

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: Kenai Peninsula Borough****Federal Tax ID: 92-0030894****Project Title:****Project Type: Other**

# Kenai Peninsula Borough - Elodea Eradication Project

**State Funding Requested: \$700,000****House District: Kenai Areawide (28-30)**

One-Time Need

**Brief Project Description:**

Elodea Eradication Project-Tier 1 Project

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$880,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$180,000)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$700,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Elodea is an invasive aquatic plant which multiplies quickly, inundating and clogging water bodies. Elodea was identified in three lakes on the Kenai Peninsula in 2012 and 2013 -- Beck, Daniels, and Stormy Lakes. Elodea invasion has severe impacts, including degraded fish habitat and displacement of native plants, devastation of salmon spawning environments, and impediment to boat travel and reduction of other recreational opportunities.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough -- with its economic foundation of tourism, commercial fishing and sport fishing -- cannot afford to have its extensive network of lakes consumed by Elodea. As only a fragment of a plant is required to distribute the aquatic weed, it could easily spread to the entire wetland complex of the eastern Kenai Peninsula.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly approved an FY14 budget appropriation of \$40,000 to combat the invasive plant. This money was used to purchase Diquat -- a nonselective, contact herbicide that is considerably less expensive to use than Fluridone (Sonar), but eradication will require a more intensive and expanded program.

Elodea quickly migrates to new water bodies, and a successful eradication program will involve both chemical mitigation extant Elodea populations and a persistent educational campaign to teach boat owners and recreational lake users how to avoid spreading the plant. If Elodea can be eradicated from the three Kenai Peninsula lakes which it has infected, it is more likely that other water bodies on the Peninsula will remain Elodea free.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough is requesting \$700,000 to fund development of a comprehensive Elodea eradication program. It is anticipated that development and execution of the program would be accomplished through a cooperative effort by the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), Kenai Watershed Forum, and other partner agencies; this would fully eradicate Elodea from all three infected lakes using Fluridone over the course of four treatments. Fluridone does not appear to have any apparent short-term or long-term effects on fish or birds at application rates.

Without a full-scale attack on this invasive weed, it is likely that the Kenai Peninsula Borough will suffer substantial economic impact, as the region's lakes grow to be so widely infected that eradication is impossible. The risk of Elodea spreading is directly linked to the proximity of infected water bodies to non-infected water bodies. By eliminating Elodea before it spreads further, we have the potential to keep Kenai Peninsula lakes healthy and able to support the spawning of our precious salmon resources and protect the recreational, cultural and economic values of this important shared asset.

**Project Timeline:**

ongoing

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

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

**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