12.01.2016

# Kodiak Island Habitat Enhancement Proposal
# Buskin River Watershed

Photo: Buskin Lake with Chiniak Bay in background, Kodiak, Alaska, by Franklin Dekker

## Project Background

The Kodiak Archipelago is an Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) affected geographic area and its injured resources and services have received past and ongoing EVOS Trustee Council (EVOSTC) habitat restoration support. For example, the EVOSTC is currently considering new conservation easements on Kodiak Island for protection of habitats, species and services affected by the EVOS such as herring, harbor seals, salmon and fishing opportunities. In this proposal the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) propose a watershed-scale, on the ground restoration effort that will similarly benefit Kodiak's habitat, species, and services affected by the spill. The Buskin River Watershed has been identified as the highest priority for restoration because its salmon fishery is Kodiak's most important and widely used for subsistence and recreation users. Also, landowners in the watershed are supportive and willing to contribute funding and time to complete the project. We propose to restore fish passage at 20 barriers, 10 through removal and 10 through replacement, in partnership with three supportive landowners, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) and the Natives of Kodiak. The projects chosen will restore access to over 6 miles of upstream habitat and 53 acres of lakes in the 26 square mile Buskin River drainage. There is no agency or landowner requirements to address these fish passage barriers, and without this funding and partnership restoration of this watershed would not progress. By restoring unimpeded movement for salmon and trout species and reconnecting fragmented natural processes, the productivity of the Buskin River watershed and greater Women's Bay and Chiniak Bay areas will be improved. The proposed restoration work in Kodiak will bolster and enhance ecosystem function for a productive watershed and provide additional opportunity for impacted species populations to recover and improved opportunities for commercial, recreational and subsistence fishing.

FIGURE 1: BUSKIN WATERSHED & CULVERT LOCATION MAP

## Project Narrative

This restoration proposal focuses on improving connectivity and ecological processes for injured EVOS species and services within the Buskin River watershed by removing or replacing 20 culverts identified by ADF&G as barriers to the free movement of fish including salmonids, trout and other native species (see figure 1 for map). These 20 culverts include both total and partial fish passage barriers that impede the upstream movement of adult and juvenile salmon and native fish as well as contribute to local channel degredation, scour and other impacts.

Photo 1: Perched culvert on a Battery Creek tributary

Unrestricted fish access to spawning, rearing, and overwintering habitats is essential to maintaining salmonid production as well as healthy populations of resident trout and other fish (Jackson 2003). Barriers to fish passage also degrade riparian and instream ecosystem function. Natural processes such as sediment transport, water flow, water temperature regimes and the transfer of marine derived nutrients beneficial to mammals, birds, and fish species in the watershed are all affected the lack of

connectivity caused by barriers. Increased biocomplexity and species resilience to urban development and climate stressors is more fully realized when aquatic species passage is provided. Removing aquatic species passage barriers is expected to allow access to additional spawning areas for adult salmon and allow access to additional feeding, rearing, and overwintering areas for juvenile salmonids and other species resulting in better survival. Fish distribution and presence throughout the Buskin Watershed and in adjacent marine waters will be improved.

Returning salmon make an important contribution to marine, freshwater, and forest ecosystems of Kodiak, interacting with mammals, birds, and fish. Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.*) are a direct food source for a variety of marine, terrestrial, and avian species. Salmon also deliver large amounts of marine-derived nutrients (MDN) to freshwater ecosystems through their eggs, excretion, or carcasses, whichimproves the productivity of the wider Kodiak ecosystem. Species and habitats affected by EVOS are likely to have a direct reliance on the annual pulse of returning salmon and the nutrients they deliver. For example, marine mammals follow the movements and timing of migrating salmon to feed on this rich resource. Also, Dolly Varden follow salmon returning to freshwater and feed directly on salmon eggs and decaying carcasses; further, Dolly Varden benefit from the salmon-transferred MDN that improve overall aquatic ecosystem productivity. Implementing this project will restore habitat connectivity and riparian function in the Buskin River watershed, benefiting the overall watershed ecological health and in turn contributing benefits to injured and recovering species as well as subsistence fishing, sport fishing, recreation, and other services injured by the spill.

FIGURE 2: EXXON VALDEZ AFFECTED AREA

To focus the restoration efforts in areas of concern to the EVOSTC, queries were run in the USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) database and in the NOAA Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA) to provide a summary of coastal resources that are at risk, including important biological resources, sensitive shorelines, and human-use

resources. From these queries habitat restoration in the Buskin River system was identified as a priority because of the importance to the trust resources of EVOS and the supporting agencies (NOAA, USFWS, ADF&G), willingness of the landowners, and opportunities for in kind support.

The projects chosen will restore access to over 6 miles of upstream habitat and 53 acres of lakes in the Buskin River drainage. By restoring unimpeded movement for salmon and trout species and reconnecting fragmented natural processes, the productivity and resilience of the Buskin River watershed and greater Women's Bay and Chiniak Bay areas will be improved.

This project complements other conservation efforts in the Kodiak Archipelago, adding greater natural diversity and improving environmental resiliency in the face of climate change. At 10 sites, the existing road crossing culvert will be removed entirely by the US Coast Guard. At the other 10 sites, the existing culvert will be replaced with a bridge or larger diameter embedded culvert or bottomless arch culvert, following the United States Forest Service (USFS) stream simulation methodology (USFS 2008). Large historical debris from old culverts failures have been observed throughout the system. This debris is detrimental to water quality and fish passage and will be removed where possible. Where necessary, adjacent stream banks will be re-vegetated with native vegetation and stream channels restored to the natural slope and hydraulic capacity. In addition to improving fish passage, installing correctly-sized stream simulation culverts will greatly reduce the likelihood of catastrophic road failures in the future (Cafferata et al. 2004) and enhance aquatic habitat quality in the area adjacent to the road crossings for all aquatic organisms, especially for juvenile salmonids.

## Injured resource Benefits:

**Species Benefits:** The IPaC report identifies the Buskin River and drainage as critical habitat for Steller's eider, Northern Sea Otter, and Steller Sea Lion. The area is also deemed year round habitat for Bald Eagle, Black Oystercatcher, Kittlitz's Murrelet, Marbled Murrelet, Pelagic Cormorant and Red-faced Cormorant. ADF&G identifies Dolly Varden, pink, coho, and sockeye salmon in the system. Salmon are an important part of the food chain for the Steller Sea Lion and Killer Whales commonly seen feeding in the marine outfall of the Buskin River. Because the work proposed will enhance the entire watershed the ecological benefits will encompass the surrounding area through improved sediment transfer and nutrient transfer in the system and its surrounding terrestrial habitat.

**Service Benefits:** The Buskin River is one of the most productive fisheries on the road system in Kodiak. This important accessibility makes it vital to the community's commerce and subsistence.

**Recreation:** The restoration projects proposed are upstream of the Alaska State Parks Buskin River Recreation Site. This area is well used by recreational fishers, campers, and hikers. ADF&G estimates 12,808 sport fishing days by 2,921 anglers on the Buskin River in 2015. In the past decade, recreational fishing effort on the Buskin River has represented 33% of total annual freshwater recreational fishing effort in the Kodiak Management Area (Polum 2014).

**Subsistence:** The Buskin River supports a subsistence fishery for sockeye and coho salmon. Because of accessibility and the presence of desired species, this is the most important road-accessible subsistence fishery in the Kodiak Archipelago. ADF&G estimates from 2004-2012 indicate and average 5,524 sockeye and in 2008 estimate 1,232 coho caught in the subsistence fishery.

**Commercial:** The Buskin River system contributes to the Chiniak Bay s salmon fishery which is a small but vital fishery to the region.

## Description of Work

Photo 2: USFWS has funded design for this USCG culvert on

There are a total of 20 culverts in the Buskin River drainage that block aquatic organism (AOP) and fish passage to quality spawning and rearing habitats and negatively affect natural watershed processes. (See table 1 for a complete list). These culverts are known barriers identified through ADF&G's Fish Passage Program , rankings of red indicate the culvert has been fully assessed through ADF&G fish passage program as inadequate for fish passage, black and grey culverts listed have since been

determined to block passage and have been identified as priorities for restoration through various prioritization efforts by USFWS and ADF&G. Barriers on Anton Larson Road above Buskin Lake and Devil's Creek were not included in this proposal because ADF&G biologists determined the streams did not have high quality habitat. Addressing the suite of 20 priority culverts through one coordinated project will collectively restore the Buskin River watershed to a natural condition, promoting and enhancing the recovery of many EVOS-impacted species and services. The success of this project is predicated on partnerships. ADF&G, NOAA, and USFWS agree that the Buskin River watershed is a priority restoration opportunity in the Kodiak Archipelago.

The three landowners in the project area (i.e., the US Coast Guard (USCG), the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), and the Natives of Kodiak are committed to the restoration work under their respective jurisdictions. The current alignment of resource agencies and landowners cannot be overstated. Past efforts to replace individual barriers and restore connectivity in the Buskin watershed have not been able to progress until now . Thus, with the commitment of all parties involved, it is important that we capitalize on the timing and opportunity to take a watershed-scale approach to restoring aquatic connectivity and natural processes in the Buskin River.

| CULVERT LOCATION AND OWNERSHIP | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stream Name | Road Name | ADFG Rating | ADFG Number | Ownership | Solution |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | USGS Battery Road | Black | 10103248 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | Gunnery Drive | Black | 10103253 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | Shooting Range | Black | 10103254 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | Gunnery Drive | Black | 10103255 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | Magazine Access Road | Black | 10103256 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | Magazine Access Road | Black | 10103259 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | Burma Road | Black | 10103260 | USCG | Remove |
| Tributary to Battery Creek | Access Road | Red | 10103261 | USCG | Remove |
| Battery Creek | Anton Larsen Bay Road | Red | 20700785 | DOT | AOP Replace |
| Battery Creek | US Coast Guard Access Road | Red | 20700786 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Lake Louise | Tom Stiles Road | Gray | 20700877 | USCG | AOP Replace |
| Tributary to Buskin Lake | Old Military Road | Black | 20703436 | USCG | Remove |
| Tributary to Buskin River | Old Military Road | Black | 20703437 | USCG | Remove |
| Tributary to Buskin River | Old Military Road | Red | 20703438 | USCG | Remove |
| Tributary to Buskin River | Old Military Road | Red | 20703439 | USCG | Remove |
| Tributary to Buskin River | Old Military Road | Black | 20703439a | USCG | Remove |
| Boy Scout Lake Outlet | Old Military Road | Red | 20703440 | Natives of Kodiak | AOP Replace |
| Genivieve Creek | Abandoned | Black | 20703470 | USCG | Remove |
| Tributary of Genivieve Creek | Abandoned | Black | 20703470a | USCG | Remove |
| Tributary to Boy Scout Lake | Abandoned | Black | 20703471 | Natives of Kodiak | Remove |
| Instream Debris Removal | System Wide | | | Various | Remove |

Table 1: List of Culverts

**USCG owned sites**: 17 culverts on USCG property have been identified, 9 of these culverts will be removed and the channel restored by the USCG and 8 culverts will be removed and replaced using the requested funds from EVOSTC. This work will mainly take place in tributaries to the Buskin River in the upper watershed of the Buskin Drainage. These tributaries provide several miles of spawning, rearing, and wetland habitat and benefit the larger watershed via sediment flow that recharges downstream habitats. The culverts on USCG land are primarily WWII era culverts that are in very poor condition and heavily impact aquatic organism passage, aquatic connectivity, and stream habitat. Several are made of creosote treated wood. They are located on unpaved roads and tracks, some of which are no longer used. The USCG has committed to this project by allocating construction funds to conduct removal of the culverts located on unused roads and lightly used tracks. Requested funds would be used to replace culverts on roads that are still in use. All work will be conducted under direction of the USFWS, ADF&G, NOAA, and local participation by partners at Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District. The work conducted under direction of these agencies will abide by all environmental regulations dealing with in water work and contamination.

In addition to culvert work, a previously ditched section of a Battery Creek tributary will be restored to its historical channel allowing for reconnection to groundwater sources and improving the thermal regime of the Buskin watershed (See Photo 3).

Photo 3: Groundwater in historical channel

**AKDOT owned site**: AKDOT is the owner of one red culvert in the Buskin system on Anton Larsen Bay Road and Battery Creek. This is a large crossing located on a heavily used paved road near the mouth of Battery Creek. A water line also crosses the road at this location. The current culvert is permitted and there is no obligation by AKDOT to replace it. All action on replacing this culvert would be above and beyond what is required of AKDOT. Restoration of this culvert is crucial to fish passage upstream in Battery Creek as it is the lowest culvert in the system. AKDOT will manage the permitting and construction of this culvert and EVOSTC funds are requested to fund the design and construction. This removal and restoration is one of the larger projects on a second order stream, allowing for habitat access in the larger system and access to side channel rearing.

Photo 4: A coho salmon failing to pass a perched culvert at Boy Scout Lake outlet

**Natives of Kodiak**: The remaining two barriers are located on land owned by Natives of Kodiak. During a site visit in September of 2016, adult Chinook and coho salmon were observed attempting to leap into the culvert at the Boy Scout Lake outlet and all failed repeatedly. (See Photo 4; Video is available at: https://vimeo.com/185348321). At this site, the options for restoration are either to replace the culvert or to build a pedestrian bridge. The Natives of Kodiak have agreed to both of these options even though a pedestrian bridge would limit access of vehicles on this road. The site will require construction of a water control structure and a longer meandering channel to provide fish passage due to a 4'-7' difference in lake and stream elevation. An alternatives analysis will be performed and the most economical structure that provides for fish passage will be used at this site. The other culvert, located upstream of Boy Scout Lake, will be removed and the stream function will be restored. EVOSTC funds are requested for both of these projects. The Natives of Kodiak land and trails in the Boy Scout Lake area are currently open to the public for recreational use. The Natives of Kodiak personnel support these barrier removal projects and have stated they have no intention to restrict public access to this area. Further, Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association (KRAA) operates a salmon enhancement project on Boy Scout Lake and has provided a letter of support for these barrier removals.

## Estimated Cost & Schedule:

The EVOSTC request for this work is $4.5 million. (See Table 1 below). Leveraging for this project has already included a $100,000 investment by the USFWS for survey, design and geotechnical investigations. Work by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to remove culverts is estimated to be a $200,000 match for construction, permitting and contract administration. AKDOT will provide contract administration and permitting; they have requested $80,000 to cover these costs. The USFWS, ADF&G and NOAA have invested approximately $60,000 dollars in staff and travel costs to survey the culverts,

assess the fish habitat, discuss the projects with the landowners, and provide permitting, design and construction oversight for the removals that have already started on USCG land.

| Cost Estimate: Design, Construction, and Contract Administration | | |
|---|---|---|
| **TASK** | **MATCH** | **EVOSTC Request** |
| Direct Project Costs | $292,221 | $4,161,039 |
| ADF&G, NOAA & FWS Staff Time & Travel to date | $60,000 | |
| GA @ 9% | | $374,494 |
| **Total Cost** | $352,221 | $4,535,533 |

Table 2: Cost Estimate

The cost estimate was developed by USFWS fish passage engineer, Heather Hanson, P.E. based on historical cost data for construction of culverts on Kodiak. Ms. Hanson has been an Alaska licensed civil engineer since 1999 and is trained in stream simulation methods for aquatic organism passage at culverts through the US Forest Service. The USFWS have made several site visits and carried out surveys as necessary to provide this cost estimate. USFWS will serve as the primary fiscal agent; through cooperative agreements, USFWS will provide EVOSTC funds to KSWCD ( Appendix 1) and ADF&G, for design & construction through a competitive bid process. AKDOT will also conduct the bid process for the work on Anton Larson Bay Road.

**Schedule:**

**USCG Culverts**:

November 2016: USFWS and the KSWCD awarded geotechnical investigation and design for a culvert on USCG land near the outlet of Battery Creek ADFG #20700786 (USFWS funds). Also included in this award are geotechnical investigations at three other sites: #20700785 owned by AKDOT, #20700877 owned by the USCG and #20703440 owned by Natives of Kodiak. Fall 2016-Spring 2017: The USCG will remove 9 culverts and do channel work as necessary to restore connectivity (USCG funds)
Summer 2017: Begin survey and design of remaining 8 culverts (EVOSTC funds)
Jan-March 2018: Complete design (fund source – EVOSTC)
Spring- Fall of 2018-2019: USFWS and KSWCD award construction contracts for culvert replacements (EVOSTC funds)

**AKDOT:**

August 2017: USFWS and the ADF&G develop and release an RFP for design for the culvert on Battery Creek at Anton Larsen Bay Road ADFG# 20700785 (EVOSTC funds)
September 2017: USFWS and ADF&G award the design contract for culvert #20700785.
Jan-Dec 2018: Complete design (fund source – EVOSTC)
Spring- Fall of 2019: ADF&G transfers funds to AKDOT to award a construction contract for culvert replacement (AKDOT & EVOSTC funds)

**Natives of Kodiak**:

August 2017: USFWS and the Natives of Kodiak develop and release an RFP for design of the Boy Scout Lake outlet culvert #20703440 and removal of culvert #20703471 at the tributary to Boy Scout Lake (EVOSTC funds)
September 2017: USFWS and KSWCD award the design contract for culvert #20703440 and #20703471
Jan-March 2018: Complete design (fund source – EVOSTC)
Spring- Fall of 2018-2019: USFWS and KSWCD award a construction contract for culvert replacement of #20703440 and removal of #20703471 (EVOSTC funds)

## References;

Cafferata, P., T. Spittler, M. Wopat, G. Bundros and S. Flanagan. 2004. Designing Watercourse Crossings for Passage of 100-year Flood Flows, Wood, and Sediment. California Forestry Report No. 1. February 2004. State of California, the Resources Agency, Department of Forestry & Fire Protection

Jackson, S., 2003. "Design and Construction of Aquatic Organism Passage at Road-Stream Crossings: Ecological Considerations in the Design of River and Stream Crossings." 20-29 International Conference of Ecology and Transportation, Lake Placid, New York

Polum ,T., Evans,D., and Dann, T.,2014 Buskin River Sockeye and Coho Stock Assessment Operational Plan 2014-2017.ADF&G Regional Operational Plan SF.2A.2014.07

Taylor, R.N. and M. Love, California salmonid stream habitat restoration manual, part IX: fish passage evaluation at stream crossings, California Department of Fish and Game (2003).

United States Forest Service (USFS). 2008. "Stream Simulation: An Ecological Approach to providing passage for aquatic organisms at road-stream crossings." United States Forest Service Stream-Simulation Working Group in partnership with the US Dept of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration Coordinated Federal Lands Highway Technology Implementation Program, National Technology and Development Program, San Dimas, CA.

# Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak

October 18, 2016

Exxon Valdez Trustee Council
c/o Elise Hsieh
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4626

RE: Buskin River Habitat Enhancement Project Proposal by USFWS, NOAA and ADF&G

Dear Exxon Valdez Trustee Council,

Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Buskin River Habitat Enhancement Project. Buskin Watershed is located five miles southwest of the city of Kodiak. This watershed is the nearest location for many user groups to partake in subsistence and sport fishing, along with other recreational activities. Buskin Watershed supports one of the largest subsistence salmon fisheries in the Kodiak/Aleutian Islands Federal Subsistence Region. On average, 4,800 salmon are harvested annually for subsistence use from Buskin River.

The health of Buskin Watershed is extremely important for the watershed itself, along with the surrounding habitat and marine interface which provide multiple ecosystem services. By allowing for fish passage through the system, nutrient transport will benefit the native species on land, air, freshwater, and saltwater.

In 2010, Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak (STK) signed Resolution 2010-35 to make a commitment to preserving and proactively promoting Alaska Native subsistence activities. In recent years, STK has built natural resources management capabilities from development of a Tribal Wildlife Grant to enrich subsistence coho salmon populations within the Buskin Watershed. Additionally, STK has received funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to survey for invasive signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) within Buskin Watershed.

Buskin Watershed is vital to the community of Kodiak. This proposed project advocates for the health and subsistence resources of Buskin Watershed. Please consider this letter an indication of our commitment to preserve the subsistence activities of Buskin Watershed. We look forward to hearing of the project award and working with project partners to benefit the project.

Sincerely,

Thomas Lance
Natural Resources Director

312 West Marine Way
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone: 907.486.4449
Fax: 907.486.3361

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

Commanding Officer
United States Coast Guard
Base Kodiak

P. O. Box 195025
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Staff Symbol: fe
Phone: (907) 487-5170 x6698

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EV-17003

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NOAA Fisheries
222 West 7th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99513
Attn: Erika Ammann

Dear Ms. Ammann,

Thank you for informing me of the "Kodiak Island Habitat Enhancement Proposal, Buskin River Watershed" (Proposal) prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Parties), which seeks the removal or replacement of 16 old culverts on Coast Guard Base Kodiak, to aid salmon and Dolly Varden in fish passage and ecosystem health. The Proposal specifies eight culverts for Base Kodiak to remove, with another 8 on our property to be removed by the Parties.

As to the eight culverts that the Parties seek to remove or replace, the Coast Guard is willing to grant a no-cost temporary right of access on terms and conditions to be established by our respective real property staffs, subject, of course, to completion of the Coast Guard's required environmental impact analysis prior to granting a license or permit to enter CG property.

Regarding the eight culverts the Proposal identifies as a Coast Guard responsibility, Coast Guard policy provides units such as Base Kodiak with the discretion to take an active approach to reconnect existing habitats on our base on the theory that larger blocks of habitat are better than smaller blocks in accordance with *CG Natural Resources Management Manual*, COMDTINST M5090.3, section 3.D.4.a. As Commanding Officer of Base Kodiak, I must be mindful of funding and other resource constraints. However, I am able to express my intent to undertake the actions the Proposal allocates to the Coast Guard, and my intent to continue to work with the Parties. The Buskin River system provides a valuable fishery and recreational space in the Kodiak area. I am not able to provide an ironclad guarantee that they will be undertaken by a specific date.

We look forward to working with the Parties to improve the freshwater habitat of the Buskin River system and ensure that connectivity through US Coast Guard land allows for fish passage, sediment transport and sustainability of the important fisheries that depend on the Buskin River.

My local point of contact for this matter is Mr. Robert Gray, the Base Kodiak Environmental Division Chief; Mr. Gray can be reached at (907) 487-5320, extension 6698, for follow-up actions or ensuing questions.

Sincerely,

J. C. WESTLING
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer, Base Kodiak

THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Natural Resources
DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
1400 Abercrombie Drive
Kodiak, AK 99615
Main: 907.486.6339
Fax: 907.486.3320

Exxon Valdez Trustee Council
c/o Elise Hsieh
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4626

November 19, 2016

Dear Exxon Valdez Trustee Council,

I would like to send this letter in support of the Buskin River Habitat Enhancement Project. Alaska State Parks manages the Buskin River State Recreation Site, which supports camping, sport fishing, biking, hiking, wildlife viewing, berry picking and beach combing as the predominate activities for the area. The State Recreation site is at the nexus of the freshwater and marine environment and provides visitors from around the world as a very popular location for sockeye and coho fishing. The Buskin River is extremely important for the health of the entire river system as well as its surrounding habitat and marine interface. Improving and re-establishing fish passage through the system will allow for improved sustainable habitat and nutrient transport that will benefit the whole watershed ecosystem for numerous terrestrial, marine and avian species.

The Buskin River drainage is important to the community of Kodiak for its ecological and economical benefits due to the proximity and accessibility on the limited Kodiak road system. As the Kodiak District Ranger II/manager, I support the overall general project, partnerships and the environmental benefit this enhancement project will provide to the natural river system as well as the community and visitors that rely on it for recreation, enjoyment, and subsistence.

Respectfully,

Preston Kroes
Alaska State Parks – Kodiak Area Park Ranger II
1400 Abercrombie Dr.
Kodiak, AK 99615
907-486-6339
preston.kroes@alaska.gov

Exxon Valdez Trustee Council

C/o Elise Hsieh

4210 University Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4626

Dear Exxon Valdez Trustee Council,

I would like to send this letter in support of the Buskin River Habitat Enhancement Project. On behalf of the Natives of Kodiak. The Buskin system is very popular site for sockeye and Coho fishing and allows for fishing that is easily accessible on Kodiak Island. The health of the Buskin River is extremely important for the river as well as its surrounding habitat and marine environment. The proposed work will allow for juvenile salmon to move through the system and find overwintering habitat and productive areas for growth within the freshwater system. The passage improvements will also allow for sediment transport, returning the river to a more natural environment throughout the system. We value the health of this system and will work with partners NOAA, USFWS and ADF&G to conduct these habitat improvements.

Sincerely,

David A. Anderson
Natives of Kodiak
V.P. Natives of Kodiak

# Kodiak Island Borough

**OFFICE of the MANAGER**

710 Mill Bay Road, Room 126
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone (907) 486-9301 Fax (907) 486-9374
E-mail: mpowers@kodiakak.us


November 7, 2016

Exxon Valdez Trustee Council
c/o Elise Hsieh
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4626

Re: Support for Buskin River Habitat Enhancement Project

Dear Exxon Valdez Trustee Council:

On behalf of the Kodiak Island Borough, I am submitting this letter of support for the Buskin River Habitat Enhancement Project. The Borough recognizes the importance of healthy fisheries to a full spectrum of community interests including subsistence, recreational and commercial fisheries. We will work diligently with the project partners on this proposal, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Alaska Department of Fish & Game; NOAA Fisheries; and the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District.

We are mindful that this project will also have collateral benefit to other wildlife and natural resources in the Buskin river drainage, as well as improve this area of the Borough for human use as well. We value the health of this river eco-system for fish habitat as well as improvements to water passage that can result in benefits to human uses of the river system and to public safety.

Sincerely,

Michael Powers, Manager
Kodiak Island Borough

Cc: Mayor and Assembly
Community Development Department
Engineering and Facilities Department
Parks and Recreation Committee
Resource Management Office

A  letter of recommendation from AKDOT  is currently awaiting review from signing officials but should be provided prior to EVOS trustee council meeting