

2018 Sockeye Salmon Disaster - Chignik Area

FY2022 Request: \$2,000,000

Reference No: 63237

AP/AL: Appropriation
Category: Natural Resources
Location: Chignik

Project Type: Research / Studies / Planning

House District: Bristol Bay/Aleutians/Upper Kuskokwim (HD 37)

Impact House District: Bristol Bay/Aleutians/Upper Kuskokwim (HD 37)

Contact: Sam Rabung

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2021 - 06/30/2026

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Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Secretary of Commerce announced on February 27, 2020, that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) allocated \$10,327,039 for the 2018 Chignik Area sockeye salmon fishery disaster relief. The State of Alaska is working with affected stakeholders and NOAA Fisheries to identify funding priorities and develop a distribution plan for the disaster funds. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission will administer the federal grant and distribute funds. Part of the funding may be allocated to the Department of Fish & Game for research and administrative support. This funding is estimated to be approximately \$2,000,000.

Funding:	<u>FY2022</u>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>Total</u>
1002 Fed Rcpts	\$2,000,000						\$2,000,000
Total:	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000,000

<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"/> Ongoing
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:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

Project Description/Justification:

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Please note this plan is still being formulated and is going through the public comment process. Final funding amounts are subject to NOAA Fisheries approval and research project selection through an open competitive bidding process.

The 2018 Chignik sockeye salmon fishery disaster resulted from a failure in both the early and late run components of the stock. Key data gaps exist as to the potential cause of the collapse and the extent to which freshwater or marine processes contributed to the failure of both runs is unknown. Disaster funds will be used for scientific and socioeconomic research activities to better understand sockeye salmon ecology and abundance, improve sockeye salmon forecasts in the future, and

improve understanding of the effects of the Chignik sockeye salmon disaster on subsistence users in the region.

There are two genetically distinct sockeye salmon runs that contribute to the Chignik sockeye salmon fishery. The early-run, predominantly Black Lake watershed, sockeye salmon and the late-run, primarily Chignik Lake watershed sockeye salmon. Information from ADF&G shows that the total Chignik sockeye salmon run has both a long-term (1998 to 2017) and short-term (2013 to 2017) average size of approximately 2.4 million fish. In 2018, both the early and late runs failed, and total run size was approximately 540,000 sockeye salmon. Key data gaps exist as to the potential cause of the collapse and the extent to which freshwater or marine processes contributed to the failure of both runs is unknown. Research funds will be available by competitive bid through PSMFC. Funds will be available for scientific research projects that provide information to help fishery scientists and managers assess the freshwater and marine conditions that influence the productivity of the Chignik sockeye salmon stock. The primary goals of research funds are to further our understanding of the cause of the 2018 Chignik sockeye salmon fishery failure, better understand the abundance and ecology of Chignik sockeye salmon, improve the ability of resource managers to identify future poor runs, and to help managers avoid and mitigate the impacts of future Chignik sockeye salmon fishery disasters that cannot be prevented.

Funds will also be available for socioeconomic research to examine the effects of the Chignik sockeye salmon disaster on subsistence users in the region. This research will help scientists and managers better understand the relationships between subsistence and commercial fishing, factors that affect harvest effort and harvest success, and will help to effectively manage future fish related disasters. Based on initial comments received from stakeholders and resource managers, ADF&G recommends funding research projects that are focused around the following themes: 1) Better understanding of the environmental factors and freshwater and marine processes that drive downstream movement of early and late run sockeye salmon. 2) Investigate juvenile sockeye salmon movement, growth, and habitat use in freshwater and estuarine environments. 3) Improvements to sockeye salmon escapement enumeration with a focus on late-season assessment. 4) Better understanding of the socioeconomic effects of fishery disasters on subsistence users in the region related to food security concerns.

Program Support: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is proposing to designate funds for staff time dedicated to fishery disaster plan development and implementation in coordination with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). ADF&G is proposing to allocate funds to cover salary and benefits for a Program Coordinator position to oversee the fishery disaster program on behalf of the State of Alaska. Fishery disaster coordination is not expected to require full-time year-round work. Funding for this position is expected to cover an average workload of 37.5 hours per month plus indirect costs.