

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District****Federal Tax ID: 92-016947****Project Title:****Project Type: Planning and Research**

Alaska Association of Conservation Districts - Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District ATV/ORV Salmon Stream Crossings Survey, Assessment & Outreach

State Funding Requested: \$97,500**House District: Mat-Su Areawide (7-11)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

Brief Project Description:

Across the approximately 2.3 million acres in the Mat Su Valley, this project will locate, by GPS and GIS, and assess negative impacts of off-road vehicle crossings on some 400 miles of salmon-rearing streams. A large outreach effort will be made through public meetings to educate the public about the benefits of salmon habitat management. An engineered stream crossing will be enhanced to provide improved habitat protection.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$109,700
Funding Already Secured:	(\$12,200)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$97,500)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

Funding Details:

None.

Detailed Project Description and Justification:**Description:**

ATV/ORV trail crossings of salmon streams significantly degrade the fishery and negatively impact adjacent lands. The Mat-Su Borough has the highest concentration of ATVs in the State and serves as the motorized playground for Mat-Su Valley residents and Anchorage. The project will cover the watersheds of the Greater Wasilla, Palmer, and Houston areas within the heartland of the Mat-Su Borough. The research is primarily formulated to assist ADF&G with mandatory management of stream crossings, as related to the impact on fish resources. The goal is to inventory, photograph, record, and assign a numeric ranking value at each site. Better decisions can then be made to funnel current trails into fewer permitted crossings, while ensuring and preserving future recreation user access. This inter-agency prioritized list will be shared with user groups and agencies to systematically propose and fund future projects. As a not-for-profit, non-regulatory, community agency, the Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District is capably postured to bridge the gap between government and trail users, ensure healthy salmon habitat, and preserve access.

Justification:

Many ATV/ORV riders do not know and understand the impacts they have on salmon streams. This fact was confirmed

during a 2012 WSWCD survey of riders conducted on-site at the Swiftwater Creek trailhead. The State Recreation Trails Grant program will not fund assessment/survey projects. Without ATV registrations, there is no other mechanism for funding a logical plan for future crossing upgrade construction projects.

Accomplishments/Deliverables:

Research land ownership; assess crossings in the field, using detailed site survey data forms cooperatively developed by USFWS & ADF&G to collect physical characteristics and natural resources; record and GPS locations; upload data into existing GIS systems; partner with resource agencies to provide an acceptable, chronologically prioritized list of crossings for future funding; and construct a model crossing project at McRoberts Creek to provide a cookie-cutter outline and methodology for agencies and/or non-profits to develop public process and involvement action plans from project inception to ribbon-cutting.

Partners:

This project will cover the watersheds of the Greater Wasilla-Palmer, & Houston areas within the heartland of the Mat-Su Borough. Partners include private and public land owners; Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District; Cities of Wasilla and Houston; the Mat-Su Borough, the Mat-Su College; ADF&G; Mental Health Trust; DNR; Div. of Forestry; Div. of Juvenile Justice; USFWS; National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program; Mat-Su Trails Council; Alaska Trails; Upper Cook Inlet Sport Fish Assn. (UCISA).

Project Timeline:

2014 - July	\$ 7,500
August	\$10,000
Sept	\$10,000
Oct-Dec	\$15,000
March	\$10,000
April -	\$15,000
May -	\$20,000
June	\$10,000

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

N/A; research & assessment project

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No

For use by Co-chair Staff Only:

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