

Environmental Monitoring and Assessment of Surface Waters

FY2004 Request: \$1,763,495
Reference No: 37756

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Health and Safety

Category: Natural Resources

Location: Statewide

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House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)

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Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2003 - 06/30/2008

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

Federal funding from the EPA will enable Alaska to conduct water quality monitoring, with initial assessments in coastal southeast Alaska and the Yukon River watershed, to contribute to the development of baseline information through the Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) plan on the health of Alaska's waters. The baseline information that will be gathered from this project will be the basis for ensuring that Alaska's waters remain workable, fishable, drinkable and swimmable.

Funding:	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$1,763,495						\$1,763,495
Total:	\$1,763,495	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,763,495

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	135,899	2
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	135,899	2

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

A prior appropriation for a similar project collecting baseline data for Prince William Sound was made in FY2002 for 1,000,000.

Project Description/Justification:

This capital improvement project will enable the DEC Air and Water Data and Monitoring program to conduct baseline water quality monitoring gathering information on the health of Alaska's waters, in coordination with Alaska's Clean Water Actions plan.

The monitoring projects will be designed to yield results which will statistically represent large geographic areas. The field sampling will assess the existing baseline concentration for known harmful contaminants in the marine or river sediments, in the water column and in the tissue of fish, shellfish and benthic species. The studies are not designed to examine impacts from specific known or suspected sources of pollution, but rather to assess the overall health of the water environment. We know that some pollutants are naturally high in Alaska due to geologic conditions. This work will help document the extent or unique nature of those conditions as well as the potential import of pollutants from other areas of the world. The knowledge gained will be used for resource management decisions and useful for potential new development projects. Two separate projects are proposed as described below.

The Southeast assessment will provide information and knowledge that will help resource managers better characterize the health of our near-shore environment by understanding the spatial extent and relative importance of various stressors and impacts over the Southeast Alaska coastal eco-region. The project will provide a baseline dataset which would complement the Southeast Sustainable Salmon Fund initiative/research and help scientists improve their understanding

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of the marine environment between the Pacific Northwest and the Gulf of Alaska which is key to our commercial fishing industry.

Monitoring and assessing the health of the Yukon watershed in Western Alaska using Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (EMAP) protocols would represent the first step in helping to address local concerns about impacts to the environment in western section of the state. DEC would serve as lead agency working closely with local villages and regional corporations. This project would provide an unbiased objective assessment of the environmental condition of the Yukon watershed. Results would help state and local resource managers understand the spatial extent and relative importance of various stressors, which may be impacting this important regional watershed. One key objective would be to identify how village growth and modernization may be impacting this rural river drainage with a long-term focus of potential impacts on the region's subsistence life style. The project would simultaneously provide a surface-water quality baseline for the watershed which the State and local governments may build on through the Alaska Clean Water Actions plan. The results would also assist with identifying further assessment needs for reporting on the condition of Alaska's fisheries and waters.

DEC would manage these two, and any additional EMAP projects, in the same manner as the first EMAP project by partnering with cooperating public and non-governmental organizations to develop sampling design, conduct sample collections, analyze, catalog and distribute the information.

This project, in conjunction with the first EMAP project in southcentral Alaska, will provide baseline information on the health of Alaska's waters to use as a basis for ensuring Alaska's water remain workable, fishable, drinkable and swimmable.