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State Awards Nearly \$300,000 in Clean Water Actions Grants

(JUNEAU, AK) – The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced the recipients of a combined \$295,493 in Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) grants. The ACWA partnership between DEC and the Departments of Fish and Game and Natural Resources awarded 14 grants to assist the State in achieving its clean water goals. The grants focus efforts on waters in greatest need of protection and restoration.

Michelle Hale, Director of DEC's Division of Water, noted, "Many of the projects awarded augment the work being done by other federal, state, and local entities. For example, the Municipality of Anchorage has a number of improvements slated for Cuddy Park. These funds will augment those ongoing improvements and reduce the negative impact that excessive numbers of birds are having on the ponds."

In addition, many of the projects awarded through these grants help to build environmentally friendly infrastructure. The community of Haines has been working for a number of years on ways to better manage snow. The green infrastructure projects being funded will help ensure that the pollution often captured in snow does not reach Alaska's waters.

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.

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 2016 and finishing in June 2017. The summaries are arranged by region of the state and include the contact information for the group conducting the project.

Southeast

Duck Creek and Nancy Street Wetland Assessment, Juneau

Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition, \$9,997

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority. Since 1994, many restoration projects have been completed along Duck Creek in Juneau, Alaska, including culvert replacement, streambank stabilizations, revegetation projects, and creation of wetlands. This project evaluates the effectiveness of the best management practices that have been installed on Duck Creek by working with the Juneau Watershed Partnership and the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau to collect water quality data to measure the effectiveness of the improvements. This is a 2-year project.

Contact: Amy Sumner, (907) 723-4969

Petersburg Beach Monitoring Program, Petersburg

Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition, \$25,949

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. This project will conduct the second year of recreational beach monitoring at Sandy Beach Park in Petersburg, Alaska. This beach was identified by DEC as a high priority, because it is commonly used for swimming, wading, and recreation activities. DEC will work with local agencies to notify the public if monitoring results exceed the standards for bacteria that protect public health at recreational beaches. The project will also increase public awareness of potential sources of bacterial contamination, associated health risks, and actions that can reduce the risk of disease.

Contact: Angela Flickinger, (907) 231-1710

Slowing It Down-Wetland Creation for Sawmill Creek, Haines

Takshanuk Watershed Council, \$14,652

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. This project enhances work done during state Fiscal Year (FY) 2016. During FY16, a bioswale was created at the corner of Dalton and 6th Avenue to capture pollutants from a

nearby snow storage site. This project will enhance the treatment occurring by creating a 3,000 ft² wetland to filter stormwater prior to entering Sawmill Creek. Contact: Meredith Pochardt, (907) 766-3542

Snow Removal Bioswale, Haines

Takshanuk Watershed Council, \$10,863

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship Priority. This project will install two 700 ft² bioswales to capture snow melt run off along the corners of the Fort Seward Parade Grounds. Run-off from this site discharges directly into Portage Cove, an anadromous waterbody that supports all five species of Pacific salmon. The bioswales will intercept the melting snow, allowing pollutants to be filtered. Community tours of green infrastructure projects throughout Haines and signs and presentations to local officials will serve to educate the community on the benefits of green infrastructure.

Contact: Meredith Pochardt, (907) 766-3542

South-Central

Assess Existing Waterfowl Best Management Practices on Fish Creek, Anchorage

Anchorage Waterways Council, \$8,500

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority and continues an ongoing program. The development of Anchorage's Cuddy Family Midtown Park allowed Fish Creek to emerge into ponds at Cuddy Park that have become a popular area for waterfowl feeding. In 2015-2016, Anchorage Waterways Council embarked on a messaging campaign through multiple media to discourage waterfowl feeding; the outreach activities included signage, public service announcements, and television and news articles. This project will gauge the scope and effectiveness of the earlier outreach measures by conducting face-to-face surveys with visitors to the Cuddy Family Midtown Park during the summer of 2016. The survey questions will address whether park visitors remember any outreach messages and whether the messages changed their behaviors or attitudes about waterfowl feeding. Results from the surveys will be analyzed in order to produce more effective future outreach activities.

Contact: Cherie Northon, (907) 272-7335

Clean Boating in the Susitna Valley and Cook Inlet, Matanuska-Susitna and Kenai Boroughs

Cook Inletkeeper, \$30,500

This project addresses both ACWA Restoration and Protection priorities and continues an ongoing program. Since 2010, DEC, in conjunction with Cook Inletkeeper and local partners, has been educating boat owners about clean boating practices. This project continues the education activities at popular sport fishing and other recreational locations throughout Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Kenai Peninsula. Sport fishing is an important economic asset, yet some popular fishing locations are polluted or at-risk of pollution by petroleum hydrocarbons and turbidity. Boaters will be encouraged to take a free online clean boating course that focuses on proper sewage management, boat maintenance, clean fueling tips, fuel efficiency, and boating safety. People completing the course are eligible to receive discounts for goods and services from participating local businesses.

Contact: Carly Wier, (907) 235-4068

Cuddy Park Ponds Rehabilitation, Anchorage

Municipality of Anchorage, \$30,000

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority. The development of Anchorage's Cuddy Family Midtown Park with its popular water features inadvertently resulted in a popular waterfowl feeding area. Features that were initially intended to absorb flood flows from Fish Creek have become an attractive nuisance. This project will discourage waterfowl feeding by constructing natural barriers to the pond. Attractive plantings will be installed.

Contact: Vikram Patel, (907) 343-4599

Green Infrastructure Filtration for Odiak Pond, Cordova

Copper River Watershed Project, \$47,891

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. Earlier work identified 11 locations in Cordova as feasible for stormwater improvements. This project constructs two vegetative berms at two locations along watercourses draining to Odiak Pond, an anadromous waterbody. The project will also install a sub-drain and sediment trap which will provide for soil filtration of stormwater at a third location.

Contact: Kristin Carpenter, (907) 424-3334

Kenai River Zinc and Copper Pollution Review, Soldotna

Kenai Watershed Forum, \$15,000

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. Since 2000, the Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF) has been performing bi-annual water quality sampling on the Kenai River and its tributaries. A comprehensive report of the water quality sampling results, published in 2015, noted a rise in zinc and copper zinc levels in the Kenai River from 2010 to 2014. KWF will investigate the likely sources contributing to the increase focusing on those areas which have seen the most change. This study will allow KWF to make recommendations for further action as necessary in a final report.

Contact: Jeff Sires, (907) 260-5449

Protecting Healthy Waters in the Mat-Su Basin, Matanuska-Susitna Borough

The Nature Conservancy, \$26,092

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. This project will complete a multi-year effort to identify and map critical salmon habitat within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Knowing which areas are critical will enable stakeholders, including developers and the local governments, to prioritize and implement protective measures to maintain healthy waters. The information can serve as guidance for the set-back ordinances and design of stormwater controls. The project will also train a wide range of users on the model used to identify the most critical areas.

Contact: Corinne Smith, (907) 865-5721

Stormwater Analysis on Cottonwood Creek, Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Matanuska-Susitna Borough, \$30,000

This project addresses ACWA Stewardship and Restoration priorities and is a continuation of a project started during FY16. The project will survey and map stormwater infrastructure and flow paths, identifying inadequate storm drain collection and treatment systems in the Cottonwood 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.

Contact: Mike Campfield, P.E., (907) 861-7719

Interior

Green Streets and Noyes Slough Assessment, Fairbanks

Tanana Valley Watershed Association, \$10,500

This project addresses an ACWA Restoration priority and expands on-going work by conducting presentations to local officials on the need for a Green Streets policy. A Green Streets Guide will be distributed to the local officials, designers, contractors, agency representatives, and the general public. The project will focus on sites where road construction is occurring, increasing the likelihood of green infrastructure applications being installed. In addition, the project will conduct an assessment of the trash in Noyes Slough. Noyes Slough is an impaired waterbody with a restoration plan to reduce trash. The assessment will be used as a baseline to determine what actions the City of Fairbanks could be taking to reduce yearly inputs.

Contact: Bryn McElroy, (907) 374-8890

Goldstream Creek Education and Outreach to Miners, Fairbanks

Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District, \$10,000

This project addresses an ACWA restoration priority. In 2015, a Total Maximum Daily Load restoration plan was completed for Upper Goldstream Creek to address on-going high levels of turbidity. A number of potential turbidity sources were identified in the restoration plan. This project will work with the placer mining operators and other land owners in the Upper Goldstream Creek watershed. Outreach will include education at local venues on the impacts from turbidity and sediment on fish and training on how to measure turbidity.

Restoration opportunities will also be explored. Contact: Joni Scharfenberg, (907) 978-1727

Nome Beach Monitoring Program, Nome

Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition, \$25,549

This project addresses an ACWA Stewardship priority. Working with the Nome Eskimo Community and the City of Nome, monitoring recreational beach sites at Middle and East Beaches in Nome, Alaska, will begin. These beaches were

identified by DEC as a high priority, because they are commonly used for recreation activities including swimming and wading. If monitoring results exceed the standards for bacteria that protect public health at recreational beaches, the public will be notified. The project will also increase public awareness of potential sources of bacterial contamination, associated health risks, and actions that can reduce the risk of disease.

Contact: Angie Flickinger, (907) 231-1710

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