

Copper River Watershed Project

“Copper River Monitoring for Protection & Restoration”

FY03 Grant Award: \$ 33,000.00

Project Match: \$ 39,214.5



Description and Purpose:

Assessing fish habitat conditions of the Copper River watershed builds on initial investments in the FishWatch monitoring project (FY 2002 ACWA grant). To launch FishWatch in the FY03 grant period, the Copper River Watershed Project:

- Compiled existing habitat information, coordinated FishWatch volunteer work to collect monitoring data, interpreted and distributed summer 2002 FishWatch data, and continued restoration investigation.
- Aided in protecting critical fish habitat from residential development by producing a handout with guidelines for landowners.
- Coordinated three fish habitat restoration projects: Middle Fork, Gulkana River trail restoration; Town Lake, Chitina, restoration plan; Gulkana River, Mile 190, Richardson Highway, salmon viewing platform and water quality education/non-point source interpretive signs.

Evaluation of Environmental Benefits:

The established FishWatch planning team served as the project evaluator. Agency resource managers, private landowners, and tribal organizations evaluated the effectiveness and usefulness of the assessment work. The landowners' manual was evaluated by conducting a usefulness survey of those who received it.

Project Deliverables Included:

1. “Copper River Fish Habitat Assessment”, a document that includes a referenced index of previous fish habitat studies in the region and a summary of habitat conditions and land use in sub-watersheds.
2. “FishWatch Annual Report”, a document compiling the fish habitat data collected in the first year (summer 2002) of the volunteer monitoring program.
3. Restoration Plan for Town Lake in Chitina.
4. “Landowners Guidelines for Fish Habitat - Compatible Development”, a guide that describes development and transportation options for preventing nonpoint source pollution and degradation of fish habitat.
5. Restoration of 1,000 feet of trail on the Middle Fork, Gulkana River Trail, including "before" and "after" photos from summer 2002 and early summer 2003.
6. Construction of a salmon-viewing platform with water quality and nonpoint source interpretive displays at Mile 190, Richardson Highway. The platform provides safe access for tourists to observe salmon in their natural, spawning habitat and also protects salmon habitat from degradation caused by trampling of bank vegetation, a potential cause of water quality pollution and habitat degradation. Photos of the project were taken before and after construction.



Project Contacts

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