

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

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Dale Bagley, Assembly President
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dale Bagley, Assembly President
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members

FROM: Brent Johnson, Assembly Member

(Handwritten signature) for B.J.

DATE: November 21, 2014

RE: Resolution 2014-066 (Johnson Substitute); A Resolution Relative to Kasilof River Sockeye Smolt Enumeration

A State salmon hatchery was built at Crooked Creek, a tributary of Kasilof River, in 1973.¹ Sockeye eggs and sperm were subsequently collected at Tustumena Lake, incubated in the hatchery and released back into Tustumena lake as "fry." Sockeye fry typically rear in Tustumena Lake for one or two years and then migrate down Kasilof River as "smolt" on their way to rearing in the Pacific Ocean.

The State of Alaska established a Kasilof River sockeye salmon smolt trap study in 1980 to establish estimates on fresh water survival rates.² Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) took over management of Crooked Creek Hatchery in 1993, and the smolt trap estimates. In 2004 the 9th Circuit Court closed the hatchery operation based on potential conflicts with goals of the 1980 Andy Simon Wilderness Area, which encompasses Tustumena Lake.

The State of Alaska and Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association recognize a scientific value in the sockeye smolt estimates and have worked together to continue them through the calendar year 2013 season. However, funding was not provided for the calendar year 2014 season (FY2014 June and FY2015 July) which creates a gap in data. Subsequently, with the help of Kenai Peninsula legislators, a grant of \$25,000 was provided for this project and became

1 McNair, Marianne. *Alaska Salmon Enhancement Program, 2001 Annual Report*, by Alaska Dept of Fish & Game, March 2002, Table 3, page 6.

2 Flagg, Loren; Owecke, Michael; and Waite, David. *Sockeye Salmon Smolt Studies, Kasilof River, Alaska, 1982*. For Fred Division, ADF&G, page 24.

available July 1, 2014 FY2015). That money is available for the project next summer (calendar year 2015 / FY 2015 June).

Seasonally the project costs \$35,000 and therefore an additional \$10,000 is needed. About \$25,000 of the costs are typically incurred before July 1 and \$10,000 of the costs are incurred after July 1. In recent years the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has provided the money for the smolt counts while CIAA has hired the experts and staff who have done the actual work.

Tustumena Lake has apparently become more productive, which is probably due to raised water temperature and possibly lower turbidity. Fishermen and processors use the annual sockeye forecast to help plan for upcoming seasons. In addition, freshwater survival rates are important for science purposes.

This resolution asks the State of Alaska and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to fund the \$10,000 necessary to complete the smolt count next summer and to continue funding the sockeye smolt count in the future.

Your consideration is appreciated.