

2020 Annual Report to the Board of Forestry



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Habitat Section
February 2021

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2020 OVERVIEW

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Habitat Section submits our 2020 annual report to the Board of Forestry. This report summarizes our January 1 – December 31, 2020 forestry related activities and informs the Board of Forestry of Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) effectiveness protecting the resources and habitats for which ADF&G has responsibility.

Alaska Statutes require ADF&G to manage, protect, maintain, improve, and extend the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state in the interest of the economy and general well-being of the State (AS 16.05.020), to ensure the proper protection of anadromous fish habitat (AS 16.05.871), and to provide fish passage (AS 16.05.841).

On public lands, FRPA^a requires the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitats. The state forester recognizes the expertise of ADF&G regarding fish and wildlife habitat on all lands with fish habitat as the primary value in riparian areas.^b ADF&G helps identify and protect important wildlife habitats on private lands and provides technical expertise for voluntary management techniques that minimize adverse effects on wildlife habitat.^c

PRIVATE AND MUNICIPAL LAND

Table 1 contains FRPA activity on private, municipal, and trust land.

Southeast Region

Craig staff reviewed and commented on 37 detailed plans of operation (DPOs) for commercial timber harvest on private timber lands including, University of Alaska Lands (3), Sealaska (25), Mental Health Trust (8), Alaska Milling (1); reviewed 14 changes in operations, processed eight renewals, and conducted five FRPA inspections; issued four fish habitat permits for bridge installations and one water withdrawal permit all on Sealaska timber lands.

Douglas staff commented on two DPOs for timber harvest on Yak-Tat Kwaan Land, one for timber harvest on Mental Health Trust Land in Yakutat, and one for harvest on City and Borough of Yakutat Land; conducted two field inspections for Yak Timber operations in Yakutat; issued 10 fish habitat permits for bridges and culverts on Yakutat, six fish habitat permits for removing or replacing logging road structures on Huna Totem land; and surveyed 66 streams for anadromous fish presence on Yak-Tat Kwaan, Shee Atika, Sealaska Corporation, Goldbelt, and Huna Totem land.

Southcentral Region

Anchorage staff reviewed and commented on two DPOs for commercial timber harvest and issued four fish habitat permits for culvert installation and a vehicle stream crossing on Afognak Native Corporation lands. No FRPA inspections were completed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Palmer reported no activity.

^a AS 41.17.060 (c)(7)

^b AS 41.17.098 (d)

^c AS 41.17.910 (b) and (c).

Interior Region

One DPO was reviewed in the interior region.

STATE LAND

Table 2 contains FRPA activities on State land.

Southeast Region

Craig staff reviewed and commented on the Bay View Timber Sale Best Interest Finding and Decision and reviewed and commented on the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS).

Douglas staff surveyed five streams for anadromous fish on State land in Southern Southeast where future harvest may occur.

Southcentral Region

Soldotna staff reviewed and commented on a 2020-2024 5-year schedule of timber sales (FYSTS) on the Kenai Peninsula.

Interior Region

Fairbanks staff reviewed and commented on one DPO renewal, four FLUPs and Best Interest Findings, one FYSTS, 12 personal use firewood permits, two firebreak projects, and issued five fish habitat permits for winter equipment crossings and one for the renewal of statewide wild fire suppression activities.

FEDERAL LAND

Table 3 contains activities on federal land.

Southeast Region

Craig staff reviewed 16 projects under the general concurrence and issued 27 individual concurrences for culvert and bridge installations on Prince of Wales Island; conducted three inspections of restoration projects in the Stoney Creek watershed; and provided comments on the proposed Prince of Wales Landscape Level Analysis.

Douglas staff issued three fish habitat concurrences for stream restoration at Corner Bay, Ohmer Creek, and Lumpy Creek, and surveyed 121 streams on Tongass National Forest Land for anadromous fish.

Southcentral Region

No activity reported.

Interior Region

No activity reported.

FOREST PRACTICES IMPLEMENTATION

COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

Habitat staff participated with the Division of Forestry monitoring FRPA compliance and effectiveness.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

ANADROMOUS WATERS CATALOG

Douglas staff continued field work to catalog anadromous streams on Prince of Wales Island and Tongass National Forest Land throughout Southeast Alaska under an Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund grant project. Though not exclusively focused on timber lands, staff surveyed 30 drainages on private land, five on Southeast State Forest Land and 121 on National Forest Land.

TONGASS COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

In a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Habitat Section and USFS Alaska Region, USFS Agreement No. 194-MU-11100100-108, ADF&G agrees to participate annually in BMP monitoring field visits.

TONGASS FISH PASSAGE

ADF&G continues to work with the USFS to evaluate fish passage across the forest and prioritize fish passage restoration projects.

BUDGET AND PERSONNEL

BUDGET

ADF&G funding for FRPA activities conducted during calendar year 2020 came from state general funds. The Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund provided funding to identify and nominate freshwater anadromous fish habitat to the AWC in areas where we anticipate timber harvest.

PERSONNEL

New Hires

Resignations

Will Frost, Habitat Biologist II, Anchorage

STATEMENT OF FRPA EFFECTIVENESS

ADF&G considers FRPA and its regulations effective for maintaining fish habitat within the classified surface water types during forestry related activities. The Habitat Section works cooperatively with the Division of Forestry, the Department of Environmental Conservation, landowners and operators to implement FRPA to protect important fish habitat, water quality, and important wildlife habitat from the effects of timber harvest activities.

CALENDAR YEAR 2021

WORKLOAD PRIORITIES

FRPA participation remains a Habitat Section workload priority in addition to anadromous waters cataloging, fish habitat and special area permitting, special area planning, large projects of importance to the State, and research to aid in permitting decisions. Habitat Section staff continue to work with the Divisions of Sport Fish, Commercial Fisheries, and Wildlife Conservation, and the Division of Forestry, to identify fish bearing waters and important wildlife habitat on timberlands, participate in forestry reviews, and conduct forestry related fieldwork. Douglas staff are developing a GIS tool and evaluating its effectiveness for identifying riparian stand susceptibility to windthrow, sharing their findings with the Board of Forestry and industry partners.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

If requested, the Habitat Section will participate in Division of Forestry-sponsored training for agency staff and operators to describe fish habitat permitting under the Anadromous Fish and Fishway Acts and strategies to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to important fish and wildlife resources and habitats.

Habitat staff continues to assist Division of Wildlife Conservation staff with updating important habitat components, concerns, and harvest techniques for loggers and personal use firewood harvesters for consistency with our comments to DOF and provide information to the public for practices of “good stewardship” when harvesting forest resources.

Table 1.–FRPA activities on private, municipal, and trust land.

Area	DPO	Renewals	Change in Operations	Variation Requests	Variation Inspections	Other FRPA Inspections	FHPs Issued	AWC Updates
Southern Southeast	Keete Inlet (12) – STC	Keete Inlet (2) – STC	Keete Inlet (2) – STC				McKenzie Water Withdrawal (1) -- STC	2
	Polk Inlet (2) – STC	McKenzie Inlet (2) – STC	Kosciusko (1) -- STC				Kosciusko Bridge (1) - - STC	
	Tuxekan (7) – STC	Naukati (1) – Viking	Naukati (2) -- Viking				Keete Bridges (3) -- STC	
	McKenzie Inlet (4) – STC	Tuxekan Island (1) – STC	Tuxekan (4) – STC					
	Yatuk Creek (4) -- Viking		McKenzie (4) -- STC					
	Naukati (4) -- Viking		Polk Inlet (2) -- STC					
	Election Creek (1) -- STC							
	Vallenar Bay (3) – Alcan							
	West Hollis (1) – AK Mill							
Northern Southeast	Yak-Tat Kwaan (4)						Yakutat (10) Huna Totem (6)	30
Anchorage	Afognak Native Corp – ANC Land (2)					Afognak Native Corp – ANC Land (4)		
Fairbanks	Gana-A'Yoo, Limited	SEGA Continued Winter Harvest						

Table 2.–FRPA activities on state land.

Area	BIFS	SFMP	FYSTS	FLUP	Personal Use Firewood	House Log Sales	FRPA Inspections	FHPs Issued	AWC Updates
Southern Southeast	Bay View		SSE	Bay View					
Northern Southeast									5
Soldotna			Kenai Area						
Palmer									
Anchorage									
Fairbanks	Cache Creek Birch (NC-1580-F)			Cache Creek Birch (NC-1580-F)				Tanana River Winter Crossings (3)	
	Flat Birch (NC-1610-F)			Flat Birch (NC-1610-F)				Chena River Winter Crossing (1)	
	Halfaspruce #3 (NC-1637-F)			Halfaspruce #3 (NC-1673-F)				Smallwood Creek Winter Crossing (1)	
	Skinny's Fire Salvage (NC-1805-F)			Skinny's Fire Salvage (NC-1805-F)				Statewide Fire Suppression	

Table 3.–Activities on federal land.

Area	NEPA	Field Visits	Concurrences
Southern Southeast	South Revilla IRP – KRD	Restoration Inspection (1) – TRD	Bridges (2) – TRD
	Twin Mountain TS – TRD	Bridge Inspection (2) – TRD	Culverts (1) – TRD Restoration (1) – TRD General Concurrences for Culverts (11) – TRD
Northern Southeast	Central Tongass Project		Stream Restoration (3)

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