

2011 Progress toward Objectives in the Strategic Action Plan of the Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership

The Mat-Su Salmon Partnership's broad goals are to protect salmon and their habitats in the Mat-Su Basin and Upper Cook Inlet, mitigate potential threats to salmon and their habitats, restore connectivity between salmon habitats, and increase knowledge about salmon and their use of freshwater and marine habitats. To conserve salmon in the Mat-Su Basin, the Partnership is addressing 9 focal issues for salmon and salmon habitat:

- Overarching Science Needs
 - Anadromous Waters Catalog
 - Water Quantity, & Water Quality
 - Alteration of riparian areas
- Filling of wetlands
- Impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff
- Septic systems
- Culverts that block fish passage
- Loss or alteration of water flow or volume
- Loss of estuaries and nearshore habitats
- Invasive Northern Pike

Conservation strategies are composed of **objectives**, which define a vision of success, and **strategic actions** that will achieve the objectives. The Partnership's strategies fall into four broad categories: protection, restoration, education, and science. The partnership will monitor effectiveness of strategy implementation by monitoring target viability and the mitigation of potential threats. Results of implementing strategic actions need to be measured to see if strategies are working as planned and whether adjustments will be needed. Measures also allow the planning team to monitor the status of those targets and threats that were not identified as critical but may need to be reconsidered in the future. An **indicator** is a measure of a key ecological attribute, critical threat, objective, or other factor.

The Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium provides an opportunity to assess what progress the Partnership and its partners are making toward implementing the Strategic Action Plan. Table 1 lists objectives for the focal issues the strategic actions and indicators that accompany each objective. Additionally general research and data needs that were identified by the Science Working Group are included in Table 1. Based on presentations and break out sessions at the Symposium and follow-up communications, a list of work that is contributing toward achieving the Partnership's goals has been compiled. By necessity, the information in Table 1 is brief and focuses on current and recent work. Partners should be contacted for more details about their work. The Partnership lacks a mechanism for quantifying indicators so many of those remain blank. Calculating of these will improve assessing how the Partnership is doing at achieving its goals.

Progress toward achieving the plan's objectives can be summarized as follows:

Strong Effort

These may be the issues and needs that partners were already working on within established programs. Some of these areas have stable funding sources that enable action on a steady basis, or partners have been successful in securing short-term project funding to accomplish. Multiple partners may be working on these issues, which results in greater progress in these areas. These objectives may be on track for fulfilling objectives in the time period laid out in the plan.

- O1.1: Anadromous Waters Catalog
- O2.2: Protection of Priority Salmon Riparian Habitat – *identification of priority habitats; local land use planning; and riparian habitat protection with conservation easements*
- O3.1: Conserve Wetlands for Salmon - *Mapping wetlands and assessing function; protection with conservation easements*
- O4.2: Imperviousness Impact Assessment - *Mapping of Impervious Surfaces & understanding impacts*
- O6.2: Fish Passage Restoration – *culvert inventory and replacing priority culverts*

Moderate to Low Effort

Work is occurring on these issues but with fewer partners or resources than those listed above. These existing efforts could be strengthened with new support, either in-kind or financial, and will likely need additional resources to fulfill objectives by the time specified in the plan. Some projects in these areas are just beginning.

- O1.2 Comprehensive Surface and Groundwater Studies – *USGS groundwater modeling and stream gages*
- O1.3 Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring – *stream temperature monitoring*
- O2.1: Identification of Priority Riparian Areas for Salmon – *map and prioritization of riparian habitats for protection*
- O2.3: Restoration of Priority Riparian Habitat
- O4.1: Minimization of Imperviousness Impacts on Water Quality – *local land use planning and best management practices*
- O5.1: Improved Wastewater Disposal – *septic suitability information available to public*
- O5.2: Expanded Wastewater Infrastructure – *regional wastewater study*
- O6.1: No New Barriers
- O7.1: Instream Flow on Anadromous Waters – *filing for reservations on priority anadromous streams*
- O8.1: Salmon Use of Cook Inlet
- O9.1: Pathways Analysis of Northern Pike
- O9.2: Reduction of Introduction of Northern Pike through Education

Efforts not Begun

From available information, it appears that no partners are working yet on these issues and objectives.

- O7.2: Community Water Needs Study
- O8.2: Conserve Estuaries for Salmon through Regional Cooperation