

## 2017 Annual Report to the Board of Forestry



Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Habitat  
February 2018

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## 2017 OVERVIEW

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Division of Habitat submits our 2017 annual report to the Board of Forestry. This report summarizes our January 1 – December 31, 2017 forestry related activities and informs the Board of Forestry of Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) effectiveness protecting the resources and habitats for which ADF&G has responsibility.

Alaska Statutes require ADF&G to manage, protect, maintain, improve, and extend the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state in the interest of the economy and general well-being of the State (AS 16.05.020), to ensure the proper protection of anadromous fish habitat (AS 16.05.871), and to provide fish passage (AS 16.05.841).

On public lands, FRPA<sup>a</sup> requires the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitats. The state forester recognizes the expertise of ADF&G regarding fish and wildlife habitat on all lands with fish habitat as the primary value in riparian areas.<sup>b</sup> ADF&G helps identify and protect important wildlife habitats on private lands, and provides technical expertise for voluntary management techniques that minimize adverse effects on wildlife habitat.<sup>c</sup>

### PRIVATE AND MUNICIPAL LAND

Table 1 contains FRPA activity on private, municipal, and trust land.

#### Southeast Region

Craig staff reviewed and commented on 16 detailed plans of operation (DPOs) for commercial timber harvest, reviewed two requests for variations and eight changes in operations, processed four renewals, conducted four FRPA inspections, and issued one fish habitat permit for timber operations.

Douglas staff commented on one DPO, conducted one FRPA site visit to survey a stream on Tuxekan Island, and issued four fish habitat permits for road culvert installations. Staff surveyed 91 other drainages, and submitted 32 Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC) updates on privately held timber lands in Southern Southeast where future harvest may occur.

#### Southcentral Region

Anchorage staff reviewed and commented on one DPO for commercial timber harvest, conducted 10 FRPA inspections, and issued one fish habitat permit.

Soldotna staff reviewed and commented on one DPO and conducted one FRPA inspection.

Palmer staff conducted one FRPA inspection and provided comments on the Mat-Su Borough's 5-year harvest plan.

#### Interior Region

Fairbanks staff reviewed and commented on two DPOs: one for sawtimber and firewood harvest on Fairbanks North Star Borough lands and the other for a third year of winter hardwood harvest

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<sup>a</sup> AS 41.17.060 (c)(7)

<sup>b</sup> AS 41.17.098 (d)

<sup>c</sup> AS 41.17.910 (b) and (c).

on Gana-A 'Yoo land for the Sustainable Energy for Galena Alaska (SEGA) chip biomass central heating project. Staff also reviewed and commented on a Change in Operations for SEGA.

## **STATE LAND**

Table 2 contains FRPA activities on State land.

### **Southeast Region**

Craig staff reviewed one preliminary best interest finding for the North Hollis Timber Sale and conducted three inspections for the Gravina Island Timber Sale and road.

Douglas staff reviewed and commented on one Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) and conducted two FRPA site visits to survey streams for the Baby Brown Timber Sale. Staff surveyed 38 other drainages, and submitted seven AWC updates on State Forest lands in Southern and Northern Southeast where future harvest may occur.

### **Southcentral Region**

Soldotna, Anchorage, and Palmer staff reported no activity.

### **Interior Region**

Fairbanks staff reviewed and commented on seven best interest findings and seven FLUPs, and issued a fish habitat permit for winter equipment crossings. Personal use firewood harvest reviews conducted by the Department of Natural Resources Division of Mining, Land and Water decreased by more than half of previous year totals.

## **FEDERAL LAND**

Table 3 contains activities on federal land.

### **Southeast Region**

Craig staff issued 11 US Forest Service (USFS) concurrences for timber and restoration related instream activity on Prince of Wales Island, participated in a USFS best management practices (BMP) monitoring trip of the boat ramp and water supply at the El Capitan cave, and conducted site visits at four proposed USFS timber related projects.

Douglas staff issued eight concurrences for timber related instream activity, and participated in three USFS BMP monitoring trips.

### **Southcentral Region**

No activity reported.

### **Interior Region**

No activity reported.

## **FOREST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTATION**

### **COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING**

Habitat staff participated with the Division of Forestry monitoring FRPA compliance and effectiveness.

## **REGION II & III REFORESTATION SCIENCE & TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Fairbanks staff assisted Division of Forestry staff with Region II & III Reforestation final review and editing.

### **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

#### **ANADROMOUS WATERS CATALOG**

Douglas staff continued field work on a three-year grant from the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund to document anadromous water bodies on private and state timber lands in Southeast Alaska. Staff surveyed 130 drainages and submitted 38 updates to the AWC on Southern Southeast timber lands.

#### **TONGASS COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING**

In a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Division of Habitat and USFS Alaska Region, USFS Agreement No. 14-MU-11100100-015, ADF&G agrees to participate annually in BMP monitoring field visits. Southeast Region staff participated in the annual visits on the Thorne Bay, Juneau, Petersburg, and Sitka Ranger Districts.

#### **TONGASS FISH PASSAGE**

ADF&G also agrees in the MOU to develop general concurrences for routine activities. The Douglas Regional office issued a general concurrence to the USFS for forest routine culvert and bridge maintenance, and structure replacement with stream simulation design, eliminating the need for individual permit review. ADF&G continues to work with the USFS to evaluate fish passage across the forest and prioritize fish passage restoration projects.

## **BUDGET AND PERSONNEL**

### **BUDGET**

ADF&G funding for FRPA activities conducted during calendar year 2017 came from state general funds. The Division of Forestry provided partial funding for our work on the Region II and III reforestation science and technical committee. The AKSSF provided partial funding to identify and nominate freshwater anadromous fish habitat to the Anadromous Waters Catalog in areas where we anticipate timber harvest.

### **PERSONNEL**

#### **New Hires**

Ron Benkert, Southcentral Regional Supervisor, Anchorage  
Brian Blossom, Area Manager, Soldotna  
Luke Byker, Habitat Biologist II, Soldotna  
Dylan Krull, Habitat Biologist II, Douglas  
Justin Burrows, part-time Program Technician, Fairbanks  
Ben Landes, Seasonal Fish and Wildlife Technician, Douglas  
Connor Fish, Seasonal Fish and Wildlife Technician, Sitka

## **Resignations**

Ron Benkert, Area Manager, Palmer

Bonnie Templin, Fish and Game Program Technician, Soldotna

## **STATEMENT OF FRPA EFFECTIVENESS**

ADF&G considers FRPA and its regulations effective for maintaining fish habitat within the classified surface water types during forestry related activities. The Division of Habitat works cooperatively with the Division of Forestry, the Department of Environmental Conservation, landowners and operators to implement FRPA to protect important fish habitat, water quality, and important wildlife habitat from the effects of timber harvest activities.

## **CALENDAR YEAR 2018**

### **WORKLOAD PRIORITIES**

FRPA participation remains a Division of Habitat workload priority in addition to anadromous waters cataloging, fish habitat and special area permitting, special area planning, large projects of importance to the State, and research to aid in permitting decisions. For example, in 2017, the Division of Forestry requested that a biologist complete a road condition survey and consider stream restoration opportunities in Wrangell. Douglas office staff was fully committed to other field projects at the time, so Craig office staff filled in and accompanied Division of Forestry staff to conduct the fieldwork and then issued the Fish Habitat Permit for road closure. As demonstrated here, Division of Habitat staff continues to work with the Divisions of Sport Fish, Commercial Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation, and the Division of Forestry, to identify fish bearing waters and important wildlife habitat on timberlands, participate in forestry reviews, and conduct forestry related fieldwork.

### **OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

If requested, the Division of Habitat will participate in (or lead) Division of Forestry-sponsored training for agency staff and operators to describe fish habitat permitting under the Anadromous Fish and Fishway Acts and strategies to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to important fish and wildlife resources and habitats.

Table 1.–FRPA activities on private, municipal, and trust land.

Area	DPO	Renewals	Change in Operations	Variation Requests	Variation Inspections	Other FRPA Inspections	FHPs Issued	AWC Updates
<b>Southern Southeast</b>	Keete Inlet (6) – STC	Keete Inlet (1) – STC	Keete Inlet (4) – STC	Keete Inlet (2) – STC	Keete Inlet (2) – STC		Keete Inlet (1) – STC	
	Polk Inlet (7) – STC	Polk Inlet (1) – STC	McKenzie Inlet (2) – STC					
	Tuxekan (3) – STC	Edna Bay (1) – STC	Polk Inlet (1) -- STC					
	Kosciusko (1) – STC	Copper Mt. (1) -- STC						
	Election Creek (1) – STC							
	Straw Island (1) – Alcan							
<b>Northern Southeast</b>	Gustavus (1) – AMHT							
	Icy Bay (1) – STC					Tuxekan Island (1) – STC	Icy Bay – TLO (4)	32
<b>Soldotna</b>	Two Moose – CIRI							
<b>Palmer</b>	Sheep Creek (1) – Mat-Su Borough							
<b>Anchorage</b>	Koniag (1) – Koniag Inc.					Koniag – Koniag Inc. (5)		
						Koncor Natives of Kodiak and Ozinkie Native Corp. (5)	ANC (1)	4
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Gana-A-Yoo (1)							
	Faribanks NSB (1)							

Table 2.–FRPA activities on state land.

Area	BIFS	SFMP	FYSTS	FLUP	Personal Use Firewood	House Log Sales	FRPA Inspections	FHPs Issued	AWC Updates
<b>Southern Southeast</b>	Vallenar Bay North Hollis						Gravina Island (3)		
<b>Northern Southeast</b>				Baby Brown			Baby Brown (2)		7
<b>Soldotna</b>			Kenai Area						
<b>Palmer</b>									
<b>Anchorage</b>									
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Cell Spruce			NC-1501-F	(5)*			Delta R Ice Crossing (1)	
	Harding Mixed			NC-1545-F Harding Mixed					
	Halfaspruce			NC-1550-F Dunbar West Birch					
	Dunbar West Birch			NC-1577-F Dunbar West Birch					
	Two Rivers Birch East			NC-1579-F Two Rivers Birch East					
	Little Goldstream Spruce			NC-1582-F Little Goldstream Spruce					
	Iowa Ridge			C-15810-F Iowa Ridge					

\*On state land not in TVSF and not classified forestry.



Table 3.–Activities on federal land.

Area	NEPA	Field Visits	Concurrences
<b>Southern Southeast</b>		Restoration Inspection – TRD	Bridges and Culverts (11)
		BMP Monitoring – TRD	Restoration Projects (1)
<b>Northern Southeast</b>		Restoration BMP – SRD	Bridges and Culverts (8)
		Trails BMP – JRD	
		Trails BMP – PRD	

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