

Public Access and User Facilities Improvements at the Mouth of the Kasilof River Phase One

FY2014 Request: \$1,400,000
Reference No: 51197

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Renewal and Replacement
Category: Natural Resources **House District:** Homer/South Kenai (HD 30)
Location: Kasilof **Contact:** Jean Davis
Impact House District: Kenai Areawide (HD 28-30) **Contact Phone:** (907)465-2422
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2013 - 06/30/2018

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

There are urgent problems needing immediate attention where the Kasilof River flows into the Cook Inlet. Unstructured access and parking, camping, and a lack of solid and human waste facilities have resulted in serious environmental, social, and natural resource impacts. Additionally public safety, emergency, and law enforcement services are hindered. The impacts being addressed result from the highly popular personal use fisheries created by the Board of Fish. The number of Alaskans participating in this unique program continues to grow annually (approximately 10,000 users this year) resulting in ever increasing impacts to the areas natural resources.

Funding:	<u>FY2014</u>	<u>FY2015</u>	<u>FY2016</u>	<u>FY2017</u>	<u>FY2018</u>	<u>FY2019</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gen Fund	\$1,400,000						\$1,400,000
Total:	\$1,400,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,400,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input checked="" 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:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	50,000	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	50,000	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

No prior funding history

Project Description/Justification:

WHAT IS THE ISSUE OR PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED?

The issues or problems to be solved include: degradation of sensitive coastal dunes and wetlands; insufficient sanitation facilities; unimproved parking and camping areas; water quality degradation; insufficient access for emergency and sanitation services; and trespass onto private property.

Intense human use of this area has created unforeseen consequences and impacts to the environment that are socially unacceptable. This project will bring order to use of the state's resources and address public health and safety issues while protecting the affected resources from continued impacts.

The negative impacts described above were brought to the attention of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by the community members, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and a variety of interest groups. Most requested that DNR implement a proactive land management approach in order to address these ever increasing impacts.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED?

This project consists of two phases of \$1,400,000 each. Phase I in FY2014 creates access and parking facilities on both the north and south sides of the Kasilof River near the river mouth to alleviate congestion, improve safety, and provide sanitation facilities.

Phase I improvements include:

- Developed parking area for 120 vehicles
- Designated drop-off and turn around areas
- Two (2) double-vaulted toilets within the designated parking areas
- Staging areas for portable toilets and dumpsters
- Informational kiosks and interpretive signs

Phase II (\$1,400,000 to be requested in FY2015) creates additional parking, pedestrian and motorized access routes, and a camping area.

Phase II improvements include:

- Developed parking area for 93 vehicles
- Camping area and designated RV sites
- Gravel loop road joining the main parking area and camping area
- Additional staging areas for portable toilets and dumpsters
- Maintenance and repair of the existing dune fencing

WHAT RESULTS WILL BE ACHIEVED AND/OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED?

The immediate result will bring order to the management and use of the state land in this area and reverse a dangerous trend of public safety concerns. The general public will benefit from improved access, designated parking areas, and additional sanitation facilities. Public safety and emergency services will become more reliable thereby increasing overall public safety.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED NOW – WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF REMAINING STATUS QUO?

The current unstructured access and parking situation at the two main access routes to the Kasilof River mouth significantly restricts public access, creates public safety concerns for emergency and law enforcement personnel, and challenges DNR abilities to handle the increased impacts to the areas natural resources. Unimproved access also results in trespass by the general public onto surrounding private lands for parking and camping purposes elevating animosity between locals and personal use fishery participants. This undesirable situation will continue if not managed to accommodate the approximate 10,000 users that enjoy this area each year.

WHAT ALTERNATIVES WERE CONSIDERED TO SOLVE THE ISSUE OR PROBLEM, AND WHY WERE THEY NOT SELECTED?

For many years the impacts as a direct result of the thousands of users in the area had gone somewhat under-managed. One alternative would be to continue managing the area status quo (passive) which would lead to additional impacts to the coastal resources habitat, continuing concerns to public health and safety, and continuing concerns about water quality.

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An additional alternative considered reflected a higher level of development and improvement. However, it was determined that current and near term projected demands do not support a higher level of investment, therefore this alternative was not advanced.

The alternative presented in this proposal provides the public increased opportunities to participate in the personal use fisheries in an appropriate and responsible manner that shall not cause further degradation to the area and its rich natural resources. This project represents the minimal investment necessary to address natural resource and community concerns over impacts to this area.

SPECIFIC SPENDING DETAIL:

<u>LINE ITEM</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Personal Services	\$ 25,000	Project Manager Costs
Travel	\$ 20,000	Airfare, Lodging, Vehicle Use, Gas
Services	\$ 430,000	Design/Engineering, Construction
Commodities	\$ 25,000	Operations/Maintenance Support
Capital Outlay	\$ 900,000	Physical Improvements
Grants	\$ 0	
PROJECT TOTAL	\$ 1,400,000	

Project Support:

The creation of the Kasilof River Special Use Area designation included recognition that additional management resources were necessary to meet the increasing public demands and to reverse negative impacts to the coastal habitat at the mouth of the Kasilof River. DNR enjoyed widespread support for an additional management option such as requested with this CIP project. That support came from a wide variety of sources including local governments, other state agencies, and various interest groups.