



Matanuska Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership July 2008

*The Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership is a broad-based, cooperative effort to better steward our salmon resources while maintaining economic prosperity.
Our vision – thriving fish, healthy habitats, and vital communities in the Mat-Su Basin.*

Little Susitna River is a Water to Watch

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) has identified the Little Susitna River as one of 10 Waters to Watch nationally because of the number of restoration and monitoring projects the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership will be completing in the watershed over the next five years.

In 2007 NFHAP funds supported wetlands mapping in parts of the Little Su watershed and in 2008, the US Army Corps of Engineers, through their Mat-Su Watershed study, is supporting additional wetlands there. Partner Aquatic Restoration and Research Inc. (ARRI) is evaluating hydrocarbons in the Little Su for the Alaska Clean Waters Action program and is assessing juvenile fish habitat in Little Su tributaries with NFHAP support.

Partners are working to replace out-dated culverts on Little Su tributaries with re-engineered structures to allow fish populations to again move upstream into natural habitats and reclaim lost rearing and spawning grounds. In 2008 and 2009 alone, projects supported by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership will replace between 5 and 8 barrier culverts on the largest tributaries, opening many miles of new habitat on impacted tributaries of the Little Su.

This summer, NFHAP funds are supporting fish passage restoration by the borough on two tributaries -- Government Creek and Colter Creek. With additional funds from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration and design and installation support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy replaced three culverts with arched pipes under private driveways on Colter Creek. The Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District (WSWCD) will be monitoring and revegetating these sites and bringing school children to the sites for an environmental education program.



Girl scouts assist Catherine Inman (WSWCD) with fish trapping on Colter Creek.

What's in a name?

In May, the Steering Committee revised the name of the partnership to the **Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership** to better reflect our focus on protecting and restoring habitat and to align with a naming convention being adopted by other fish habitat partnerships nationally.

Strategic Action Plan

The final version of the plan is available on the Partnership's planning website. In May, representatives from 15 Partnership organizations met to prioritize strategies in the plan. A report summarizing that workshop is also available on the planning website. The Steering Committee plans to revisit the plan every 3 to 5 years or sooner if events in the Mat-Su Basin significantly change the situation for salmon habitat there. You can download the plan at conserveonline.org/workspaces/MatSuSalmon.

The Rewards of Cooperation & Partnership

The Department of the Interior recently awarded the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership a Cooperative Conservation Award to recognize its outstanding contributions toward alleviating impacts on salmon habitat from human use and development in the Mat-Su Basin.

Recipients from across the nation, 21 in all, attended a two-day workshop to share approaches for successful partnerships and to generate ideas for future conservation initiatives and collaborative opportunities.



Kathy Wells (Friends of Mat-Su), Jennifer, Rick & Chief Gary Harrison (Chickaloon Village), Jeanne Hanson (NOAA Fisheries), and John DeLapp & Ann Rappaport (USFWS) received the award from Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, Assistant Secretary Lyle Laverty, and USFWS Director Dale Hall.

Partner Projects Funded in 2008

On a national level, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan received almost \$3 million for FY 2008. More than \$290,000 was allocated for priority projects identified by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership. The Steering Committee reviewed potential projects from Partnership organizations in January and were able to fund eight projects. Projects include wetlands mapping, salmon surveys, culvert replacements, and education and outreach. Partners were able to show a match of over \$375,000.

- Assessment of Juvenile Salmon Habitat in Small Streams ~ *Aquatic Research & Restoration, Inc.*
- Conserving fish habitats in the Mat-Su via the Alaska Anadromous Waters Catalog ~ *US Fish & Wildlife Service*
- Fish Passage Improvement in the Mat-Su Basin ~ *Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Works*
- Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Improvement Through Community Involvement ~ *Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District*
- Salmon Habitat in Clearwater Side Channels of the Matanuska River, Alaska ~ *US Geological Survey*
- Strategic Action Plan Outreach for the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership ~ *The Nature Conservancy*
- Upper Wasilla Creek Fish Passage Restoration ~ *Chickaloon Village Traditional Council*
- Wetlands Conservation in the Mat-Su Basin through Assessment & Mapping ~ *US Fish & Wildlife Service*

Mat-Su Salmon Partners

**** Denotes new partners**

AK Dept of Commerce, Community & Economic Development
AK Dept of Environmental Conservation
AK Dept of Fish & Game
AK Dept of Natural Resources
AK Dept of Transportation & Public Facilities
Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Outdoor Council
Alaska Railroad Corporation
Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats
Aquatic Restoration & Research, Inc.
Bureau of Land Management
Butte Area Residents Civic Organization
Chickaloon Village Traditional Council
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association
Cook Inletkeeper
Environmental Protection Agency
Friends of Mat-Su
Glacier Ridge Properties
Great Land Trust
Knik River Watershed Group
Matanuska River Watershed Coalition
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Park Service
Native Village of Eklutna
Natural Resources Conservation Service
** Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District
** Sierra Club
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
Upper Susitna Soil & Water Conservation District
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Fish & Wildlife Service
US Geological Survey
USDA Forest Service
Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District

To Get Involved

Contact a member of the steering committee:

Frankie Barker, Mat-Su Borough
Tom Brookover, AK Dept Fish & Game
John DeLapp, US Fish & Wildlife
Jessica Dryden, Chickaloon Village
Jeanne Hanson, NOAA Fisheries
Corinne Smith, The Nature Conservancy
Kathy Wells, Friends of Mat-Su