

2/24/2017

**Testimony to the Alaska Board of Fisheries  
From Assembly Member for the Matanuska-Susitna  
Borough, Randall Kowalke**

Good morning Board Members. I'm honored to speak with you today. I'm Randall Kowalke, Assembly Member for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, representing 18,450 square miles, known as District 7.

We tend to our fresh water.

In my District, alone, 28 new fish passage culverts have been installed since 2001, and 8 of those since the last Board of Fisheries meeting in 2014. Borough-wide.... 107 new culverts are helping salmon swim upstream.

But our problem is mostly fish not making it back.

We have 14 **Stocks of Concern** identified in our State.

When you hear about the 8 **Stocks of Concern** in the Northern District most are in my Assembly District, which is basically the Susitna Drainage.

Some of the returns of these stocks of sockeye and kings have reached low enough levels that their reproduction is at risk.

That hasn't bode well for the Alaskans who make their living in the sports fishing economy.

Anecdote A—Willow Creek Recreation Area, concern the State will shutter it, no fish, no campers

Anecdote B—Willow Island Resort & Montana Creek Campground, campers becoming rare

While cohos are not stocks of concern, before the Conservation Corridor..... coho returns in Northern Cook Inlet streams had reached 20-year lows.

But in 2014, cohos returned with force. It was the first year the new Drift Plan limited drifters to one, 12-hour fishing period in the Conservation Corridor.

- Returns for cohos were the best on the Little Susitna River since 2006
- Returns for cohos were the best on Fish Creek since 2002.

In 2015, returns were nearly as strong again on both.

2 out of 3 summers is promising.

In 2015, sockeye did well too. All three Susitna sockeye escapements were made for the first time since established in 2009.

As the Assembly Member for the Susitna Drainage, I urge you to keep the corridor open. I oppose any new proposals that seek to weaken this substantially improved lane to the north for our missing cohos and sockeye.

Thank you

—Randall Kowalke