



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY ALASKA CHAPTER

2627 Ingra Street
Anchorage, AK 99508

7 March 2014

The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society is a professional society founded in 1971. With over 200 members, the Alaska Chapter is one of the largest chapters of The Wildlife Society, an international organization representing wildlife biologists and managers employed by state, federal, and borough resource agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental conservation organizations, and private industry. Our mission is to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve biological diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources in Alaska for the benefit of society.

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy
Senate Fish and Game Finance Subcommittee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Dunleavy,

I am writing to ask that you and your colleagues on the Senate Fish and Game Finance Subcommittee include funding for the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve (KBRR) in the FY 2015 Alaska Department of Fish and Game budget. These state funds of approximately \$175,000 provide a necessary match to more than \$750,000 in federal money. Without state matching funds, fisheries and estuarine research at KBRR would likely cease. That would prove harmful to long-term management of salmon and coastal resources in Alaska.

Some examples of management-oriented research currently conducted by KBRR staff include:

- The importance of estuarine habitats to salmon smolt
- Overwinter habitat of juvenile coho salmon
- The use of headwater streams by juvenile salmon
- Monitoring for invasive invertebrates that could affect the food base for salmon
- Effects of ocean acidification on larval Dungeness, Tanner and rock crabs
- Monitoring for algal blooms that can result in paralytic shellfish poisoning

This work supports ADF&G's mandate to identify and protect anadromous fish habitat. It also has direct implications for the management of economically important shellfish resources. KBRR staff have provided technical expertise to many government and private partners, including the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership's recent initiative to identify priorities for salmon conservation. They have also been highly effective in securing grants to address conservation needs, and have an education and outreach program that is important to communities and visitors on the Kenai Peninsula.

We recognize that ADF&G faces budgetary constraints and may look to elimination of KBRR funding as means to cut costs. However, given that elimination of FY 2015 funds comes at short notice for KBRR staff, it provides them little opportunity to find non-federal matching funds. We believe it reasonable that state funds be provided for at least one more year to give staff time to look for alternative sources of revenue. This is a relatively small investment for the benefits received.

There are valid concerns regarding the health of some salmon populations in Southcentral Alaska. Understanding how estuarine and freshwater habitats are used by salmon is critical to their management. Maintaining healthy salmon populations is important not only to human communities, but also to wildlife communities for which salmon are a food base. We strongly feel that the work of KBRR contributes to management of salmon and their habitats. We hope that you will provide funding for their continued operation in FY 2015.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Hupp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

Jerry Hupp, Ph.D.
President, Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society