FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 8, 2018

CONTACT:
Chandra McGee, Environmental Specialist IV (907) 451-2140,
chandra.mcgee@alaska.gov

State Awards Over $267,000 in Alaska Clean Water Actions Grants

(JUNEAU, AK) – A wide range of organizations are recipients today of $267,163 in Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) grants. The ACWA partnership between the Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Fish and Game, and Natural Resources awarded 11 grants to assist the State in achieving clean water goals. The grants focus efforts on waters in greatest need of protection and restoration. Monies are made available to the state through federal funding.

Andrew Sayers-Fay, Director of DEC's Division of Water notes that "These projects gather information on the health of our waters and sources of pollution. Stormwater mapping and management plans assist local governments in designing projects that minimize pollution impacts of new development. Surveys and monitoring projects protect the use of waterbodies for recreation and livelihood."

Several of the projects include geographic information systems (GIS) products to enhance understanding of the connections between different activities. For example, a GIS layer of septic systems in the Matanuska Susitna Borough, in combination with other data sources, will help create a more complete picture of sources that may be contributing to unacceptable levels of fecal coliform bacteria in Cottonwood Creek by putting all relevant information on a single map. The department maintains a web page of useful maps, including water quality and impaired waters, at http://dec.alaska.gov/das/GIS/apps.

ACWA grants are balanced between projects that protect at-risk waters and projects that restore waters considered polluted or impaired. The grant funds come from a combination of federal water quality funds and matching funds provided by the project grant recipient. DEC restructured the calendar of the

grant program this year to allow projects to capture the summer field season and better align with receipt of federal funding.

For more information about ACWA and the list of priority waters and actions, see http://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-actions/. For a convenient summary of 2017 activities, see our annual newsletter at http://dec.alaska.gov/water/nonpoint-source-control/annual-highlights-2017.

Below are summaries of the Alaska Clean Water Actions Grants for projects starting in March 2018 and finishing in February 2019. The summaries are arranged by region of the state then community and include the contact information for the group conducting the project.

Southeast Region

Where does it go? Stormwater Mapping in Haines, Haines
Takshanuk Watershed Council, $10,123

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. It enhances stormwater management work done previously in Haines and provides a roadmap for future work. Over the course of the last few years the community of Haines has reduced pollution flowing into Sawmill Creek and Lynn Canal by constructing bioswales, creating wetlands to capture snowmelt, and by developing a snow management plan. This project will produce a comprehensive stormwater management plan for local government. The plan will provide a roadmap that includes an inventory of the existing stormwater infrastructure as well as opportunities to further reduce pollution from entering the creek and protecting water quality.
Applicant contact: Meredith Pochardt, (907) 766-3542

South-Central

Lower Anchor River Streambank Restoration, Anchor Point
Homer Soil and Water Conservation District, $22,250

This project addresses an ACWA Protection priority and is a 2-year project. It entails the design and subsequently construct a streambank restoration project along a 1-mile stretch of the Anchor River near Picnic Hole and 90 Hole, two popular sport fishing locations. Portions of the streambank are eroding due to excessive foot traffic and in-stream flow conditions. During the first year, a strategic plan will be developed to help insure the restoration is conducted in a manner that does not result in adversely eroding other sites. The public will be engaged in the trail revision process to ensure their needs are met. Construction will occur during the second year.
Applicant contact: Kyra Wagner, (907) 235-8177 x 5

Evaluate Fecal Coliform Data for Anchorage Watersheds, Anchorage
Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC), $19,650

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority. The majority of waters within the Anchorage bowl are polluted from fecal coliform bacteria and Total Maximum Daily Load restoration plans have been developed to improve water quality. Over the last 17 years, AWC has been collecting water quality data in the local streams including the concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria. Additionally, AWC has led a number of programs designed to reduce the levels of bacteria. This project will complete the final quality assurance/quality control on the existing fecal coliform water quality monitoring data and insure all of the data are publically available via the Environmental Protection Agency's STOrage and Retrieval System (STORET). The data will also be analyzed to identify possible causes of any decreased water quality. This information will then help guide future prioritization of restoration efforts.
Applicant contact: Cherie Northon, (907) 272-7335

Strengthening Cordova's Stormwater Management, Cordova
Copper River Watershed Project, $15,500

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. It will continue work that the Copper River Watershed Project and City of Cordova have been doing to minimize the impacts from stormwater run-off. Outreach materials will be distributed and trainings will be conducted with City public works staff to increase knowledge of stormwater pollutants, water quality impacts, and how to implement better management practices to reduce water pollution in Cordova's waterways.
Applicant contact: Kristin Carpenter, (907) 424-3334

Kenai River Boat Count Analysis, Kenai
Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF), $ 17,340

This project addresses an ACWA Protection priority. It will survey the number of boats on the lower Kenai River between Eagle Rock (river mile 11) and Pillars (river mile 12.5) during the peak fishing season in July. A number of different methods will be used to gather the data including on-site observers and high-definition video recording. Information obtained will include the number of boats, boat hull type, number of passengers, and direction of travel. The information will be used to help develop methods to reduce the environmental impact of boating on the river.
Applicant contact: Jack Sinclair, (907) 260-5449

Deshka River Total Aromatic Hydrocarbon Sampling, Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Aquatic Restoration and Research Institute, $58,500

This project addresses an ACWA Data Collection and Monitoring priority. The Deshka River supports some of the most abundant salmon runs in southcentral Alaska. Fishing is largely accessed by boats which can discharge unspent fuel to the river. Limited water quality sampling in 2015 documented elevated concentrations of total aromatic hydrocarbons

(TAH) in the Deshka River. This project will conduct expanded water quality sampling to determine if the level of hydrocarbons discharging to the river from unspent motorboat fuel exceeds water quality standards at a level harmful to aquatic life. The project will develop and implement a water quality monitoring plan to sample the river during peak fishing seasons and produce a report of the findings.
Applicant contact: Jeffrey C. Davis, (907) 315 4631

Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping of Septic Systems along Cottonwood Creek, Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District (PSWCD), $20,476

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority. Cottonwood Creek is polluted due to fecal coliform bacteria. Inadequately installed or maintained septic systems are one of the possible sources contributing to the pollution. Currently, DEC maintains septic system information in both hard copy and electronic files. This project will compile and enter the relevant information into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database. The new database will enable environmental managers to evaluate the data in combination with other geospatial information (e.g., soil suitability, property maps, etc.) to help create a more complete picture of possible fecal coliform bacteria sources and vectors to the creek. This GIS database created will be shared with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and will be made available on DEC's public web maps.
Applicant contact: Louisa Branchflower, (907) 982-9181

Outreach on Controlling Urban Runoff to Cottonwood Creek, Wasilla
Sustainable Design Group LLC, $32,800

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority. Cottonwood Creek flows through a densely developed area of Wasilla. This project will use the recently finalized Cottonwood Creek Stormwater Analysis report by the Mat-Su Borough to select a recommended site for restoration using green infrastructure instead of traditional piping to capture and treat stormwater before it enters Cottonwood Creek. The project will design and construct a demonstration project at the selected site. Contractors and the general public will be invited to both classroom and field workshop sessions to learn how to implement green infrastructure to capture and treat stormwater and also the benefits of using green infrastructure techniques. The project will also improve Cottonwood Creek's water quality.
Applicant contact: Taylor Berberich, (907) 745-3500

Stormwater Analysis on Wasilla Creek, Matanuska Susitna Borough
Matanuska Susitna Borough, $30,000

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority and expands the amount of information the Borough knows about stormwater flows. It will survey and map stormwater infrastructure and flow paths, identifying inadequate storm drain collection and treatment systems in the Wasilla Creek watershed. The survey will identify specific areas which may be contributing to the creek's pollution and make recommendations for the physical stormwater control structures, including green infrastructure, which could be used to

improve water quality. A report of design recommendation and a completed Geographic Information Systems hydrography data layer will be created. The information will be used by local planners and engineers as a tool in land use decisions and management.
Applicant contact: Mike Campfield, P.E., (907) 861-7719

Interior

Green Infrastructure at the Botanical Garden, Fairbanks
Georgeson Botanical Garden Society, $21,000

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. It entails installing several green infrastructure applications at the Georgeson Botanical Garden. The green infrastructure projects will not only directly store and divert stormwater that might otherwise be untreated, it will raise awareness about the benefits of using these techniques. Educational signs will be posted at each project site, informing thousands of annual visitors to the garden about the ecological and community benefits of using green infrastructure for stormwater treatment.
Applicant contact: Laura Minski, (907) 223-9759

Nome Area Streams Data and Monitoring Project, Nome
Norton Bay Inter-Tribal Watershed Council, $19,524

This project addresses and ACWA Data Collection and Monitoring priority. It will gather all available water quality data on Anvil Creek, Dry Creek, Glacier Creek, Nome River and the Snake River. The data will then be compiled into a GIS database which will enable environmental managers to quickly identify gaps in the data to help focus any future water quality monitoring efforts. Along with the GIS database, a project report will be developed and serve as a foundation block for identifying where data collection activities are needed and where sufficient data exists so that decisions on waterbody health can be reached.
Applicant contact: Hal Shepard, (907) 491-1355

###