

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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MSB FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Memorandum

Date: March 17, 2022

Topic: Letter to the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries Hatchery Committee

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort and members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

Please accept these comments addressing the current policies regarding hatchery production.

Background

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) was formed in February 2007 to represent the interests of the Borough in the conservation and allocation of fish, wildlife and habitat.

The commission focuses on science and best available information in order to advise the MSB Assembly and the State of Alaska Boards of Fish and Game regarding fish and wildlife practices and policies that affect the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The commission consists of eight representatives, to include Chair Mike Wood, Vice Chair Andy Couch, Assembly members Tim Hale and Jesse Sumner, Larry Engel, Kendra Zamzow, Peter Probasco, Howard Delo and ex-officio member Jim Sykes. Staff support is provided by MSB employee, Ted Eischeid.

Comments

The FWC recognizes and supports the benefits of the Alaska salmon hatchery program and recognizes the importance of this program to many of the residents of Alaska. We recognize that hatchery production supports local economies, communities and all user groups. The fact that Alaska's sustainable salmon fisheries are in part due to the enhancement generated from hatchery production is also supported and recognized.

The FWC shares many of the same concerns others have expressed in the past regarding salmon hatchery production. Specifically recognizing that additional scientific data is needed to address the question of the potential impact of hatchery production, at current or increased levels, on

wild stocks both conspecific and not conspecific. Some potential impacts could occur through competition for food at different life stages, and/or straying hatchery stock in wild salmon spawning areas.

We understand that a current study will conclude in 2023 which may inform us better on the topic of straying and potential impacts. This study may also help direct and focus future research. For many of us, answers to the questions regarding genetic, ecological and behavioral interactions between hatchery and wild origin salmon still need to be further explored.

The State of Alaska and the private sector have made huge investments in developing this program. The successes this program has experienced are many and hopefully will continue. However, we must still be prudent and good stewards to assure that hatchery production and the associated management of hatchery stocks do not negatively affect wild stocks.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Mike Wood, Chair

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission

NOTE: This letter approved unanimously by the MSB FWC on March 17, 2022.