

State of Alaska FY2002 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Fish and Game
Habitat and Restoration
Budget Request Unit

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BRU Mission

The mission of the Division of Habitat and Restoration is to protect, maintain, enhance, and restore habitat for fish and wildlife consistent with sound conservation and sustained yield principles.

Work conducted in the Habitat and Restoration BRU complements the efforts of other ADF&G divisions that primarily engage in fish and wildlife population management and enhancement. The Habitat and Restoration Division reviews applications and issues permits for activities affecting fish-bearing waters, state game refuges, sanctuaries, and critical habitat areas and participates in other land management agencies' permitting and planning activities to ensure that fish and wildlife needs are addressed as required by statute. The division also develops and conducts a wide variety of injury assessment and restoration projects and develops comprehensive restoration plans that will help govern the use of Exxon Valdez settlement funds through the year 2003.

BRU Services Provided

The Habitat and Restoration BRU consists of three components. The Title 16 Permitting component was merged with the Habitat component in this budget submittal to further streamline administrative processes.

The Habitat component provides staff review of applications and issuance of permits for activities affecting fish-bearing waters, state game refuges, sanctuaries, and critical habitat areas as the state's primary tool for protecting salmon habitat. This includes review and maintenance of the Anadromous Waters Catalog and its conversion to an electronic format. It also provides for coordination with other divisions to provide fish and wildlife expertise during review of forest practices activities, mining, land management planning, land conveyances and disposals, coastal zone project reviews, and project reviews for oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development.

The Special Projects component provides the state's fish, wildlife, and habitat expertise on a variety of cooperative projects with other agencies or industry. Most projects are of limited scope and duration with the exception of the component's two largest projects: The Kachemak Bay Research Reserve located in Homer, and the Alaska Access Defense program. The latter protects and maintains access for Alaskans to state and federal public lands and waters in the state. Both are ongoing programs.

The Restoration component supports the work of the EVOS Trustee Council that focuses Exxon Valdez settlement funds on restoration, replacement, rehabilitation, recovery monitoring, and enhancement of the natural resources injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. The program develops and conducts a wide variety of injury assessment and restoration projects and develops comprehensive restoration plans and will continue through the year 2003.

BRU Goals and Strategies

The Habitat and Restoration Division developed a regional project-based budget for FY02 to accurately reflect our expenditures by funding source in each component. In FY00 the division conducted 181 projects in 4 components budgeted from 104 funding sources (84 Reimbursable Services Agreements, 18 contracts, EVOS and general funds). Two components (Title 16 Permitting and Habitat) have been combined in the FY02 budget request in the Habitat component in order to reduce budget complexity and unnecessary administrative workload. This action is essential in light of the increased workload expected with the gas pipeline, increased oil and gas exploration on the North Slope, increased mining activity, expansion of culvert assessment for fish passage programs, and implementation of the Southeast Sustainable Salmon habitat assessment, research, and monitoring programs scheduled to begin in late FY01.

Key BRU Issues for FY2001 – 2002

The responsible development of Alaska's resources while maintaining important habitats for fish and wildlife is the greatest challenge the Habitat and Restoration Division faces. Ensuring adequate staff time to work with development interests during project planning phases is the most cost-effective method for protecting Alaska's resources and providing for economic growth and development.

Reauthorization of the Trans Alaska Oil Pipeline lease; design, permitting and construction of a gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay; increased oil and gas leasing, exploration and development of the North Slope including NPRA; and escalating exploration and development of hardrock ore deposits in Interior Alaska all pose significant challenges for the division's project review and permitting staff. Maintaining a solid core of experienced permitting staff to work on the projects above is becoming a serious challenge. Most of the division's experienced permitting staff is or will be eligible for retirement in the next three years, and it will be critical to hire and train several new staff this coming fiscal year.

Research conducted in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska on road culverts in salmon streams indicates that many are blocking fish passage to spawning and rearing areas. The Department will continue its efforts to identify and prioritize problem culverts for replacement, and will begin a statewide assessment of the Alaska Highway system stream crossings during FY02 in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Protecting Alaskans' access to fish and wildlife resources on public lands remains an ongoing issue. The department will continue to review RS 2477 and 17(b) easements statewide to ensure the public's access to state lands is protected. The department will continue to address increasing pressures on the Kenai River watershed and will conduct habitat restoration projects along major salmon spawning and rearing areas associated with these fisheries. A region-wide salmon habitat assessment in Southeast Alaska will be initiated during the latter half of FY01 and will continue through FY02.

Major BRU Accomplishments for FY2000

Restructuring of the Habitat and Restoration Division programs continued through FY00 and FY01 to increase administrative and fiscal efficiency. Interagency receipts from multiple sources for a specific project were consolidated to the greatest extent practicable, and funds requiring match were consolidated with the match to ensure accountability. Substantial effort was made to get outside funds into the budget as rapidly as possible to reduce duplicative administrative efforts.

Several new projects were initiated during FY01 including an ecological assessment of log transfer facilities in Southeast Alaska, road culvert assessment for efficient fish passage in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and in portions of the Kenai Peninsula, forest practices regulations for Interior Alaska, and an assessment of ATV impacts to spawning and rearing habitat in the upper Anchor River drainage. The conversion of the Anadromous Waters Catalog atlas data into a Geographic Information System (GIS) format for Southeast Alaska was 95 percent completed; this completes the conversion for approximately 80 percent of the cataloged water bodies within the state. Conversion to GIS format will allow electronic distribution of this information to other agencies and to industries that require efficient access to accurate information on anadromous waters.

In FY00 the division provided technical assistance on 3186 projects statewide to applicants, to meet project objectives while avoiding or minimizing impacts to fish and wildlife resources within regulatory deadlines. Numerous habitat restoration projects were completed in cooperation with other agencies, municipalities, and private organizations and individuals throughout Southcentral Alaska with a continued focus on the Kenai River. The division successfully resolved numerous construction issues with the oil industry on the North Slope and coordinated department comments opposing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed 75 million acres of critical habitat for Steller's and spectacled eiders in Alaska. The division continued its work at Red Dog, Fort Knox and Green's Creek mine and received an award at the Alaska Miner's Association convention for habitat reclamation work in partnership with the Fort Knox mine.

Key Performance Measures for FY2002

Measure: 95 percent of the Title 16 (anadromous waters) applications are approved or modified to protect, minimize, or mitigate habitat damage within an average of 20 days after receipt.
(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)

Measure: 80 percent of the land use plans reviewed result in consensus on habitat related issues
(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)

Measure: 95 percent of the project reviews for industrial development, road construction, and timber harvest are completed within an average of 25 days or within the scheduled time frame for complex projects.
(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)

Measure: 100 percent of the third party contracted restoration projects are completed by the end of the contract period.
(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)

Status of FY2001 Performance Measures

	<i>Achieved</i>	<i>On track</i>	<i>Too soon to tell</i>	<i>Not likely to achieve</i>	<i>Needs modification</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 percent of the Title 16 (anadromous waters) applications are approved or modified to protect, minimize, or mitigate habitat damage within an average of 20 days after receipt. 	X				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 percent of the land use plans reviewed result in consensus on habitat related issues. 	X				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 percent of the project reviews for industrial development, road construction, and timber harvest are completed within an average of 25 days or within the scheduled time frame for complex projects. 		X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 percent of the third party contracted restoration projects are completed by the end of the contract period. 	X				

Habitat and Restoration
BRU Financial Summary by Component

All dollars in thousands

	FY2000 Actuals				FY2001 Authorized				FY2002 Governor			
	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
Formula Expenditures												
None.												
Non-Formula Expenditures												
Habitat	131.6	23.4	1,448.0	1,603.0	219.5	0.0	1,556.0	1,775.5	1,987.4	380.1	2,818.0	5,185.5
Hab. Special Projects	0.0	407.9	1,014.6	1,422.5	97.8	654.8	1,399.2	2,151.8	99.0	794.9	1,807.7	2,701.6
Habitat Permitting/Title 16	1,599.6	48.6	633.7	2,281.9	1,527.9	381.6	1,253.8	3,163.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Restoration	0.0	0.0	4,064.1	4,064.1	0.0	0.0	3,924.8	3,924.8	0.0	0.0	3,932.0	3,932.0
Totals	1,731.2	479.9	7,160.4	9,371.5	1,845.2	1,036.4	8,133.8	11,015.4	2,086.4	1,175.0	8,557.7	11,819.1

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Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2002

Efforts have been initiated to develop a trans-Alaska gas line for North Slope natural gas. This will be an enormous undertaking, beginning in FY01, which will require substantial staffing to evaluate route alternatives and environmental concerns associated with each alternative.

The renewal process for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline lease is expected to be initiated during FY01-02 which will require substantial staff work with industry on the federally required Environmental Impact Statement.

A three-year cooperative effort between the Habitat and Restoration Division and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to begin a statewide assessment of existing road culverts and their ability to provide suitable fish passage is anticipated to begin during FY02. Results of these studies will enable DOT&PF to prioritize replacement of problem culverts in concert with their 5- year highway plan to maximize restoration of important spawning and rearing habitat in the most cost-effective manner.

A long term multi-agency ecological assessment program for log transfer facilities was initiated in FY01 to study their effects on the marine environment, determine the most cost effective mitigation measures, and to investigate potential economic uses of bark deposits associated with these facilities.

A comprehensive salmon habitat assessment, research, monitoring, and restoration program in Southeast Alaska is scheduled to begin during FY 01 and will continue for the next several years.

The Kachemak Bay Research Reserve staff will increase as this program continues to develop.

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Summary of BRU Budget Changes by Component

From FY2001 Authorized to FY2002 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2001 Authorized	1,845.2	1,036.4	8,133.8	11,015.4
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Habitat	1,542.9	380.1	1,262.0	3,185.0
-Hab. Special Projects	1.2	1.0	6.0	8.2
-Habitat Permitting/Title 16	-1,527.9	-381.6	-1,253.8	-3,163.3
-Restoration	0.0	0.0	7.2	7.2
Proposed budget increases:				
-Habitat	225.0	0.0	0.0	225.0
-Hab. Special Projects	0.0	139.1	402.5	541.6
FY2002 Governor	2,086.4	1,175.0	8,557.7	11,819.1