

**Big Eddy EVOS Restoration and Improvements**

**FY2023 Request: \$4,329,567**  
**Reference No: 63979**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Parks / Recreation

**Category:** Public Protection

**Location:** Statewide

**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)

**Impact House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)

**Contact:** Jashryn Mendoza

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2027

**Contact Phone:** (907)465-2495

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

The Department will restore and protect fish habitat and improve recreation access at Big Eddy Unit of the Kenai River Special Management Area. Funding was awarded by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC) to the Kenai River Sportfishing Association who will be transferring the funds to the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to deliver the project.

<b>Funding:</b>	<b>FY2023</b>	<b>FY2024</b>	<b>FY2025</b>	<b>FY2026</b>	<b>FY2027</b>	<b>FY2028</b>	<b>Total</b>
1018 EVOSS	\$4,329,567						\$4,329,567
<b>Total:</b>	\$4,329,567	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,329,567

<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
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Prior Funding History / Additional Information:**

**Project Description/Justification:**

Alaska Statute 41.21.020 directs the Department in part to develop a plan to conserve and maximize use in the public interest of biological and recreational resources of the state. This project will support that directive by balancing habitat protection and improving recreational access at Big Eddy located in Soldotna and within the Kenai River Special Management Area.

Recreational access at Big Eddy has resulted in adverse effects to the area’s natural resources and destabilized the riverbank. The existing elevated walkway and viewing deck have exceeded their intended useful lives and do not meet current codes and standards. There is an insufficient number of river access stairs causing over-crowding at localized points and contributing to riverbank deterioration. The existing parking area is undersized and unorganized resulting in vehicles spilling out into the roadway (Figure 1). The section of road within the park unit is unpaved resulting in airborne dust, uncomfortable driving surface, and maintenance burdens.



Figure 1 - Undersized and Unorganized Parking Resulting in Vehicles Parked in Roadway (July 23, 2021)

This project will stabilize and restore approximately 150 feet of riverbank using bioengineered techniques that also create fish habitat. The existing elevated walkway and deck will be demolished, and a new elevated light-penetrating (ELP) walkway will be constructed to allow for ADA-compliant access without adversely impacting riparian resources. Approximately 1,000 feet of new ELP walkway will be constructed. Five to six river access stairs will be constructed for angler access to disperse use and prevent concentrated impacts to the riverbank and fish habitat. A 30-stall parking area will also be constructed away from the riverbank to meet user demands and help prevent haphazard parking in sensitive riparian areas. The parking area and roadway will be paved to control airborne dust, create a smoother driving surface, and help alleviate maintenance burdens. Five interpretive panels will be installed to facilitate redirecting human impact and to promote public participation in the long-term success of the project and project objectives.

This project will create both short and long term jobs. The construction aspects of this project will be contracted out and will support the construction industry. The improved facilities will support jobs in the outdoor recreation and tourism industries for the long term by creating safer and more attractive recreational facilities.

There are no reasonable alternatives to this project that would produce comparable results. This project is receipt authority for funding that the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC) awarded to the Kenai River Sportfishing Association for a time period spanning the council's fiscal years 2022 through 2026. This project is necessary in FY2023 to align with that programmatic timeline.