



United States Department of the Interior



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

In Reply Refer to:
FWS/IR11/AFWCO

April 30, 2021

Ms. Anna Henderson, Municipality of Anchorage
Mr. Tony Izzo, Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.
Mr. Lee Thibert, Chugach Electric Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 196300
Anchorage, Alaska 99519

Subject: Eklutna Hydroelectric Project's Proposed Final Study Plan

Dear Ms. Henderson, Mr. Izzo, and Mr. Thibert:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is responding to the request submitted by your consultant, McMillen Jacobs Associates, dated March 19, 2021, for our concurrence with the proposed Study Plans in support of the Eklutna Hydropower Project (Project). The Project is governed by the 1991 Fish and Wildlife Agreement: Snettisham and Eklutna Projects (1991 Agreement), which requires the Project owners (Owners) to develop a Fish and Wildlife Program to protect, mitigate damages to, and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by the continued operation of the Project. The 1991 Agreement further states that the proposed Fish and Wildlife Program will be reviewed by the resource management agencies (including the Service), the public, and the Governor of Alaska. To facilitate the development of the Fish and Wildlife Program, the Owners are required to fund studies to examine impacts to fish and wildlife from the Project. The Owners are required to develop this Study Plan in consultation with the resource management agencies, including the Service. Prior to implementation of the Study Plan, the Service, along with the other parties to the 1991 Agreement, must review and concur with the Plan's scope of work. We have commented on a draft of the Eklutna Study Plan on November 27, 2020.

The Proposed Final Eklutna Study Plan (Proposed Study Plan), dated February 2021, was developed in coordination with the parties to the 1991 Agreement. The Proposed Study Plan describes a set of actions to commence and execute 10 studies in 2021, and outlines plans for continuing several of those studies in 2022, as well as the commencement of additional studies in 2022. The actions described in all 10 studies proposed for 2021 will increase the general ecological knowledge and inform the proposed Fish and Wildlife Program that will protect, mitigate damages to, and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by the continued operation of the Project. We understand that minor changes may occur based on comments from agencies and

other parties to the 1991 Agreement. The Service concurs that the intent and breath of the Proposed Study Plan will provide sufficient information to develop a Fish and Wildlife Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Project Study Plan. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Kevin Foley, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at 907-271-2789 or kevin_foley@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Stewart Cogswell
Field Supervisor