

**Wildlife Restoration MULTI-YEAR GRANT
INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-D-6-2020

PROJECT NUMBER: Project 1.0

PROJECT TITLE: Saltery Cove Trail System Access and Improvements

GRANT PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: March 7, 2020–December 31, 2023

PERFORMANCE YEAR: October 1, 2020–September 30, 2021

REPORT DUE DATE: December 29, 2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

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Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR

TRACS strategy: Facilities/Areas O&M

Operate and Maintain 1 area by 2023

Activity Tag: Public Access Areas

OBJECTIVE 1: Kodiak Island Borough (KIB) will secure public access – via easements (which will function the same as long-term land use permits) to these important and historic

recreational routes for hunting and subsistence activities. DNR (Division of Mining, Land, and Water) is the landowner and will remain so; no land titles will be exchanged. Kodiak Island Borough will be the easement-holder for all easements for the duration of the easement period and will be responsible for the long-term maintenance of trail improvements.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: KIB contracted with Alutiiq Museum to conduct a Cultural Resource Study of the grant funded segments of the Saltery Cove trail on October 27–29, 2020. Island Trails Network (ITN) provided two ATVs for the team’s use and accompanied the two archeologists from the Alutiiq Museum on the survey. A 68-page report was written by the Alutiiq Museum and transmitted to the Borough in March 2021 and reviewed by ADF&G and USFWS who consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for compliance with the Alaska Historic Preservation Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, respectively.

Both the KIB and Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Mining, Land, and Water (DMLW) Southcentral Easement Section experienced turnover with respect to project personnel during this period. KIB hired a new Borough Manager and Community Development Director as the former KIB PI, Erin Welty, left her position in May 2021. Matt Gandel was assigned to be the new KIB PI. The previous DMLW Easement Section case manager also left his position, and the DNR easement application was assigned to a new adjudicator. Some months passed before the newly assigned KIB and DNR project leads were familiarized with the project and with each other, during which time the 2021 field season opportunity was lost.

On September 4, 2021, ADF&G and ITN had their first meeting with the acting adjudicator, AJ Wait, chief of the DMLW Southcentral Office Easements Section. At that meeting, Mr. Wait instructed ITN to provide trail assessment and prescription information along with design documents of the trail improvements, which would be added to the easement application. He explained that the Easement Section Regional Managers would then make a determination of whether the easement is in the public interest, and an Entry Authorization (EA) would be issued which will allow the necessary permits to be obtained to begin construction. On October 22, 2021, Mr. Wait appointed Alex Rearick of DNR who introduced himself as the new adjudicator for the KIB easement application. We are hopeful that the application can proceed steadily with new personnel in place.

ADF&G and ITN attended an introductory meeting with KIB on September 29, 2021, to re-introduce the KIB to the project and meet the new KIB-appointed personnel, Matt Gandel. The cultural resources report identified three sites that would be adversely affected by the proposed project and at this point in time ADF&G and KIB/ITB began working together on a plan to mitigate further damage to the sites which ADF&G would need to submit to/be approved by the federal Regional Historic Preservation Officer (RHPO) and SHPO in order for the project to continue. Once the mitigation plan is approved, ADF&G and KIB/ITN will amend the easement application to include the RHPO/SHPO approved route.

During this reporting period it was also noted that in order for DMLW Easement Section to approve the easement application a fish habitat survey would need to take place. ADF&G Anchorage based Habitat staff were unable to travel to Kodiak to conduct the

survey in September 2021 and an SDR was submitted to USFWS to allow ADF&G Division of Sport Fish staff in Kodiak to conduct the fish habitat survey instead.

OBJECTIVE 2: Construct and repair ~ 20 miles of trail, which will increase the current level of user access, allowing continued use of the trail by a broad range of ages and abilities; this will involve repairing trail grade and condition along the length of all trail segments within this project. Work will also include repairing braided and ponded sections that make traversing this trail challenging for less experienced and non-motorized users.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: No work has started on this objective as of yet, trail improvements are scheduled to begin in 2022 pending approval by the RHPO/SHPO and DNR DMLW Easement Section.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE

As of the writing of this report, the project has gained momentum with cultural resource mitigation strategies proposed by ADF&G, ITN and KIB. ADF&G has submitted the proposed mitigation strategies to USFWS/SHPO for review and comment. Next steps include additional field work to survey re-routes required for cultural resource mitigation, submission of a complete trails assessment and prescription to DMLW Easement Section, and initial survey work, all to take place in Spring 2022.

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS

Two significant development reports were submitted to USFWS during this reporting period. The first SDR requested to allow ADF&G Division of Sport Fish staff in Kodiak to conduct a fish habitat survey, as ADF&G Anchorage based Habitat staff were unable to travel to Kodiak to conduct the survey in September 2021 and the information will be needed in order for the DMLW Easement Section to approve the easement application. This SDR was approved September 20, 2021. The second SDR requested to update the grant with contact information for the new KIB PI, Matt Gandel. This request was submitted November 1, 2021.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

There are no new project photos at this time outside of the cultural resources report.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

No recommendations for this project at this time, barring any unforeseen circumstances. AF&G, KIB and ITN will follow up on the easement application and the project will continue as planned.

Prepared by:

Matt Gandel, Kodiak Island Borough

Katie Sechrist, ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Hunter Access Program

Date: 12/20/2021