



United States Department of the Interior



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

In Reply Refer to:
FWS/IR11/SAFWFO

Ms. Anna Henderson, Municipality of Anchorage
Mr. Tony Izzo, Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.
Mr. Lee Thibert, Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

Subject: Eklutna Hydroelectric Project's Proposed Final Study Plan

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

Thank you for your letter, submitted by McMillen Jacobs Associates on your behalf and dated April 1, 2022, requesting U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) review and concurrence of the proposed second year Study Plans in support of the Eklutna Hydropower Project (Project). The Project is governed by the 1991 Fish and Wildlife Agreement for the Snettisham and Eklutna Projects (1991 Agreement), which requires the Project owners (Owners) to consult and work with the Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Alaska Energy Authority, and the State of Alaska (the Parties) to develop a Fish and Wildlife Program. The 1991 Agreement was subject to approval by Congress to transfer a non-Federal hydroelectric project without obtaining a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license. The FERC process includes environmental review and analysis of impacts and potential mitigation, which had yet to be quantified for the Project. In place of obtaining a FERC license, the 1991 Agreement provided mechanisms to study, develop, and analyze measures that could mitigate damages to, enhance, and protect fish and wildlife impacted by the development of the Project.

The Study Plans developed for 2022 would use some of the data collected in 2021. Plans describe the specific goals, study areas, and proposed methods for each study. The Service has recommendations for two of the studies that use flow release information collected in 2021, Study 3.1 Geomorphology & Sediment Transport and Study 3.2 Instream Flow (see Enclosure 1 for further details). We understand there will be ongoing consultations with the Service to provide additional input on these studies as well as input on future conservation measures to protect fish and wildlife from impacts of the Project. Furthermore, we acknowledge the Service's input will be requested during alternative development and analysis, scheduled in 2023. Understanding the uncertainty of Studies 3.1 and 3.2, the Service concurs with 11 of the 13 Year-2 Study Plans per the terms of the 1991 Agreement.

Ms. Anna Henderson, Mr. Tony Izzo, and Mr. Lee Thibert

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Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Year-2 Study Plans. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Ms. Jennifer Spegon at 907-271-2768 or at jennifer_j_spegon@fws.gov, or Ms. Carol Mahara at 907-271-2066 or at carol_mahara@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Stewart Cogswell
Field Supervisor

Enclosure