

Southeast Alaska Watershed Symposium

November 4th, 5th, & 6th 2013

Centennial Hall, Juneau, Alaska

Symposium Goals:

This event will provide fisheries and aquatic resource professionals with an opportunity to share information, tools, and methods which promote fish habitat conservation and support aquatic resource management in Southeast Alaska.

It is envisioned that the Southeast Alaska Watershed Symposium will be a catalyst for professionals working in Southeast Alaska to share relevant work and recent efforts occurring in watersheds across the region as well as provide an opportunity for participants to network and identify strategic partnerships that will advance common fish habitat conservation and aquatic resource management goals.

This symposium is focused on topics of fish distribution, stream/river habitat, watershed assessment and prioritization methods, relevant geospatial tools and information on emerging research in the region. Additionally, the symposium offers an overview of the Clean Water Act Section 404 program and proposed Southeast Alaska Mitigation Fund. It is our hope that this symposium will provide a baseline level of information sharing and become an annual event for future exploration of these and other important thematic topics.

Session Objectives:

1. Provide participants with an overview and demonstration of current fish distribution and fish habitat inventory activities throughout Southeast Alaska.
2. Demonstrate watershed scale assessment and prioritization schemas with applications to support fish habitat conservation and aquatic resource management.
3. Showcase geospatial tools and emerging research with applications to support aquatic resource management in Southeast Alaska.
4. Provide participants with an overview of the Clean Water Act Section 404 program in Alaska and the role aquatic resource mitigation can play to support mitigation of development impacts to wetlands and fish habitat.

*Co-hosted by the
Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition (SAWC) &
the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership (SEAKFHP)*

<http://alaskawatershedcoalition.org>

<http://www.seakfhp.org>

November 4th- Centennial Hall

Southeast Alaska Watershed Symposium

- 11:00-12:30** **Poster Session Set-up**
Lead: Nina Horne, Juneau Watershed Partnership
Attendees are encouraged to bring poster presentations to the symposium. Posters will be on display for the duration of the event.
- 12:30-1:15** Symposium Registration
- 1:15 - 1:30** Welcoming Comments
- 1:30 - 2:00** Table Introductions, Host Partner Overviews, Agenda Overview, Symposium Goals

Session 1: Fish Distribution and Habitat Inventory Activities in Southeast Alaska

Lead: Jeff Nichols, ADFG - Sport Fish Division, Freshwater Assessment Group

Every year in Southeast Alaska, there are numerous efforts undertaken to identify fish distribution patterns, aquatic habitat use and condition, and the natural and anthropogenic factors contributing to changes in any or all of the above. A diversity of approaches have been used to address these information needs, allowing flexibility in methods and data requirements to answer specific questions, adherence to agency protocols, and comparisons across time and space. Inherently, a wide diversity of approaches can contribute to uncertainty in choosing the 'best' approach.

Session Goal: To provide participants with an overview of the most widely used, and emerging, protocols and data holdings related to identifying fish distribution, aquatic habitat use, and condition in Southeast Alaska. Presentations by practitioners will be followed by facilitated panel discussions and open forum, providing further opportunity to explore how differences in spatial and temporal variability and subsequent management or restoration actions drive selection methods.

- 2:00-4:20** Presentations – Fish Distribution/Habitat Inventory and Assessment
- 4:20-5:00** Facilitated Panel Discussion/Open Forum - Gaps and Needs: Current/Future
- 5:00-5:15** Final Points and Wrap-up
- 5:15-6:00** **Poster Session set-up**
- 7:00-9:00** **Poster Session and Evening Event**

November 5th- Centennial Hall

Southeast Alaska Watershed Symposium

8-8:30 Welcome

8:30-9:00 Table Introductions, Brief re-cap of Day 1 and Day 2 Agenda overview

Session 2: Habitat Inventory and Assessment (Continued) and Watershed Scale Prioritization

Lead: Neil Stichert, USFWS Southeast Alaska Habitat Restoration Program

This session will continue inventory and assessment themes from Day 1 and close the morning with regionally relevant watershed prioritization schemas and decision support tools for fish habitat restoration and preservation needs.

Session Goal: In Southeast Alaska, various regional and watershed-scale prioritization efforts and decision support tools have been developed and used to support management decisions and restoration project site selection. These schemas and tools are used to inform conservation or restoration plans, prioritize funding allocations, and optimize benefits to the resource. This session will provide an overview of existing and emerging activities in the region.

9:00-11:30 Presentations/Panel

11:30-12:00 Wrap-up

12:00-1:00 **Lunch: sponsored by the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership SEAKFHP works to foster and facilitate regionally relevant strategies to support cooperative fish habitat conservation, restoration and management across Southeast Alaska - join in for a lunch time discussion on recent activities of the partnership as well as an opportunity to provide constructive feedback on the Partnership's draft strategic action plan.**

Session 3: Showcase geospatial tools and emerging research and monitoring in Southeast Alaska

Lead: Cindy Hartmann Moore, NOAA Alaska Region – Office of Habitat Conservation

Session Goal: Progressive geospatial applications, tools, and data repositories are being developed to support fish conservation and aquatic resource management decisions in Southeast Alaska. In addition, new research is emerging from agencies, NGO's, and University partners across the region that provides insights on potential changes in aquatic habitat in the future, describes fish/habitat associations, outlines monitoring schemas, and other contributed topics. This session will provide an overview of these applications and tools as well as includes some of the relevant emerging research taking place in Southeast Alaska.

1:00-4:45 Presentations/Panel

4:45-5:00

Wrap-up

November 6th - Centennial Hall, Juneau AK

Southeast Alaska Watershed Symposium

- 8:00-8:30** Coffee
- 8:30-9:00** Table Introductions, Brief re-cap of Day 2 and Day 3 Agenda overview

Session 4: Building an effective Clean Water Act Section 404 Program for Southeast Alaska **Lead: Jessica Kayser, SAWC- In Lieu Fee Program Development**

In 1972, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act established a program to regulate the impacts to the waters of the United States. The program works to ensure that unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources are mitigated. In 2008 the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency issued revised regulations to the Section 404 program. The improved federal regulation seeks to address the significant losses to aquatic resources over the past several decades- nation wide- and improve compensatory mitigation for authorized impacts to wetlands, streams and other waters of the U.S.

In order to ensure the Alaska Section 404 regulatory program is able to effectively mitigate losses to important aquatic resources and fish habitat in SE Alaska there is a critical need for aquatic resource scientists, managers, practitioners, policy and decision makers, and developers to come together and support the development of regionally relevant compensatory mitigation policies, tools, guidance and science.

Session Lead: Jessica Kayser

- 9:00-10:20** **Presentations**
- 9:00-9:20** **ACOE:** An overview of the Section 404 regulatory program and an update on the development of a State-Wide Inter Agency Review team.
- 9:20- 9:40** **EPA:** An overview of the goals and objective of the State-Wide IRT, including plans to develop and/or provide guidance on state and regional policies and tools that support permittees and mitigation sponsors.
- 9:40-10:00** **ADEC:** An update of Alaska Senate Bill 27 “404 Primacy” and the actions being carried out by ADEC and ADNR to evaluate whether or not the agency should seek approval to assume the Section 404 program from the EPA.
- 10:00-10:20** **Southeast Alaska Land Trust:** How SEAL Trust prioritizes mitigation projects and an overview of WESPAK-se Wetland Assessment Methodology.
- 10:20-10:30** **Break**

November 6th - Centennial Hall, Juneau AK

- 10:30-11:15** **Presentations**
- 10:30-10:50** **Washington State Department of Ecology:** Provide participants with information and resources from the state of Washington to support collaboration between multiple stakeholders in the development of an effective Section 404 program in Alaska.
- 10:50-11:10** **Willamette Partnership:** Integrating a watershed approach into mitigation planning and the development of stream functional assessments to support aquatic resource mitigation and fish habitat conservation.
- 11:10-12:00** **Joint Panel: Question and Answer**
- 12:00-1:00** **Lunch: sponsored by the SAWC**
SAWC works to build a network of community-based efforts to achieve informed management of the resources in Southeast Alaska – join in for a lunch time discussion about recent activities and efforts spearheaded by the coalition.
- 1:00-1:45** **Presentation**
- Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition:** Introduction to the proposed Southeast Alaska Mitigation Fund.
- 1:45-2:15** **Questions**
- 2:30-3:30** **Symposium Assessment and Next Steps**