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ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
Joint Meeting of the Legislation and Habitat Committees

November 29, 2016, Islands and Ocean Visitor Center, Homer

MEETING SUMMARY

Committee Memberships:

Legislation

Reed Morisky, Chair
Robert Ruffner
Al Cain

Habitat

Israel Payton, Chair
Orville Huntington
Reed Morisky

Also present: John Jensen, Sue Jeffrey

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – Co-chair Reed Morisky introduced committees members and provided an overview of the meeting purpose. The committees were meeting to review a non-regulatory proposal received for the 2016/2017 meeting cycle that sought the Board of Fisheries (BOF) to encourage the Legislature adopt portions of the Board’s Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy (5 AAC 39.222) in Alaska Statute for the purpose of reviewing and issuing Division of Habitat permits.
- 2. Public testimony:** The committees opened the meeting for public testimony and heard from eight individuals including: Mike Wood, Lindsey Bloom, Emily Anderson, Bob Shavelson, Sam Synder, George Pierce, Sue Mauger, and Rick Halford. All who spoke were in favor of the proposal. Testimony comments included the need for science-based enforceable standards, early and greater public involvement, and law that protects fish habitat. Identified deficiencies included Division of Habitat involvement often comes only if a stream is listed in the anadromous fish catalog, lack of public notice and participation, and lack of enforceable standards. Other concerns include the highly variable nature of streams and an inability to modify the anadromous fish catalog, and the current permitting system’s inability to account for impacts of adjacent groundwater on a stream.
- 3. Overview of the Division of Habitat:** Audra Brase and Ginny Litchfield provided an overview of the Division of Habitat’s permitting system (see presentation provided on the meeting site). Committee members asked a number of questions regarding the Division’s permitting system including what projects habitat should review, but does not have authority to do so, what is done to mitigate potential enforcement issues, how the division collects fees, how large projects are handled and how the public is involved, what occurs if a stream is suspected of having anadromous species, but not listed in the catalog, and the division’s role in stream restoration.



- 4. Discussion and next steps:** The committees discussed the proposal request and determined that members would assemble a draft letter for review and possible approval during miscellaneous business at the Lower Cook Inlet finfish meeting. If a draft letter is not available at that time, the committees plan to have a draft available at the upcoming Kodiak meeting.

Adjourned at 8:30 pm.