



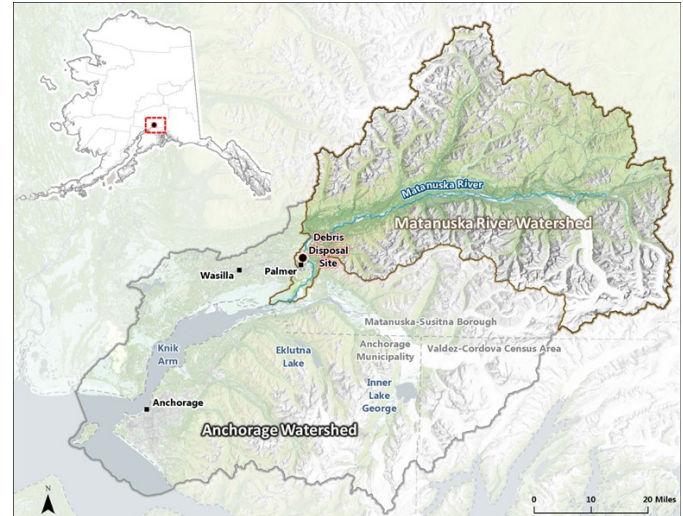
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Water

Draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Summary Debris adjacent to the Matanuska River near Palmer, Alaska July 7, 2017

What is the problem with the Matanuska River water quality and how did it happen?

An open debris pile adjacent to the Matanuska River near Palmer has the potential to directly impact the river's water quality. The Alaska Railroad initially placed railroad cars at the site in the 1960's to help stabilize the river bank. State and federal agencies agreed that the railroad cars provide bank stabilization. Unfortunately, after the Alaska Railroad placed the railroad cars, the site was used as an unpermitted open dump. Trash, including vehicles, household garbage, fuel cans and 55-gallon drums, scrap metal, and other miscellaneous debris were discarded.



Why should I care?

Trash and other debris detract from recreation activities near the Matanuska River and have the potential to introduce contaminants to the river. The unpermitted dump site is within a public water system drinking water protection area and contaminants have the potential to affect drinking water resources downstream. For example, household garbage can attract undesirable wildlife; wildlife can then spread the material to other streams where it can block culverts, impede fish passage and harm fish habitat.

What is a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)?

A TMDL is basically a plan to address the pollution that includes a "pollutant budget." It is an important component of the overall recovery plan (see text box on page 2). The plan includes water, soil, and sediment data from the area around the unpermitted open dump. This TMDL supports the residues water quality standard that prohibits debris and trash on or in the Matanuska River. A TMDL is established to meet the requirements of Section 303(d)(1)(C) of the Clean Water Act.

What you can do to help

- ✓ Properly dispose of trash, including household garbage and yard clippings.
- ✓ When travelling on the Palmer-Sutton railroad bed trail along the Matanuska River, 'if you pack it in, pack it out', including all trash
- ✓ Do not disturb or remove vegetation above the old railroad dumpsite at the end of Eagle Avenue in Palmer, Alaska.

TMDL at a Glance:

<i>Water Quality-limited?</i>	Yes
<i>Hydrologic Unit Code:</i>	190204020709
<i>Criteria of Concern:</i>	Residue (debris)
<i>Designated Uses Affected:</i>	Water supply; water recreation; growth and propagation of fish, shellfish, other aquatic life and wildlife
<i>Major Source(s):</i>	Debris migration from an unpermitted dump located on and in the Matanuska River just north of Eagle Avenue in Palmer, Alaska.
<i>Loading Capacity, Wasteload Allocation, Load Allocation, Margin of Safety, Future Allocation:</i>	Zero (0); the standard for residues prohibits deposits on or in the streambeds and streambanks - all allocations are set to zero because we are not allowing any further debris to be placed in the pile.

How will water quality be improved?

Improvements can be accomplished by preventing further illegal dumping activities and regular trash cleanups. Actions could include:

- Installing natural barrier around the area to restrict public access
- Maintaining barriers at trail heads so vehicles cannot access the site
- Increasing enforcement of the Palmer and borough disposal ordinances
- Installing trash cans that make proper disposal easy
- Installing signs along the trail prohibiting illegal littering/dumping and encouraging trail users to “keep Alaska clean.” Signs should include information on the applicable fines
- Promoting clean-up days and enlisting local employers and community to participate
- Coordinating with Palmer on clean-up days that include low-cost admission to the local solid waste facility
- Removing loose debris that does not provide bank stabilization. Any debris removal should not make the site unsafe or unstable. Due to site characteristics, this option requires further feasibility analysis.

How can I learn more about the draft TMDL or make comments?

The draft TMDL is available at <http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wqsar/index.htm> or upon request. DEC is asking for public review and comments at this time. DEC is particularly interested in ideas for addressing the problem. Written public comments must be mailed, faxed, emailed, or hand delivered to the address below **before 5:00 PM on August 21, 2017.**

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