



Eklutna Hydroelectric Project Fish and Wildlife Agreement

Terrestrial TWG Meeting
November 9, 2021



Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Outline study goals and proposed methods and obtain feedback from the TWG
 - Wildlife Habitat and Wetlands Mapping
 - Wildlife Surveys
- Review the study planning schedule and next steps



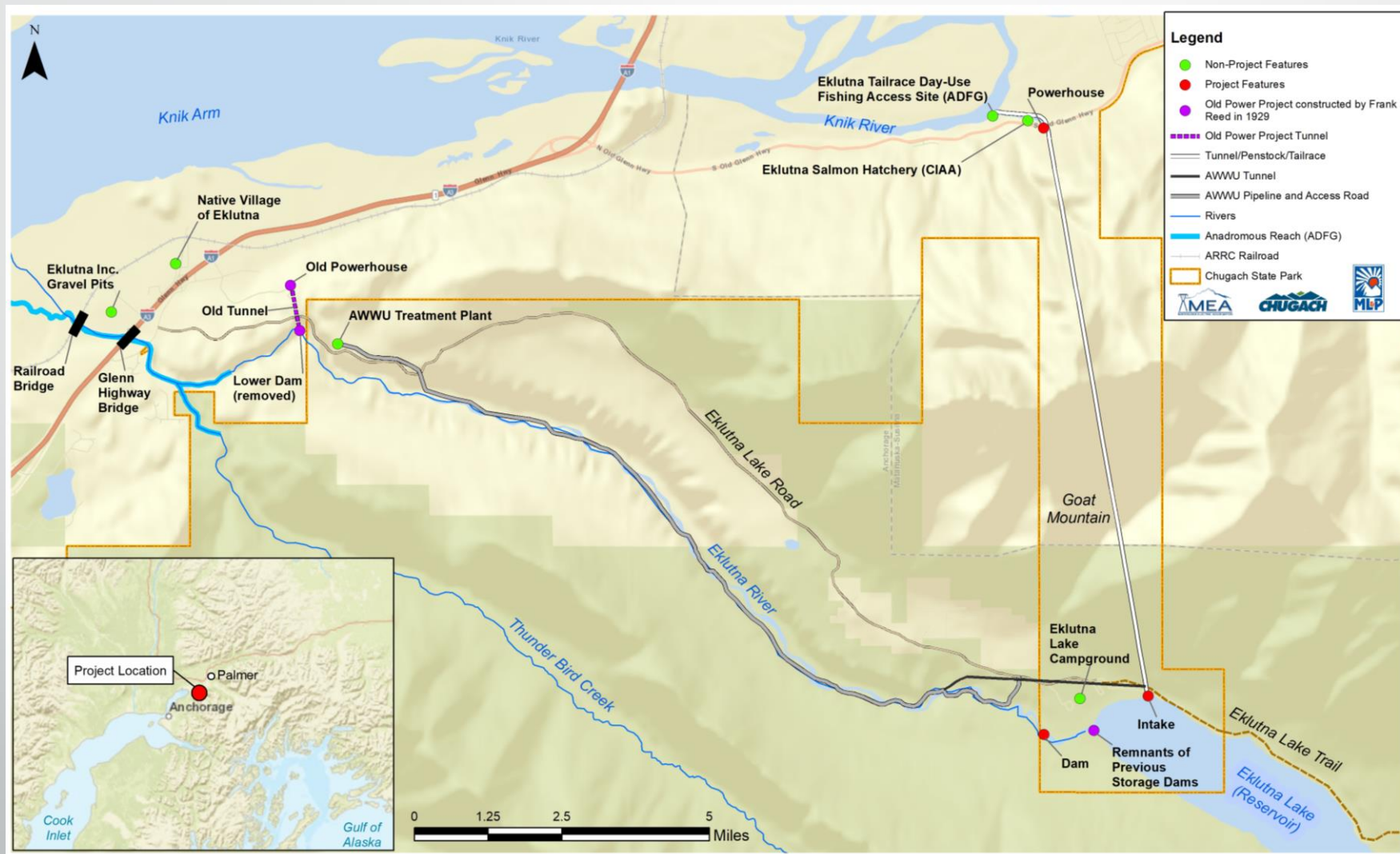
Wildlife Habitat and Wetlands Mapping

Goals

- Develop a wildlife habitat and wetland map for the study area, which will...
 - Provide a basis for sample site selection for focused wildlife surveys
 - Support a wildlife habitat-use evaluation
 - Provide the basis for a wetland functional assessment
- Assess the project's impacts on wildlife habitat and wetlands by comparing current conditions with historical aerial photos

Study Area

Eklutna River estuary/corridor & Eklutna Lake outlet/pond



Methods

- Utilize existing map data (e.g., National Wetland Inventory and Municipality of Anchorage wetland mapping) as the basis for the habitat/wetland map
- Refine the habitat/wetland map by...
 - Utilizing LiDAR, aerial imagery, and spherical video acquired for the project
 - Conducting a field survey to collect ground-truth data
- Prepare a functional assessment of wetlands to determine specific structural characteristics and functional value of wetlands in the study area
- Utilize available historic imagery to compare current and historic conditions and to evaluate project impacts to wildlife habitat and wetlands (gains/losses and change in function)



Wildlife Surveys

Goals

- Assess the seasonal presence, abundance (when sufficient data are available), and habitat use for key terrestrial wildlife species in the study area
- Key Species
 - Black and brown bear
 - Moose
 - Beaver
 - Migratory waterfowl

Methods

- Desktop analysis of available existing data
 - Species presence and abundance
 - Seasonal use
 - Important locations/travel corridors in the study area
- Supplement existing data with site-specific and seasonally focused surveys
- Habitat-use evaluation to link site-specific observations to mapped wildlife habitat and categorize habitats into high, moderate, and low value classes for each species
- Existing and new data will be analyzed to summarize existing conditions for key wildlife species

Methods

- Bear and Moose
 - All field crews will record any observations of bear or moose sign (e.g., presence, scat, tracks)
 - Motion-sensitive cameras on well-used or suspected travel corridors
 - Time-lapse cameras at strategic locations (broader sampling)
- Moose Only
 - Winter browse surveys to assess the amount of browse and the degree of browsing occurring in different areas

Methods

- Beaver
 - Beaver ponds and dams will be included in the habitat/wetland map
 - Fall aerial survey to identify active colonies based on the presence of a cache
- Migratory Waterfowl
 - Spring and fall aerial surveys of suitable habitats to assess species assemblages, abundance, and areas of use

Study Planning Schedule

- **2/11/22** – Distribute draft study plan to TWG and parties for review
- **3/11/22** – Comments due
- **Week of 3/21/22** – Meeting to discuss comments
- **4/1/22** – Distribute proposed final study plans to parties for concurrence
- **4/15/22** – Deadline to receive state concurrence letters and then submit to AEA as the governor's representative for feedback
- **4/29/22** – Deadline to receive federal concurrence letters and any feedback from AEA
- **5/13/22** – Finalize study plans

Questions

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