

EVOS Prince William Sound Pollock and Herring Interaction

FY2023 Request: \$4,129,317
Reference No: 63992

AP/AL: Appropriation
Category: Natural Resources
Location: Statewide
Impact House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2027

Project Type: Research / Studies / Planning
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)
Contact: Sam Rabung
Contact Phone: (907)465-6100

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The EVOS Prince William Sound Pollack and Herring Interaction project reestablishes the 30-year bottom trawl survey that provides the Department of Fish & Game with abundance estimates of commercially important groundfish and shellfish in Prince William Sound. By estimating the abundance of pollock in Prince William Sound and quantifying the interactions and potential disease transfer between herring and pollock, this project provides information used to improve management of the pollock fishery and understand the lack of recovery of Prince William Sound herring stocks since the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS).

Funding:	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>Total</u>
1018 EVOSS	\$4,129,317						\$4,129,317
Total:	\$4,129,317	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,129,317

<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:

The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOS-TC) was formed to oversee restoration of the injured ecosystem using the \$900 million civil settlement. The project will begin work during late winter of FY2022.

The Prince William Sound (PWS) pollock population increased dramatically in the early-mid 1990s, around the time that the PWS herring population crashed. Since then, research has provided evidence that pollock play an important role as predators on, and competitors with, herring potentially limiting the recovery of herring. In addition to competition, pollock may also be a major vector of disease transmission to herring. This project will continue historical surveys that provided the population trends of pollock abundance and will provide new information on interactions between pollock and herring in PWS. This information directly informs the management of the pollock fisheries in State and federal waters of PWS and the Gulf of Alaska. This project will estimate the spawning stock biomass and age structure of pollock, collect pollock samples to assess the potential for transmission to herring, and use DNA analysis to examine

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pollock stomach contents for evidence of predation on herring. Field work will take place during a winter survey on pre-spawn aggregates of pollock, and a summer survey when pollock are feeding. The surveys will be conducted on the Department of Fish & Game's research vessel, *RV Solstice*.

Line Item	Amount
1000 - Personal Services	\$2,436,760
2000 - Travel	\$73,112
3000 - Services	\$1,371,610
4000 - Commodities	\$117,525
5000 - Capital Outlay	\$130,310
7000 - Grants	
Total Request	\$4,129,317

Project will fund existing positions:

Partial funding for six positions that will be on the surveys and while on sea duty aboard the *RV Solstice*. The PCNs partially funded are 11-1258, 11-7020, 11-5187, 11-1109, 11-1331, and 11-1113.

The project will also fund a new Fisheries Biologist I for 10 months (the PCN has not yet been identified). Beginning in FY23, the project will also partially fund otolith aging technicians PCNs 11-5289, 11-5299, 11-6139, and 11-1978.