stormwater control for local contractors, stenciling storm drains, and water quality and stormwater monitoring to determine how well the Best Management Practices are working. Contact Mark Buggins, (907) 966-2256.

**Pullen Creek and Skagway Harbor Assessment,** Skagway Traditional Council,  
\$41,854

Pullen Creek and Skagway Harbor are priority waters in need of recovery, with metal contamination being a primary water quality concern. Historical studies show elevated levels of lead, zinc, cadmium, copper and mercury. This project, proposed by the Skagway Traditional Council, will collect scientific data on Pullen Creek to document contaminants, review and evaluate existing scientific data for Skagway Harbor to identify data gaps, and determine what actions are necessary for the recovery of both waters from the impaired water body list. Contact Lance Twitchell, (907) 983-4068.

**Effectiveness of Buffers in Supplying Large Woody Debris,** (Southeast Alaska),  
Sealaska Corp., \$77,000

This project will complete a current study examining the effectiveness of forest buffer zones to provide large woody debris (LWD) to streams and to develop a database for status and trend monitoring of buffer zones on private timberlands in Southeast Alaska. This project provides a regional monitoring network by expanding the database to include private forestlands in northern Southeast Alaska. The Forest Resources & Practices Act (FRPA) requires that buffer zones be retained along salmon streams. Data from northern Southeast Alaska would complement the existing data so the overall study results would be applicable to the entire region. This project will help Alaska achieve one of its priority stewardship actions - to evaluate the effectiveness of Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) in meeting state water quality standards and protecting beneficial uses of waters. Contact Ronald Wolfe, 907-586-9277.

**Status & Trends of Fish Habitat on Private Timberlands in SE Alaska,** (Southeast  
Alaska ) Sealaska Corp., \$74,800

This project will complete a study on the status of fish habitat on private lands in Southeast Alaska. Since 1997, several basins that were surveyed have been logged; therefore, post-logging data should be collected at many of these sites to determine the appropriateness of existing practices in protecting fish habitat. Monitoring will be completed on all basins where pre-logging and pre/post-logging data exist to document status and trends in habitat conditions. This will facilitate an evaluation of BMP effectiveness, and will help Alaska meet one of its priority stewardship actions - to evaluate the effectiveness of Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). Contact Ronald Wolfe, 907-586-9277.

**Biological Monitoring & Assessment for Southeast Alaska,** (Southeast Alaska )  
UAA – ENRI, \$107,477

This project completes an effort begun in 2001 to evaluate surface water quality to meet ACWA goals by assessing biological, chemical, and physical condition of streams in

southeast Alaska. ENRI will collect data to support other agencies, evaluate habitat impacts and effectiveness of restoration efforts, and advance application tools for stewardship of Alaska waters. This project will help Alaska address one of its priority stewardship actions: to identify biological indicators and determine reference conditions that are indicators of healthy biotic communities in Alaska's freshwater systems. Contact Daniel Rinella, 907-257-2734.

**Craig Small Vessel Raw Sewage/Bilge Cleanout, City of Craig, \$9,220**

This project will help Alaska progress toward meeting a priority stewardship action to develop harbor best management practices and a model ordinance that addresses harbor and marina operation & maintenance BMPs. By putting portable pumps/short term storage tanks and disposal facilities in place, Craig will reduce NPS pollution from sewage and contaminated bilge materials which will result in protection of essential fish habitat (i.e. eelgrass), and protection of local commercial, charter, sport and subsistence fisheries in the waters around the City of Craig. Contact Michael Kampnich, (907)826-3404.

**Northern/Interior Regions**

**Shaw Creek Hydrologic Monitoring & Evaluation, (Shaw Creek Watershed ), Alaska Boreal Forest Council, \$93,346**

This project will complete an effort begun in 2001 to gather critical hydrologic information for the Shaw Creek Watershed, a priority water that provides a major fall chum spawning and rearing habitat for the Bristol Bay fishery and Yukon River fisheries. Shaw Creek also has important fish, timber, mining, and recreational resources. Its sustainable development requires understanding of hydrologic processes. In the past ABFC established four automated hydrologic data-collection stations. This project will continue water-quality data collection and continuous hydrologic baseline monitoring of those stations and other sites. Additionally, it will evaluate the information collected to date and characterize critical hydrologic processes to assist management agencies in permitting decisions. Contact Janice Dawe, 907-474-3478.

**Copper River Watershed Baseline Assessment, (Copper River Watershed ), Copper River Watershed Project, \$65,999**

The Copper River watershed is a priority water for protection, with water quality being a primary concern. The Copper River Watershed is used for anadromous fish spawning and rearing, subsistence, and recreation. The FishWatch Planning Team, an inter-jurisdictional partnership of state and federal agencies, non-profits, Tribes, and the CRWP will develop a strategy and work plan for conducting a coordinated habitat baseline assessment of the Copper River watershed and continue baseline water quality monitoring. Information gathered on habitat and water quality on tributaries to the Copper River will be provided to state agencies to identify their status and prioritize them for future action, if necessary. This project will also address a statewide stewardship priority by assembling, from existing models, stream protection guidelines for landowners. In addition, it will work help assess Trout Lake. Contact Kristin Smith, 907-424-3334.

## **Mat-Su Region**

**Cottonwood Creek TMDL Development**, Matanuska-Susitna Valley, ARRI, \$46,790  
Cottonwood Creek is a priority water in need of recovery with foam and debris pollution from urban runoff and development being a primary water quality concern. Significant amounts of foam have been frequently observed in the Creek since 1998. Other recent monitoring indicates elevated temperatures in summer along certain creek stretches exceeding WQS, and FC bacteria counts exceeding the state standard. Much of the creek is in the urbanized area of Wasilla where runoff pollution, septic systems, and riparian zone development are impacting water quality. Past analyses of fish have indicated lesions that may be associated with water pollutants. During summer, portions creek have algal blooms (green) and clear, gelatinous, slimy algae growth which may be associated with increased nutrients (P and N). The primary objective of this project is to continue to evaluate the presence, location, and variability in foam abundance and causes within Cottonwood Creek. Foam will be evaluated to determine whether it is human caused or whether human activities influence natural foam development processes. The secondary objective is to determine whether anthropogenic factors that cause or influence foam abundance are related to other potential water quality problems. Addressing these objectives will lead to the removal of this waterbody from the State's impaired waterbody list either through the development of a TMDL recovery plan or the implementation of management practices. Contact Gay Davis, 907-733-5432.

**Mat-Su Culvert Inventory and Assessment Project**, Matanuska-Susitna Borough,  
\$13,000

This project will evaluate information on road crossing structures at anadromous streams and tributaries within the Wasilla and Cottonwood Creek watersheds, recorded via GPS, and add it to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's GIS database to identify future enhancement projects. The results of this analysis will prioritize crossings for future repairs or capital projects. This project will help Alaska meet one of its priority stewardship actions: to assess fish habitat and passage at culverts on road systems, and prioritize sites and actions needed for protection and restoration. Contact Chuck Kaucic, 907-745-9807.

## **Anchorage Region**

**Chester Creek Spatial & Temporal Distributions of Bacteria**, (Anchorage),  
UAA Engineering, \$100,000

Chester Creek is a priority water in need of recovery, with water quality from bacterial pollution being a primary concern. Chester Creek routinely has the highest level of bacterial pollution of Anchorage streams. Using information compiled from past monitoring efforts, this project will develop and implement a monitoring plan to determine the spatial and temporal extents of bacteria in the stream to determine levels, timing, and sources of bacterial pollution. This information will be used to identify the most appropriate best management practices (BMPs) to address the bacteria concerns. William E. Schnabel, (907) 786-1912.

**Ship Creek Gaging**, (Anchorage), DNR/Division of Mining, Land, & Water, \$30,000  
Ship Creek is a priority water in need of recovery due to water quality and quantity concerns. Allocated water use is very high which could reduce baseflow and negatively impact aquatic life. This project will establish a gaging station in the lower river to determine if water appropriations are affecting stream baseflow, provide streamflow and water quality data necessary to implement a fecal coliform Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) recovery plan, help adjudicate instream flow reservation applications, and help provide flow data necessary to successfully manage the stream to provide for a highly important sport fishery. Contact Mark Inghram, 907-269-8638.

### **Kenai Region**

**Anchor River Watershed Monitoring**, (South Kenai Peninsula), Community Rivers Planning Coalition, \$30,000

The Anchor River is a priority water with water quality concerns for temperature, turbidity and phosphorus. This project will provide online, in-stream monitoring stations located near the mouth of the Anchor River, just above the confluence of the North and South Forks to further research the documented exceedances in water quality standards in the Anchor River, mainly temperature and turbidity. This project will provide real-time baseline data monitoring and presentation, and data analyses. Contact Jessica R. Blackledge 907-235-8177.

**Kenai Peninsula Salmon Streams**, Homer Soil & Water Conservation District, \$69,000  
This project addresses Deep Creek, Anchor River, and Ninilchik River, which are priority waters in need of protection, with habitat and water quality being primary concerns. Water quality standards of concern are temperature, turbidity and phosphorus. This project, which addresses ACWA priority actions for these rivers, will determine the spatial and temporal extent of elevated temperatures; identify warmer tributaries and possible anthropogenic causes; evaluate whether existing turbidity data are representative of natural conditions; collect turbidity data to determine if sediment is related to human activity, determine if elevated phosphorus levels are geologic or anthropogenic, and evaluate stream bank impacts on the Anchor River. Water quality information will be disseminated to facilitate resource management decisions which will lead to the protection of these economically important salmon streams. Contact Shirley Schollenberg, 907-235-8177.

**Kenai River Outreach and Monitoring**, Kenai Watershed Forum, \$56,601

This project addresses the Kenai River, a priority water with water quality and habitat concerns. The project will follow-up on previous studies by addressing two specific water quality concerns, petroleum and fecal coliform, in the Kenai River. The results will address concerns about pollutants entering the Kenai River, refine information about the

possible sources of those pollutants, and provide information for future water management actions. Contact Robert Ruffner, 907-260-5449.