

# **Hindsight: Historical views of the Kenai River and its modifications**

By

Shana Loshbaugh

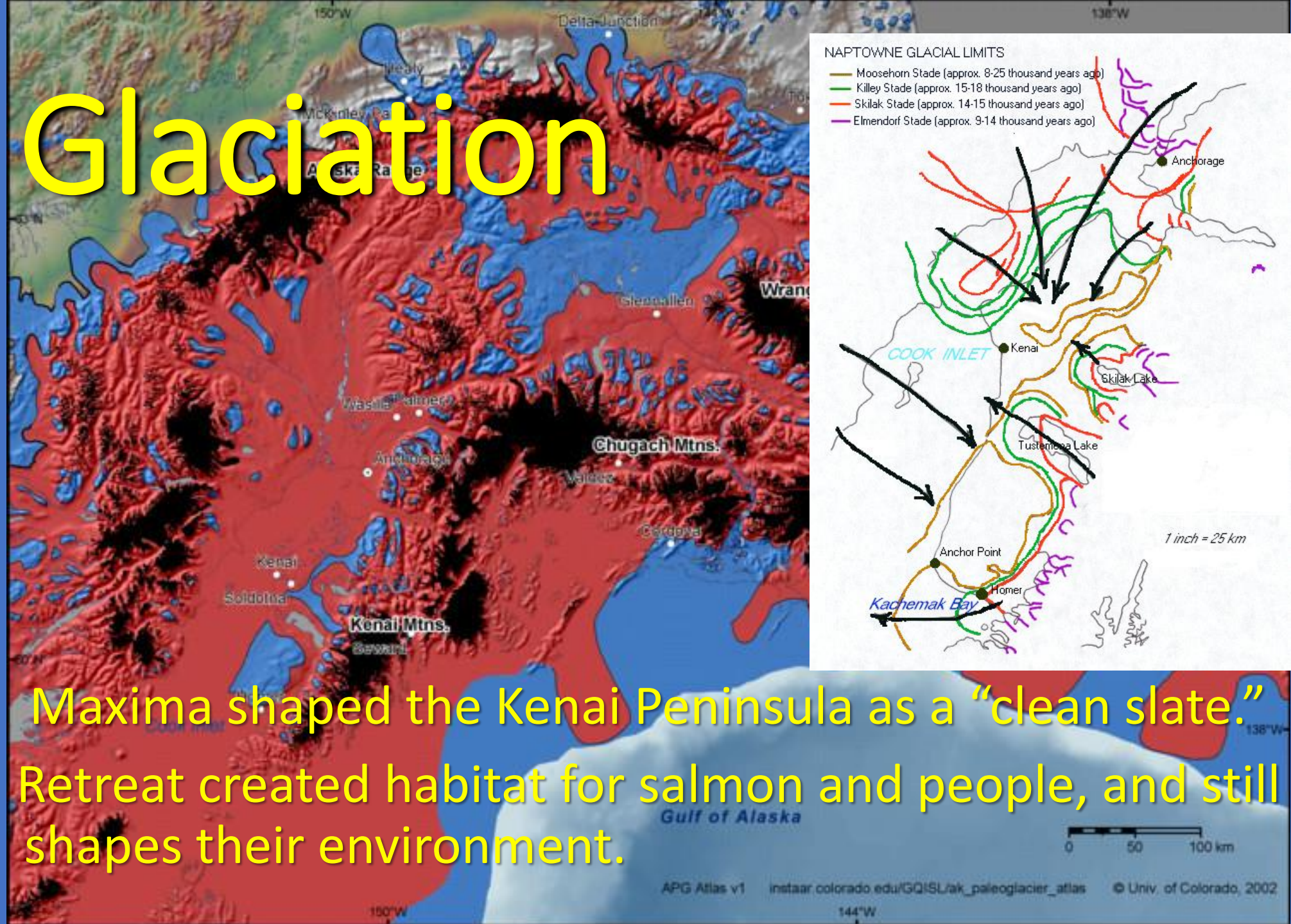
For the

Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Symposium

20 April 2023

Kenai, Alaska

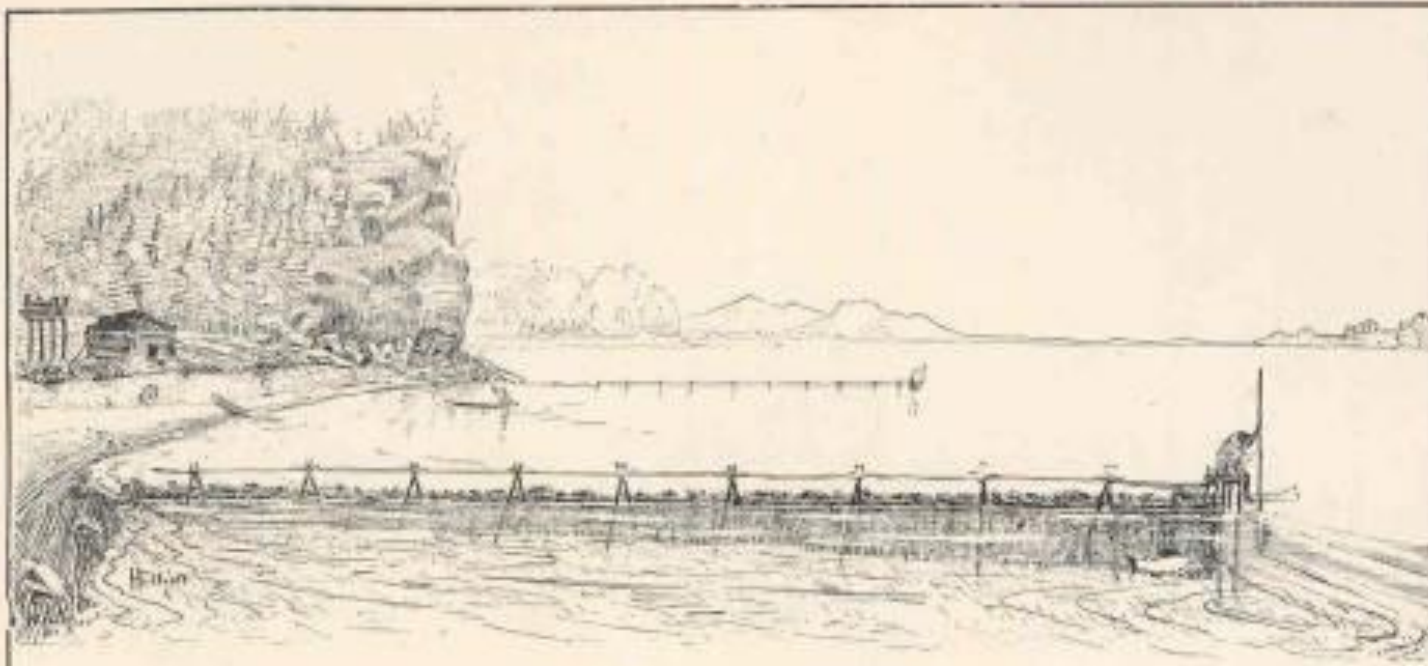
# Glaciation



Maxima shaped the Kenai Peninsula as a “clean slate.”  
Retreat created habitat for salmon and people, and still shapes their environment.

XXXX

# Natives relied on salmon runs



SALMON WEIRS OF THE KENAITZE  
Method employed by Indians of Cook's Inlet to catch Salmon.

Elliott; 1897

They used driftnets and weirs to catch fish, and sophisticated pits to store them for winter use.

Dena'ina tradition minimized waste & habitat damage.

[http://edheaded.com/wp-content/uploads/articulate\\_uploads/Salmon-Cold-Storage-/story\\_html5.html](http://edheaded.com/wp-content/uploads/articulate_uploads/Salmon-Cold-Storage-/story_html5.html)

# Outsiders brought saltries, then canneries, late 1800s



Noble; c. 1900

Focused on  
estuary & inlet  
interceptions,  
at first.

All hands building traps,

May 1890.

# 1<sup>st</sup> inlet fish traps built 1880s



Wetherbee

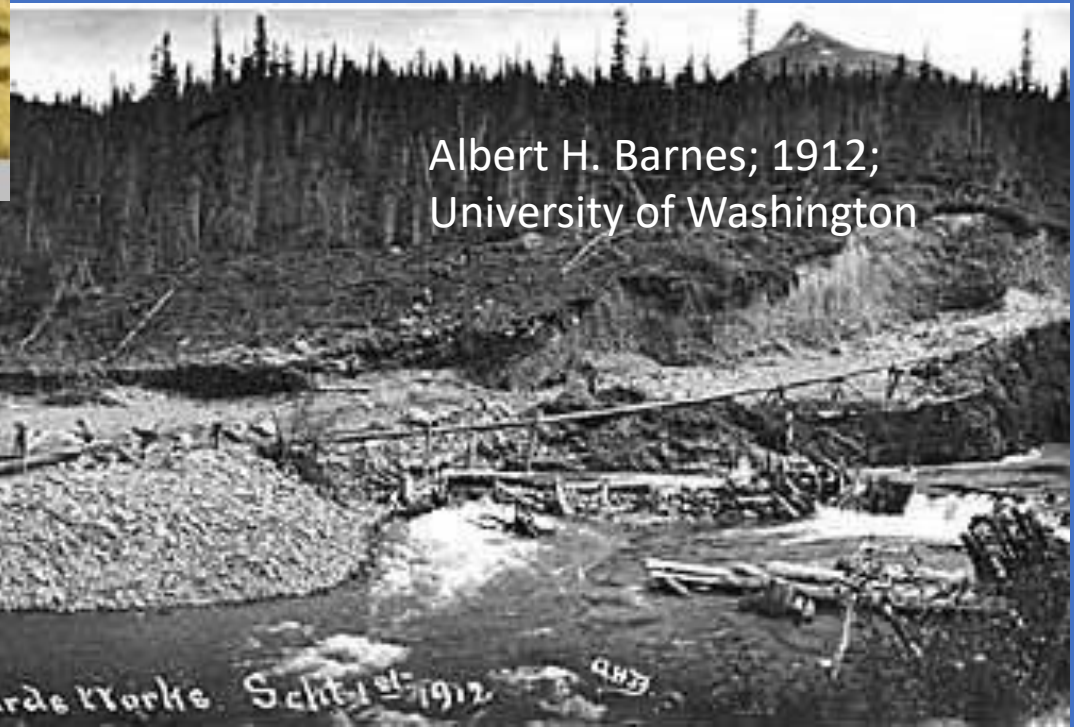
Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

# Mining in the Kenai River



C.G. Hubbard; 1911

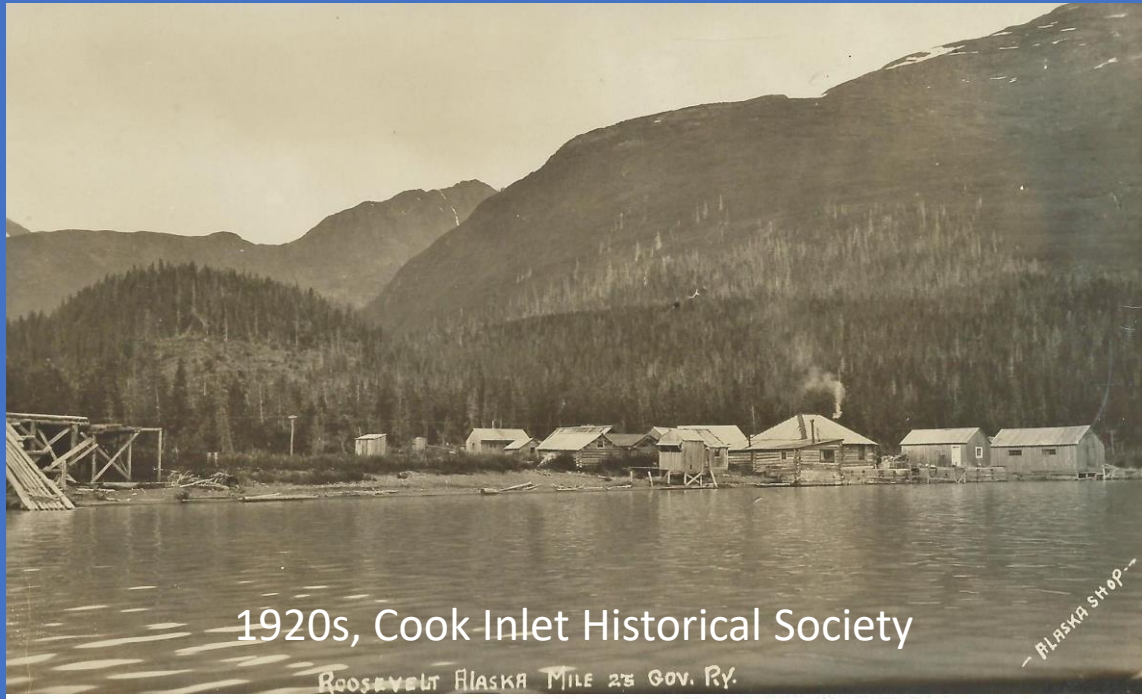
University of Alaska Anchorage. Archives & Manuscripts Dept.



Albert H. Barnes; 1912;  
University of Washington

Looking across Cooper Creek Towards Works. Sept. 1st 1912. 4877

# Upper KRW development



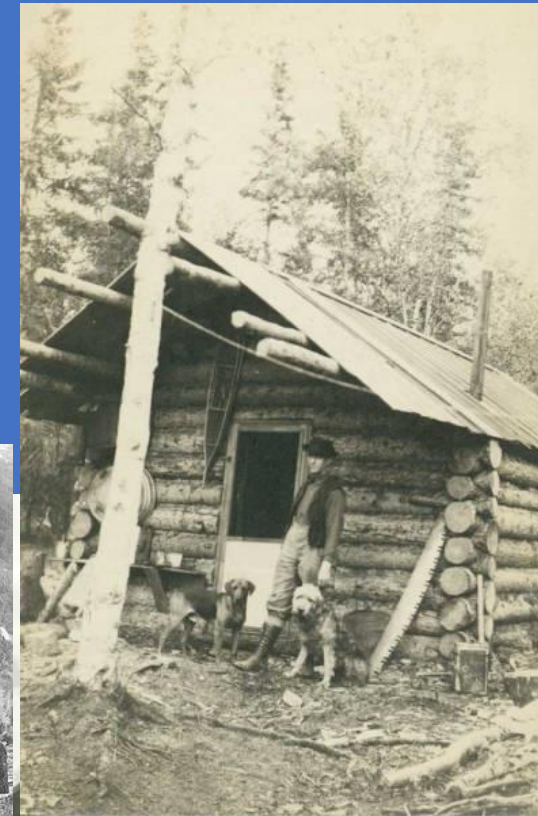
1920s, Cook Inlet Historical Society

ROOSEVELT ALASKA MILE 25 GOV. RY.

ALASKA SHOP



Resurrection Bay Historical Society  
1906



University of Alaska Anchorage. Archives & Manuscripts Dept.



Alaska State Library

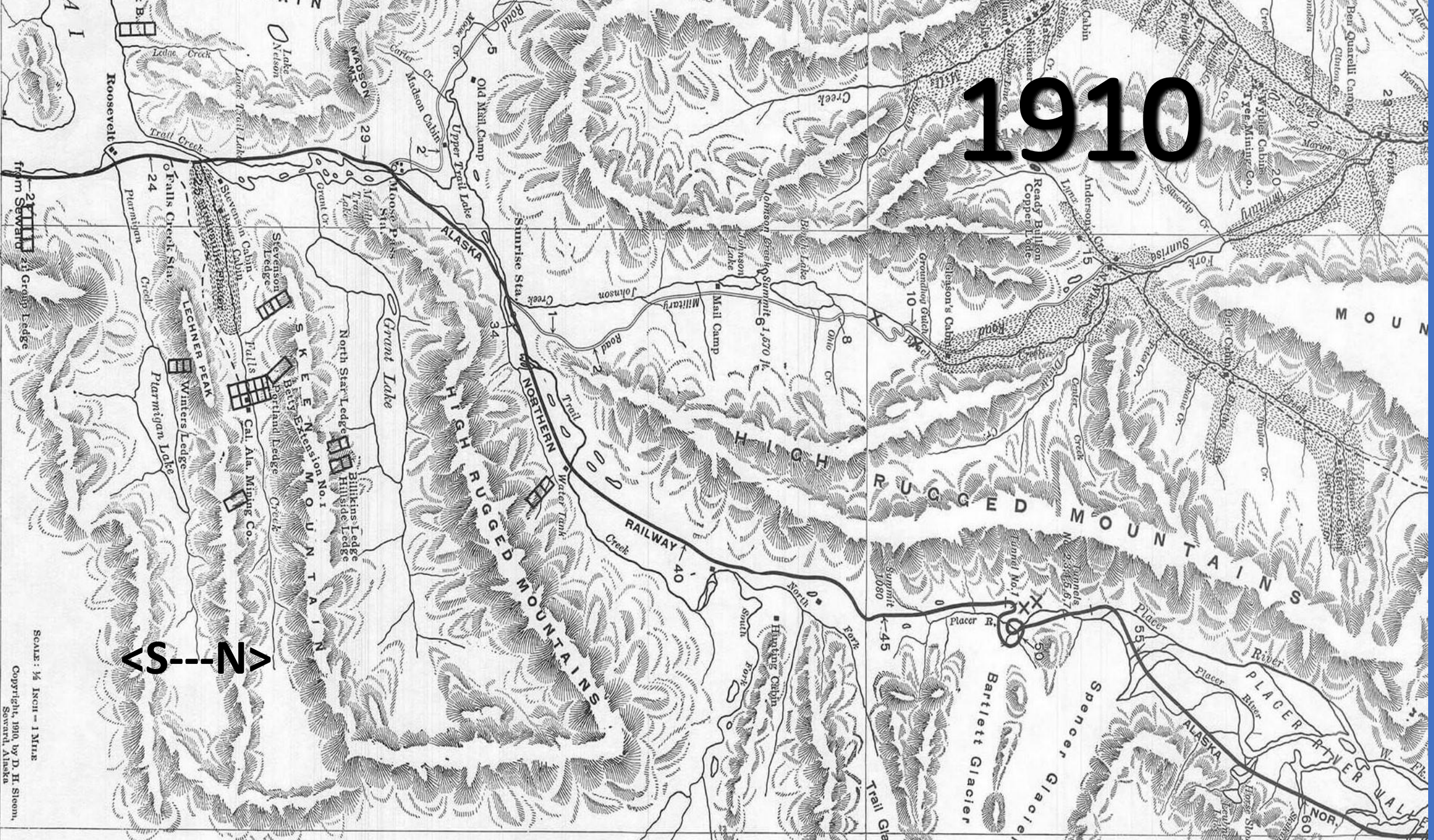


Anchorage Museum of History & Art. Library & Archives.

# 1910

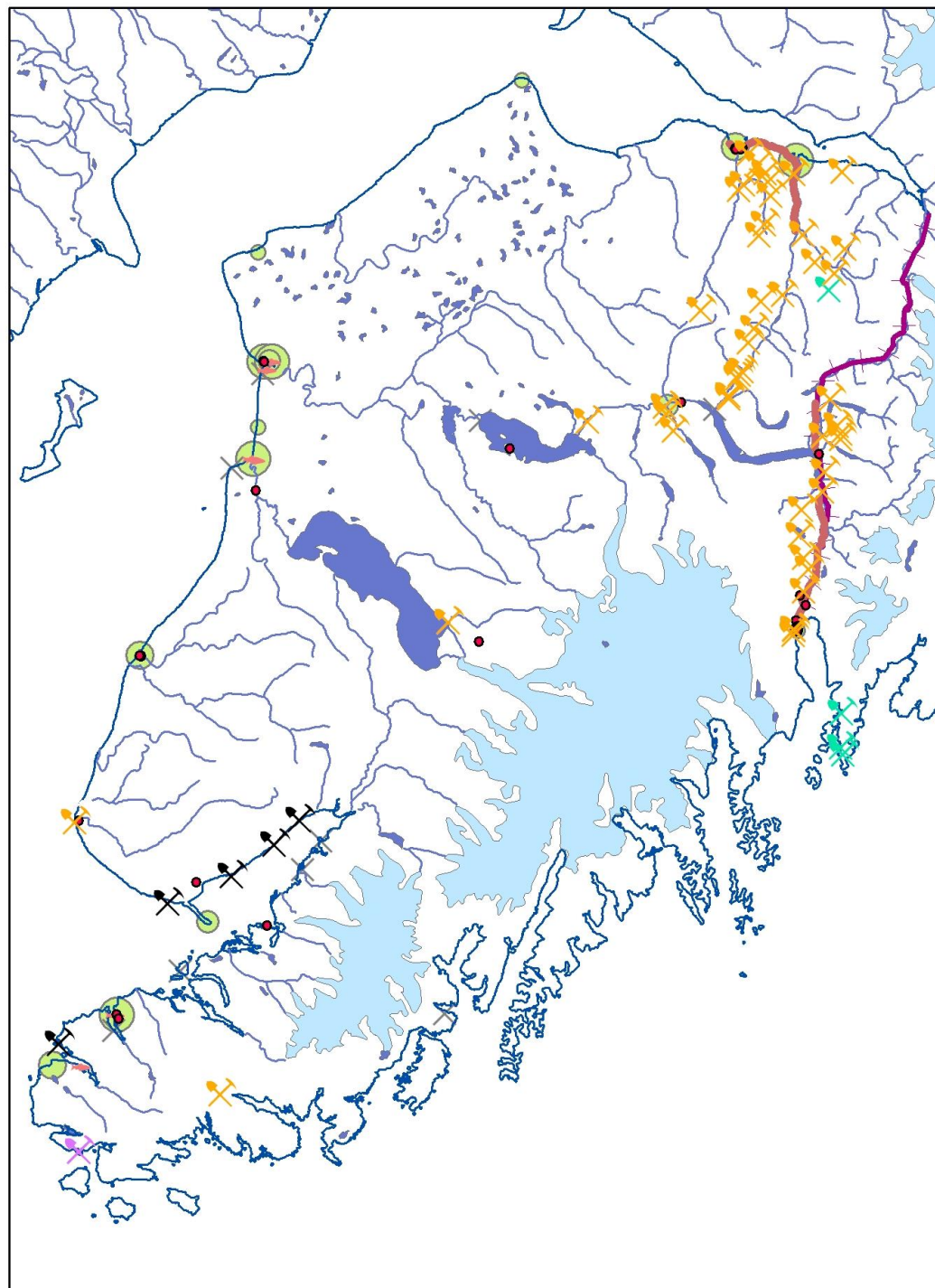
S---N

SCALE: 1/4 INCH = 1 MILE  
Copyright, 1910, by D. H. Stearn,  
Seward, Alaska



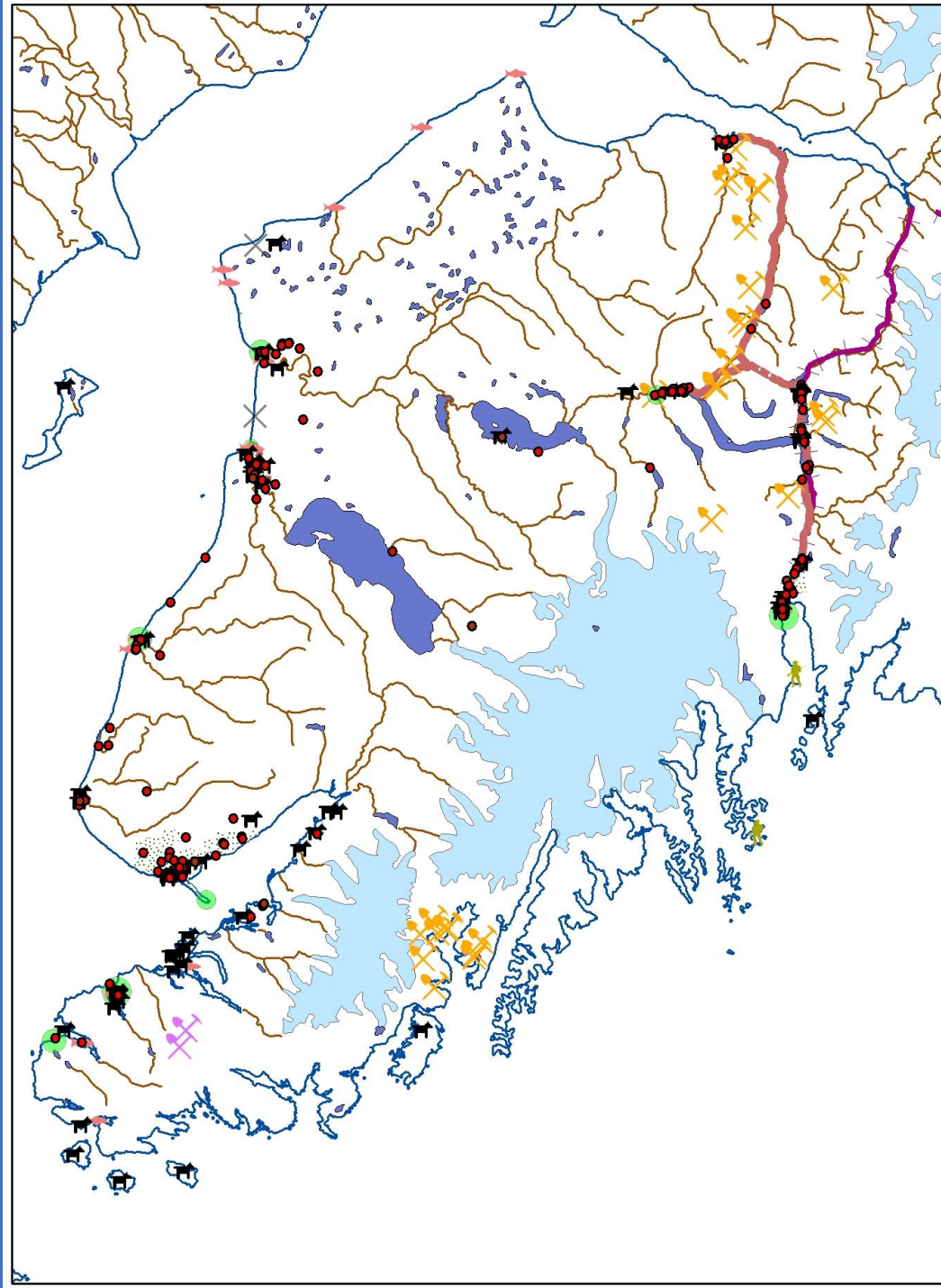


Develop-  
ment



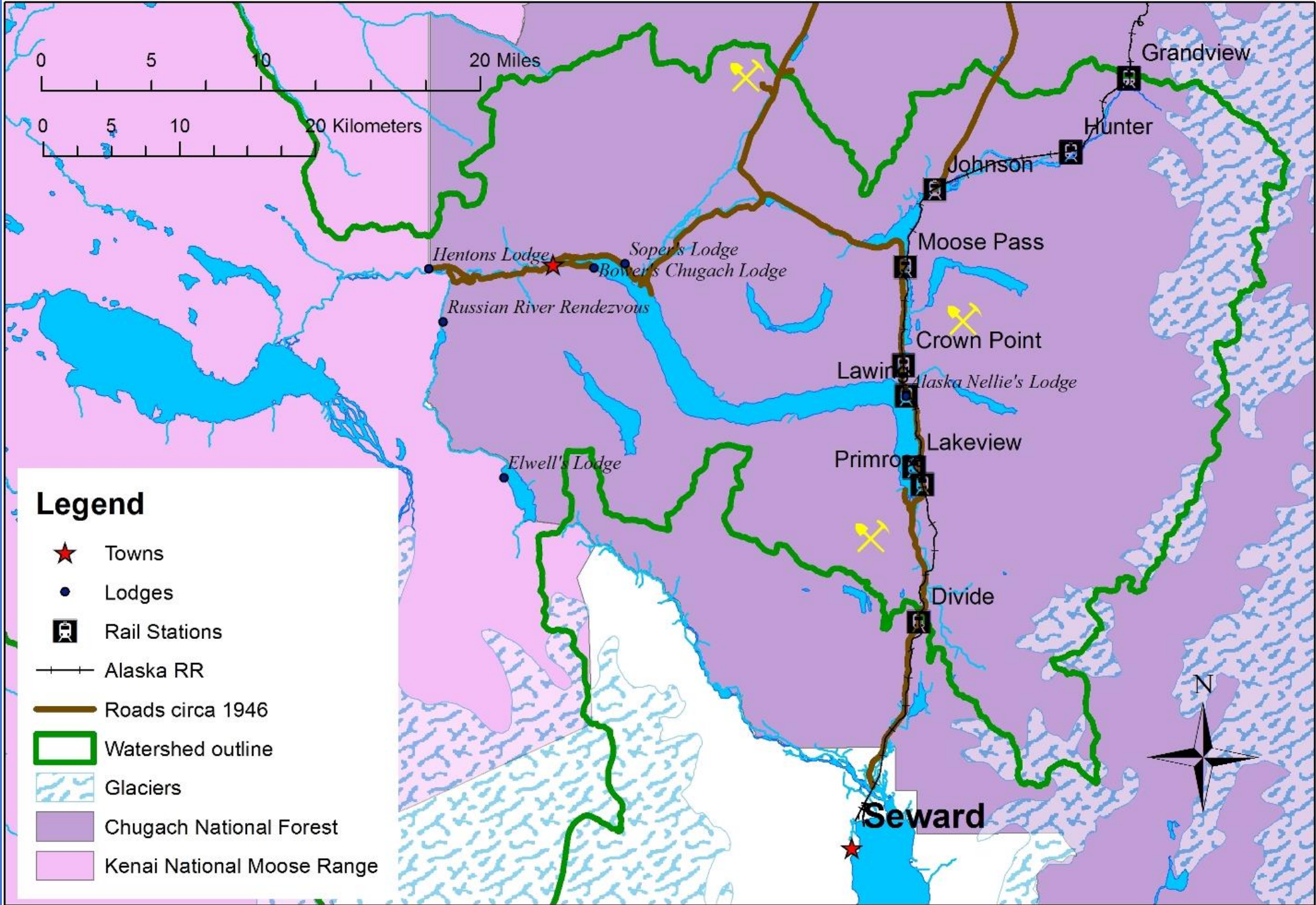
to 1918

Develop-  
ment

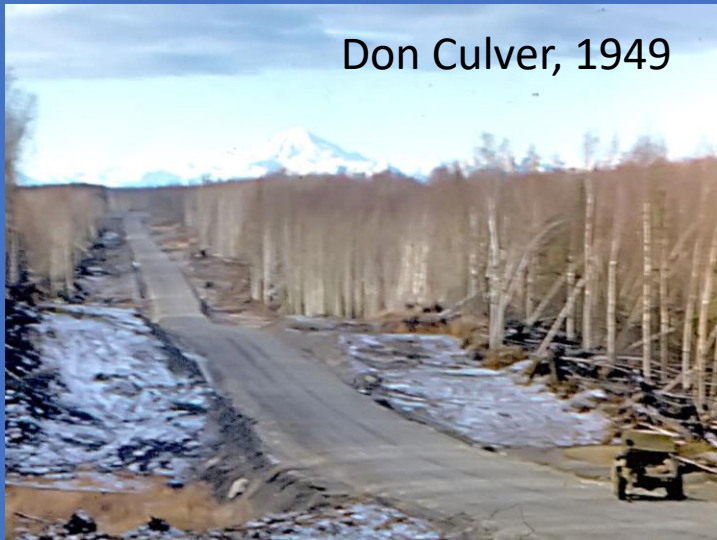


to 1946

# Upper Kenai watershed development circa 1946



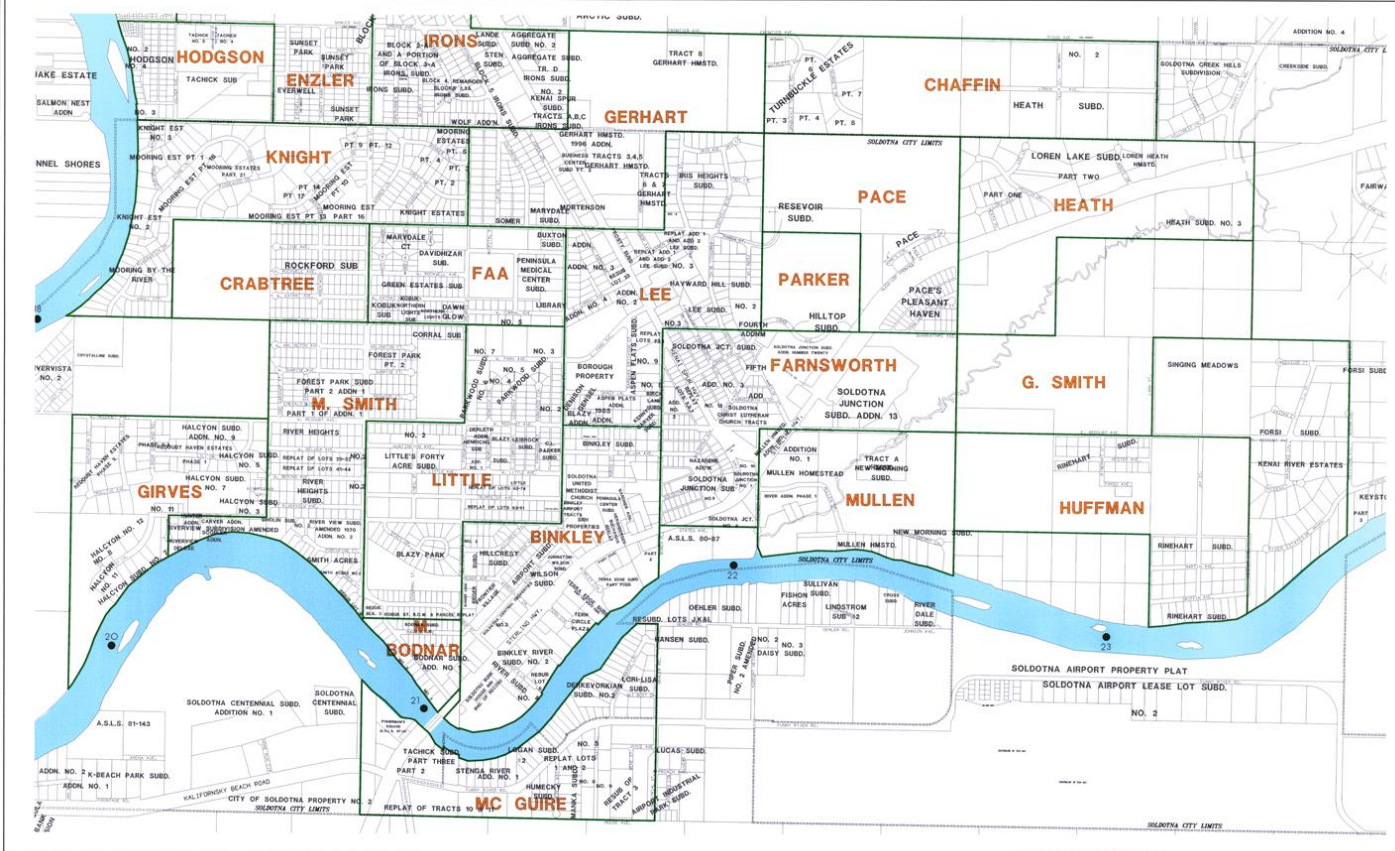
Don Culver, 1949



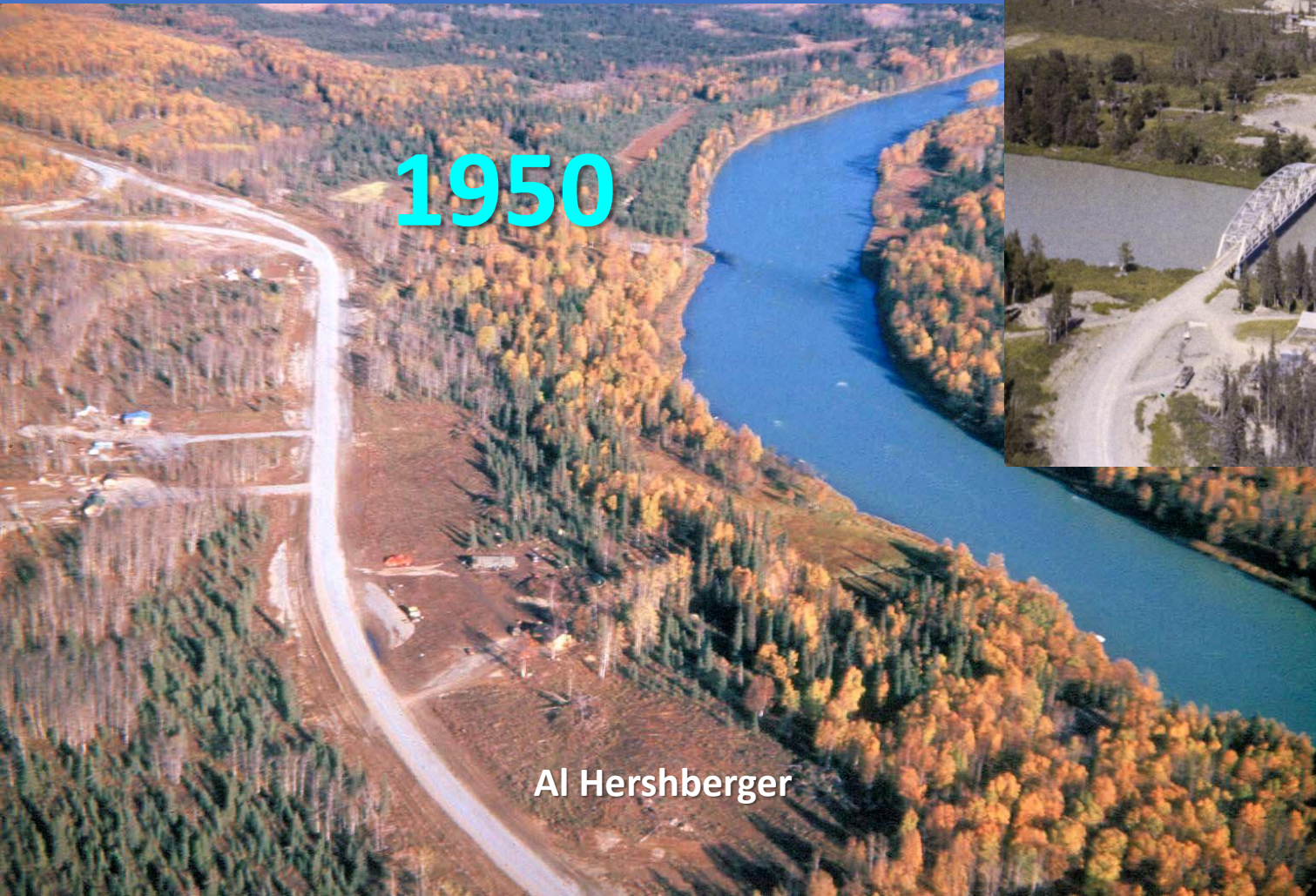
# Post-war programs boosted the population



Ralph Soberg, 1949



# Huge habitat alterations in a few years



1950

Al Hershberger



1955

Jim Taylor  
collection

Electrification  
Roads, asphalt, culverts  
Cold-war communications  
Oil exploration

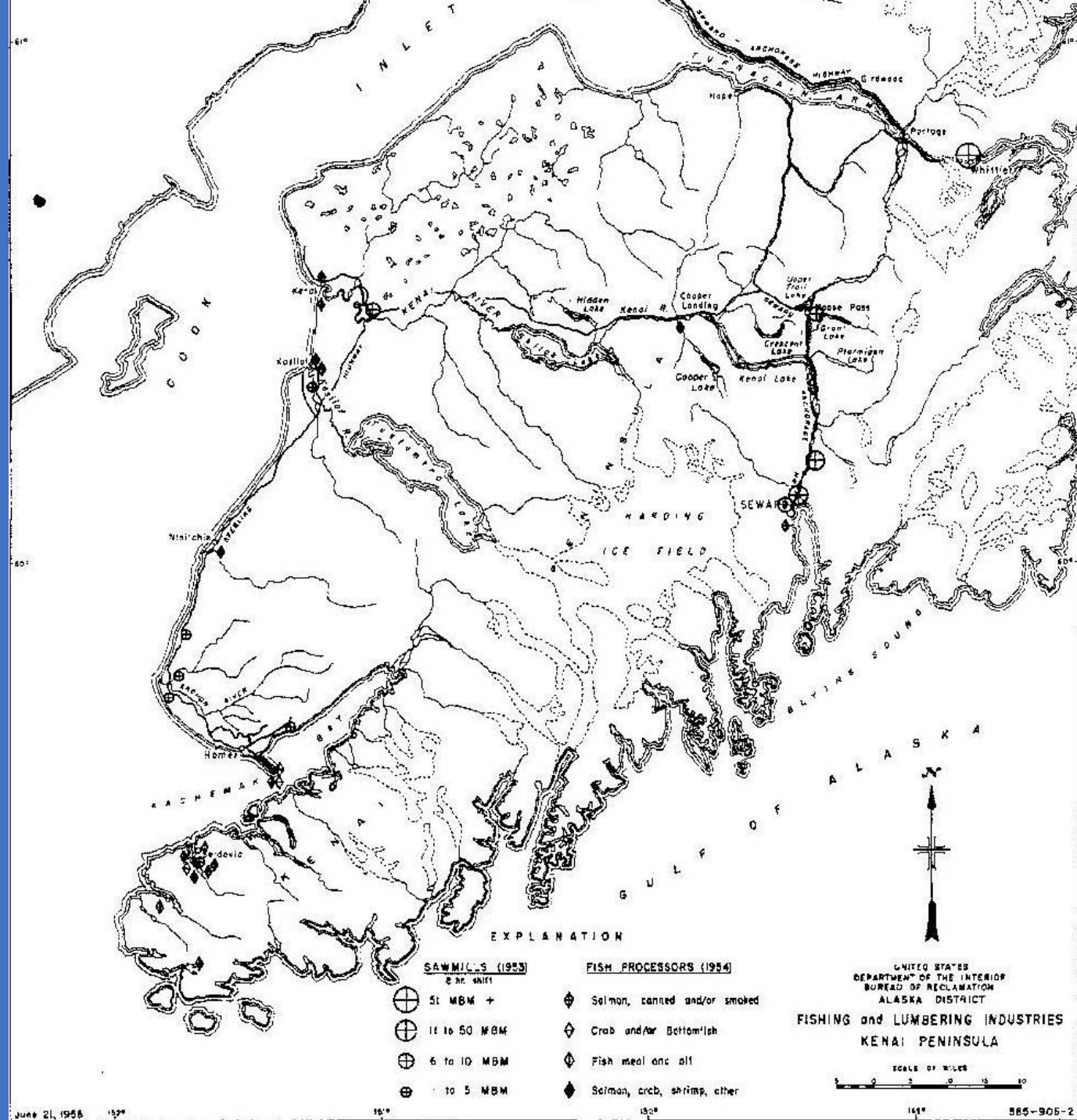
1955

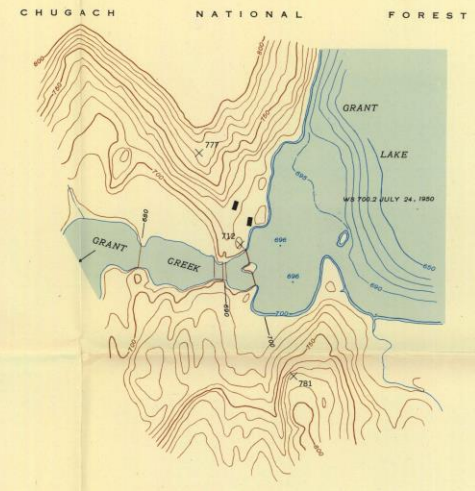
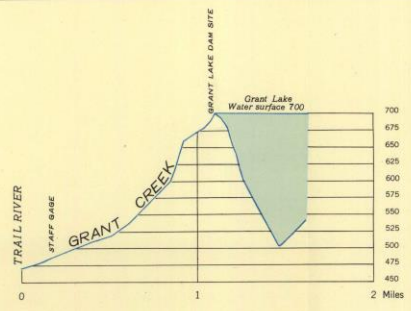
# Kenai – commercial fisheries



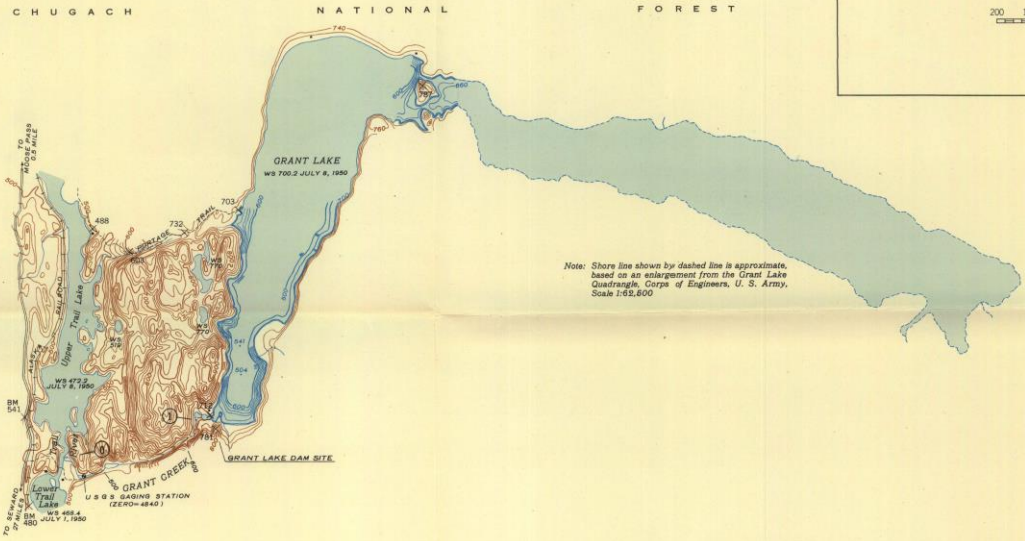
Pre-war labor unrest  
Volatile catch  
Up-river subsistence catch banned (1952)  
Fish trap expansion & controversies

# 1954

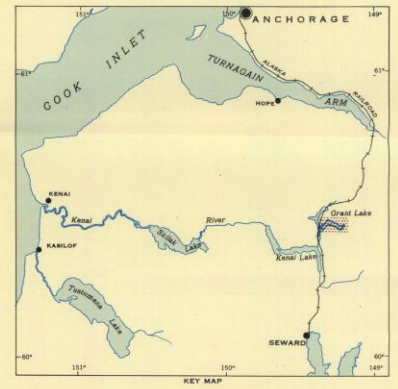




GRANT LAKE DAM SITE  
Scale 1:2400 or 1 inch=200 feet  
Contour Interval 10 feet on land  
Contour Interval 5 feet on water surface  
Datum is mean sea level

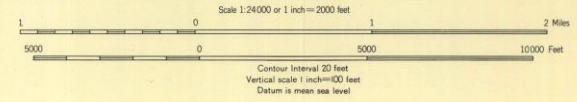


Note: Shore line shown by dashed line is approximate, based on an enlargement from the Grant Lake Quadrangle, Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Scale 1:62,600



Topography by Gordon C. Giles  
Surveyed in 1950

261°  
TRUE NORTH  
MAGNETIC NORTH  
APPROXIMATE MEAN  
DECLINATION 1960



Subject to adjustment  
All crosses (X) are plane table bench marks except those marked B M

GRANT CREEK AND GRANT LAKE  
ALASKA  
Printed in 1961

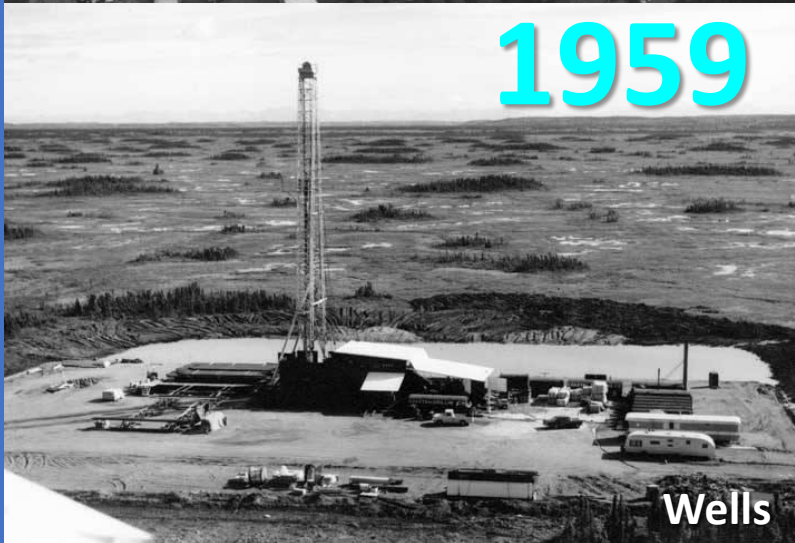
Hydropower proposals





Farbman  
LIFE magazine

1959



1959

Wells

Anchorage Museum of History & Art. Library & Archives.



1960

Wells

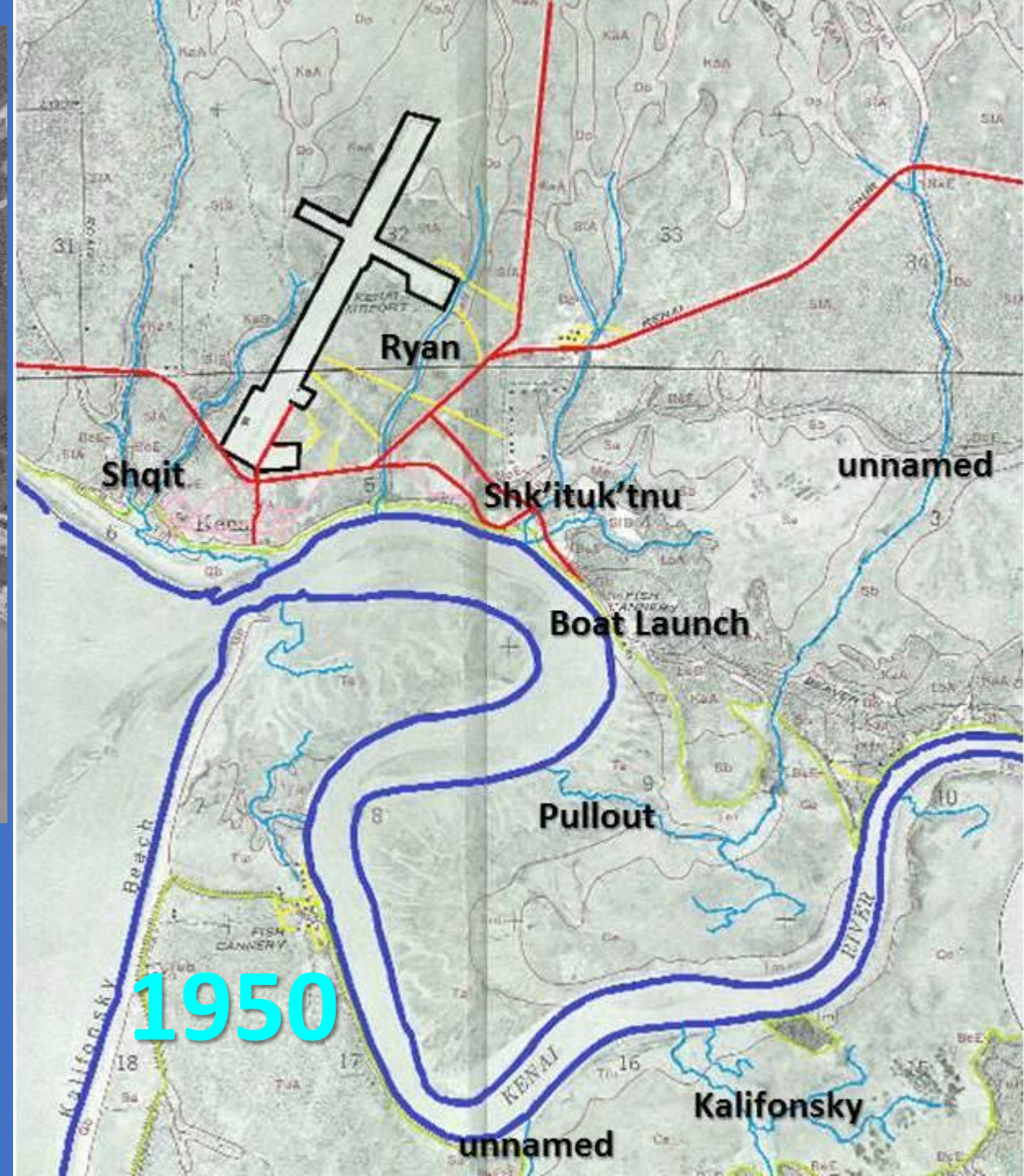
Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Oil strikes reset the  
economic focus



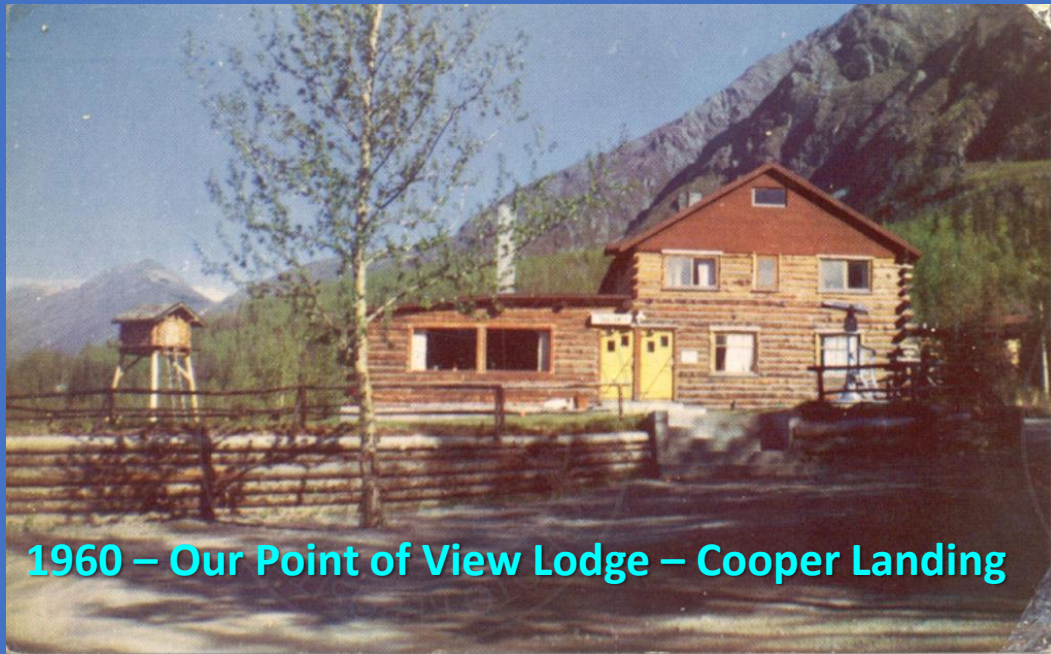
1964

# City of Kenai vs estuary creeks

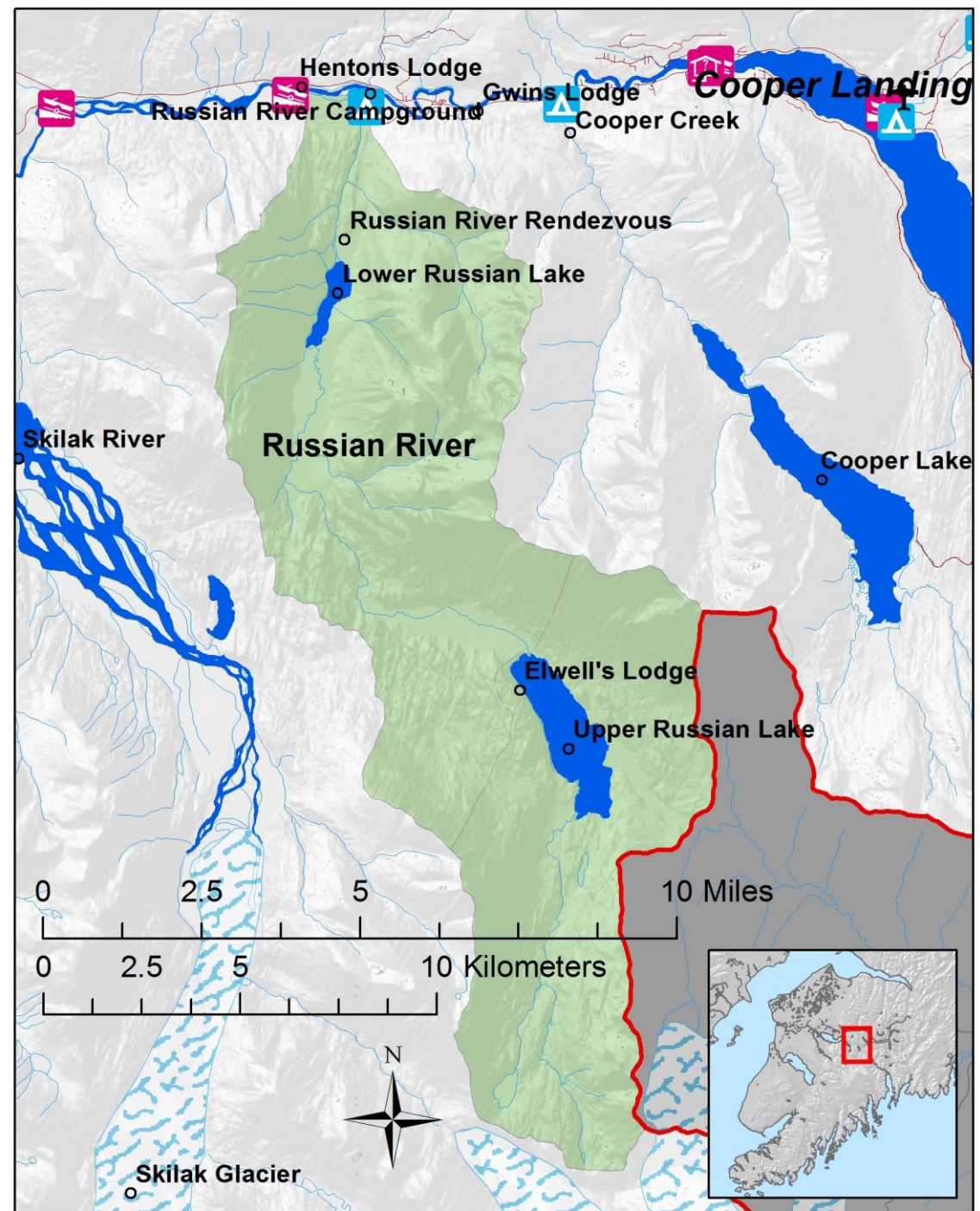


1950

Mid-1900s sport fishing grew in the upper Kenai River area.

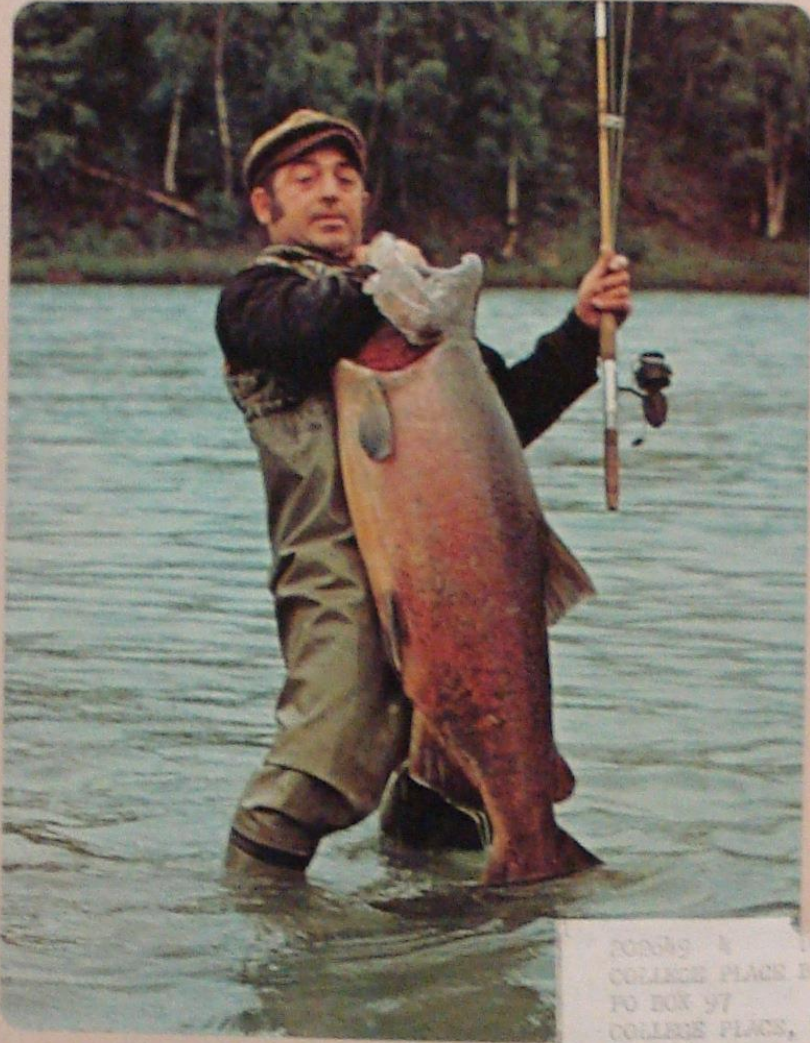


1960 – Our Point of View Lodge – Cooper Landing



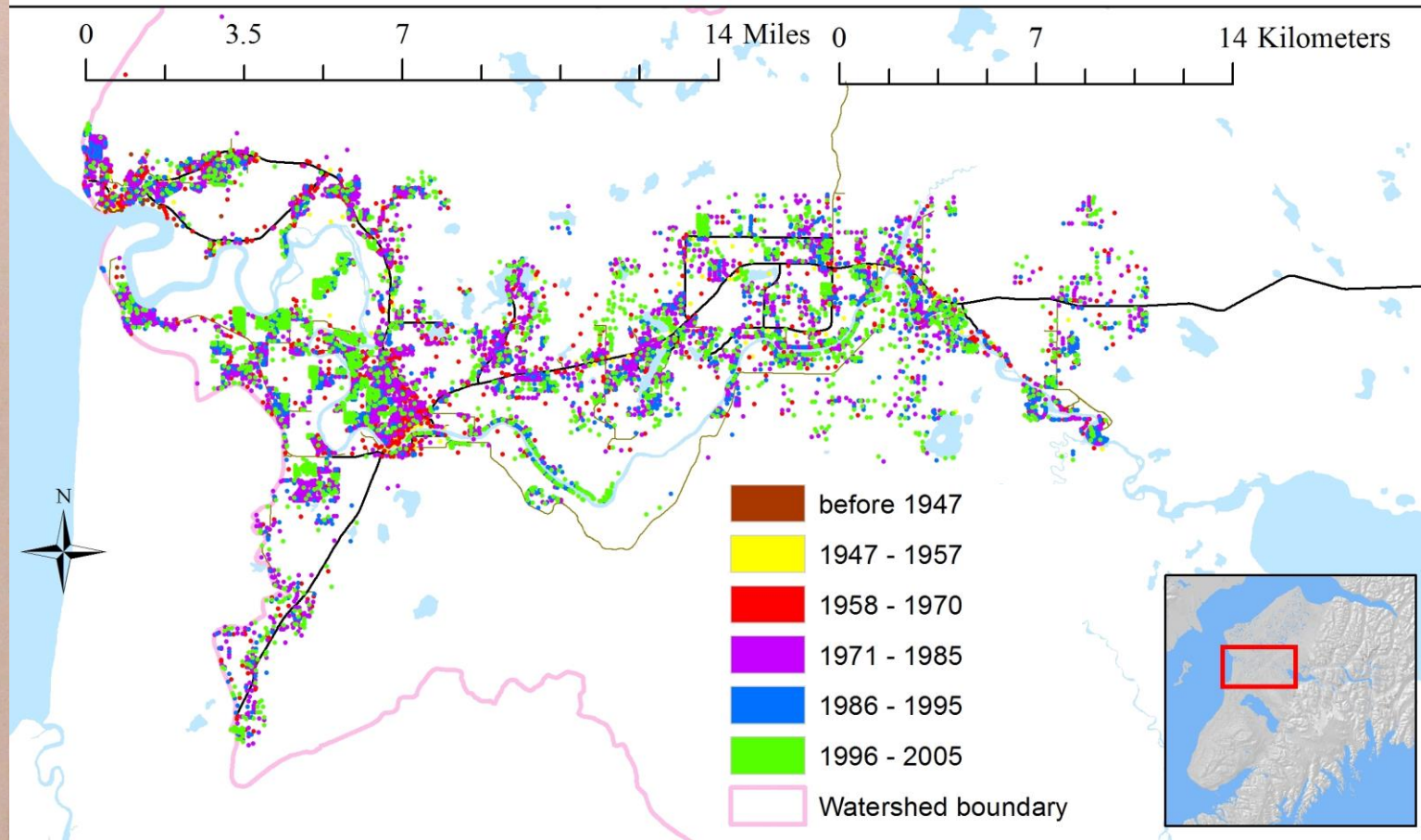
Alaska Airlines presents  
**SPENCER  
DE VITO'S  
BRAG:**

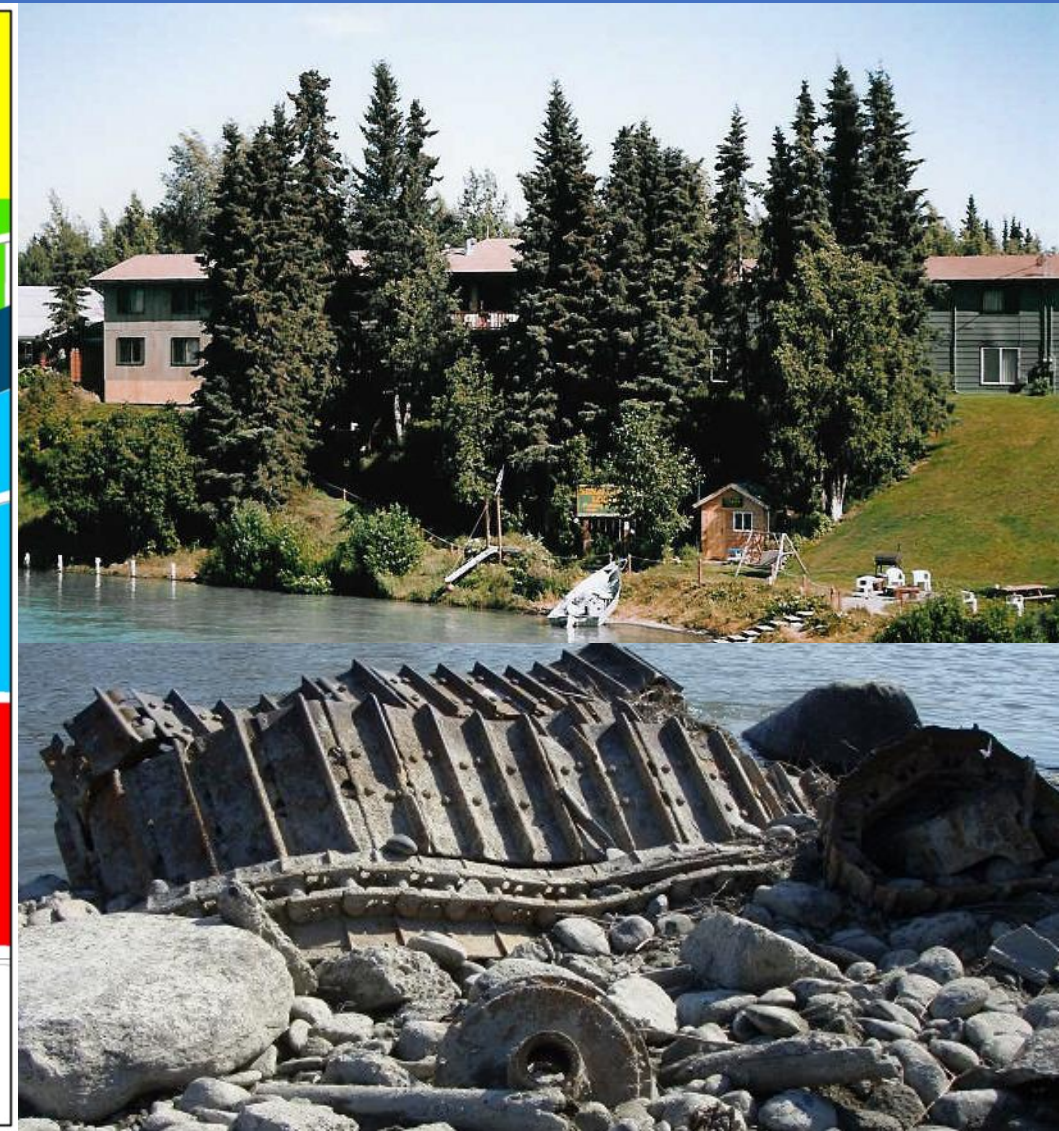
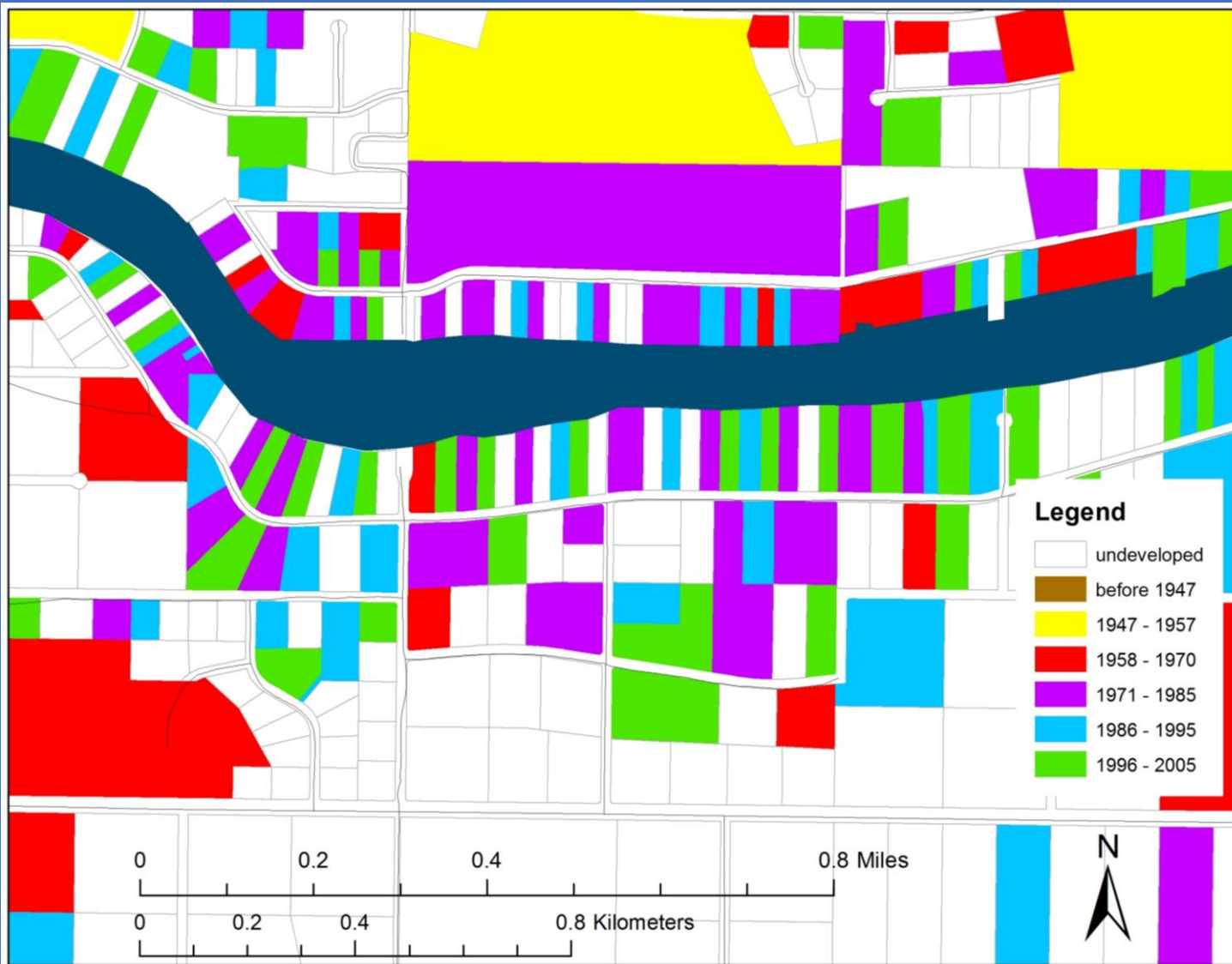
"I caught a 75-pound king salmon on a 15-pound-test line. Now tell me your fish story."  
—Spencer De Vito, Kenai sportfishing guide and schoolteacher.



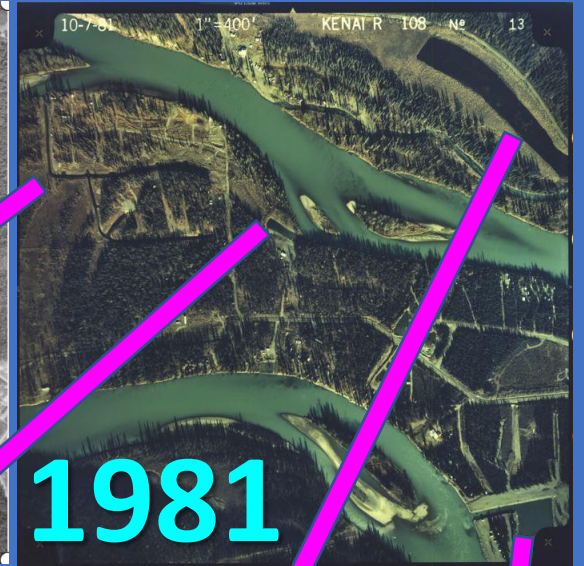
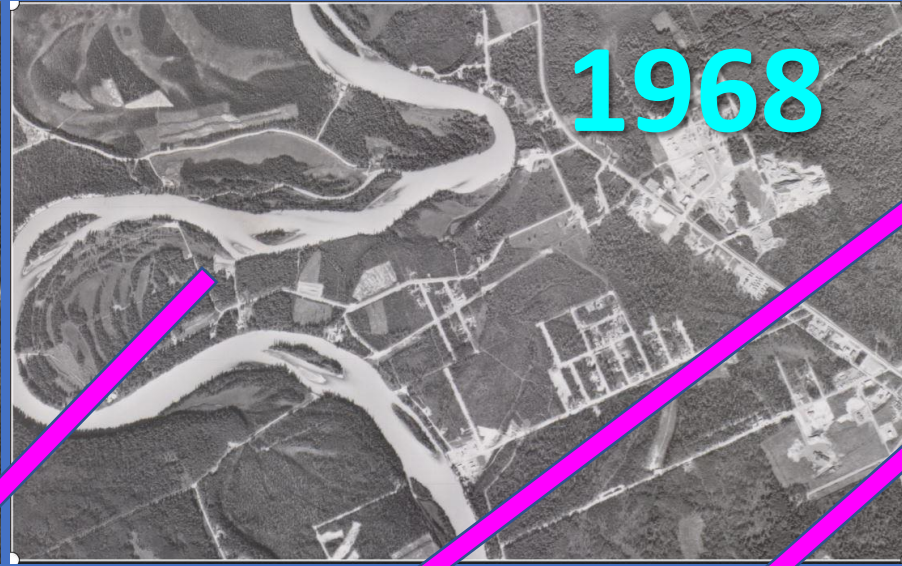
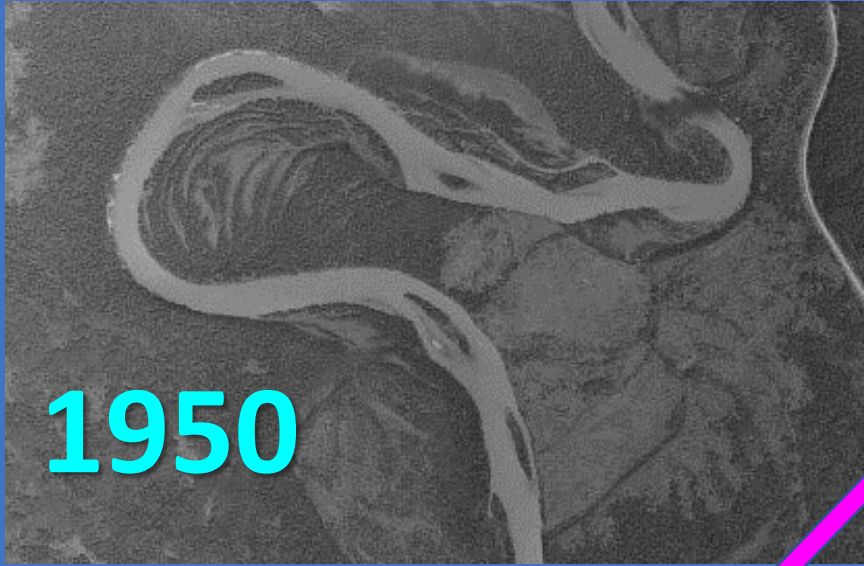
ORDER & BUY  
COLLEGE PLACE  
PO BOX 97  
COLLEGE PLACE, WA

# Peninsula salmon craze!

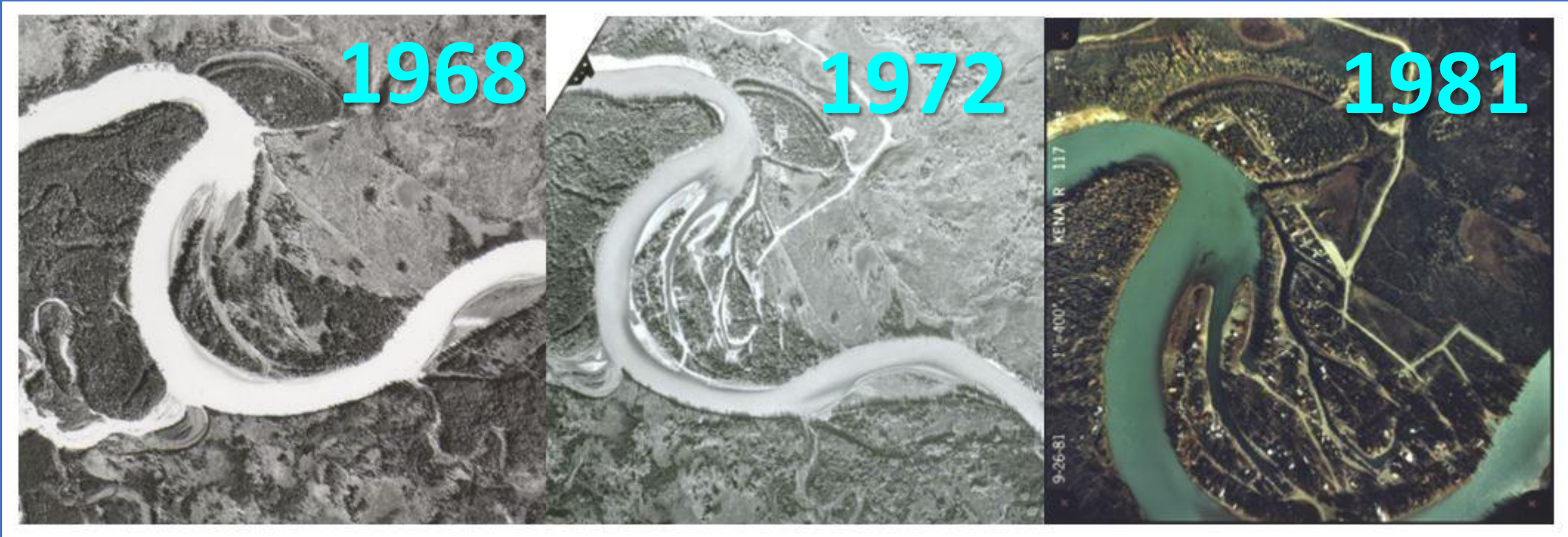




# Early riverfront use & development

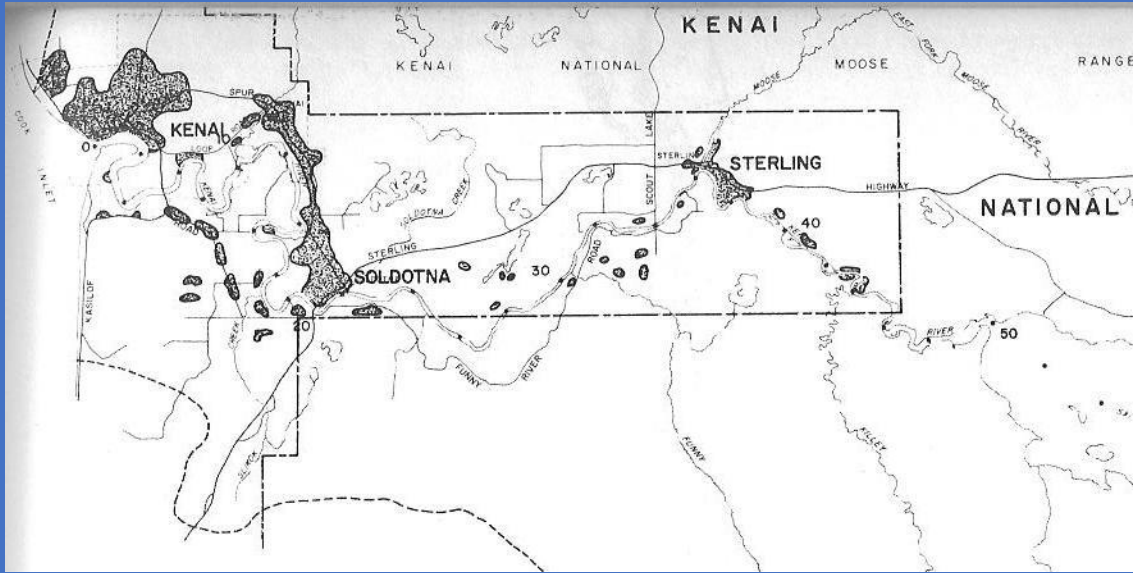


Big Eddy dredging

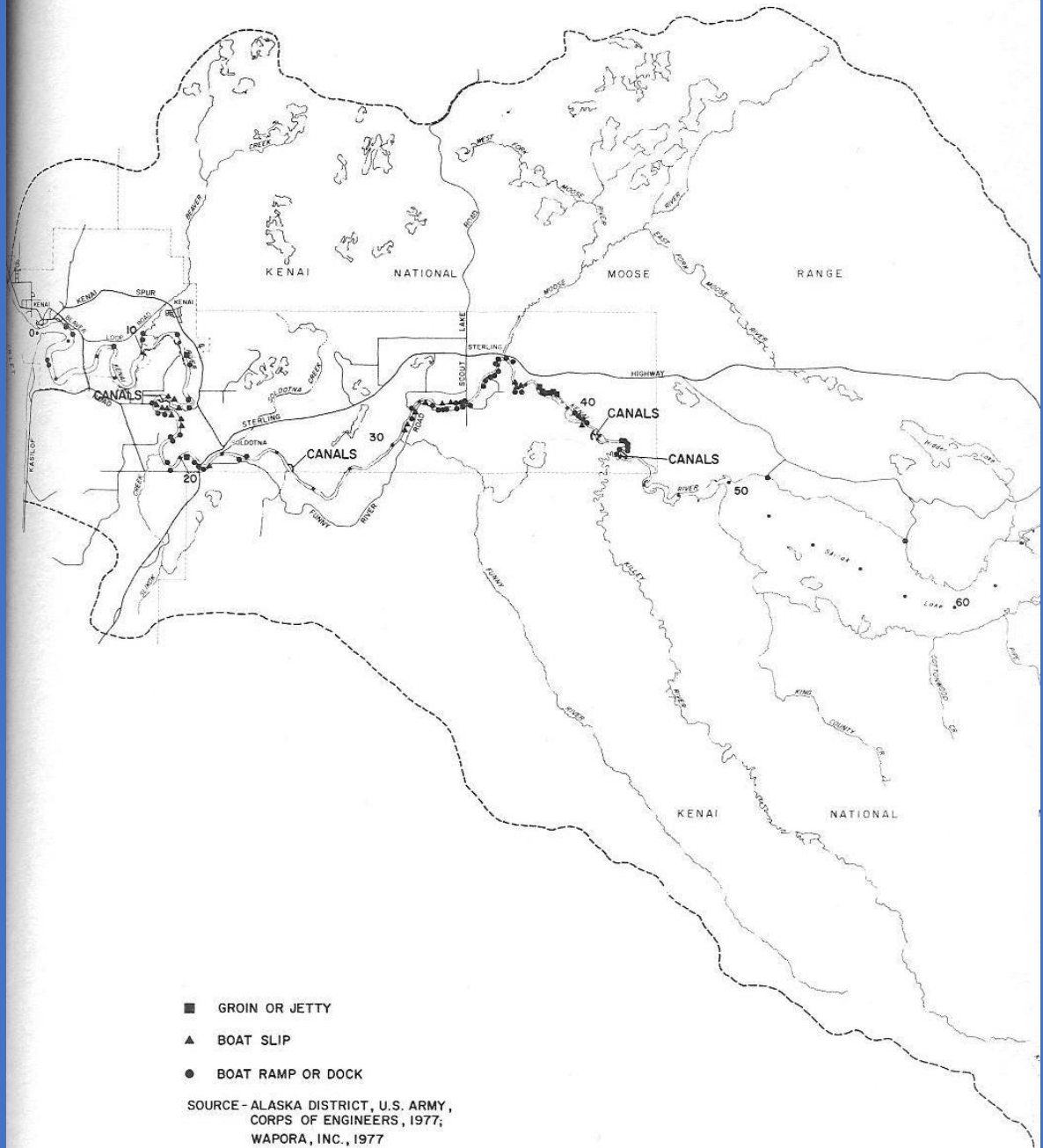


# Kenai Keys

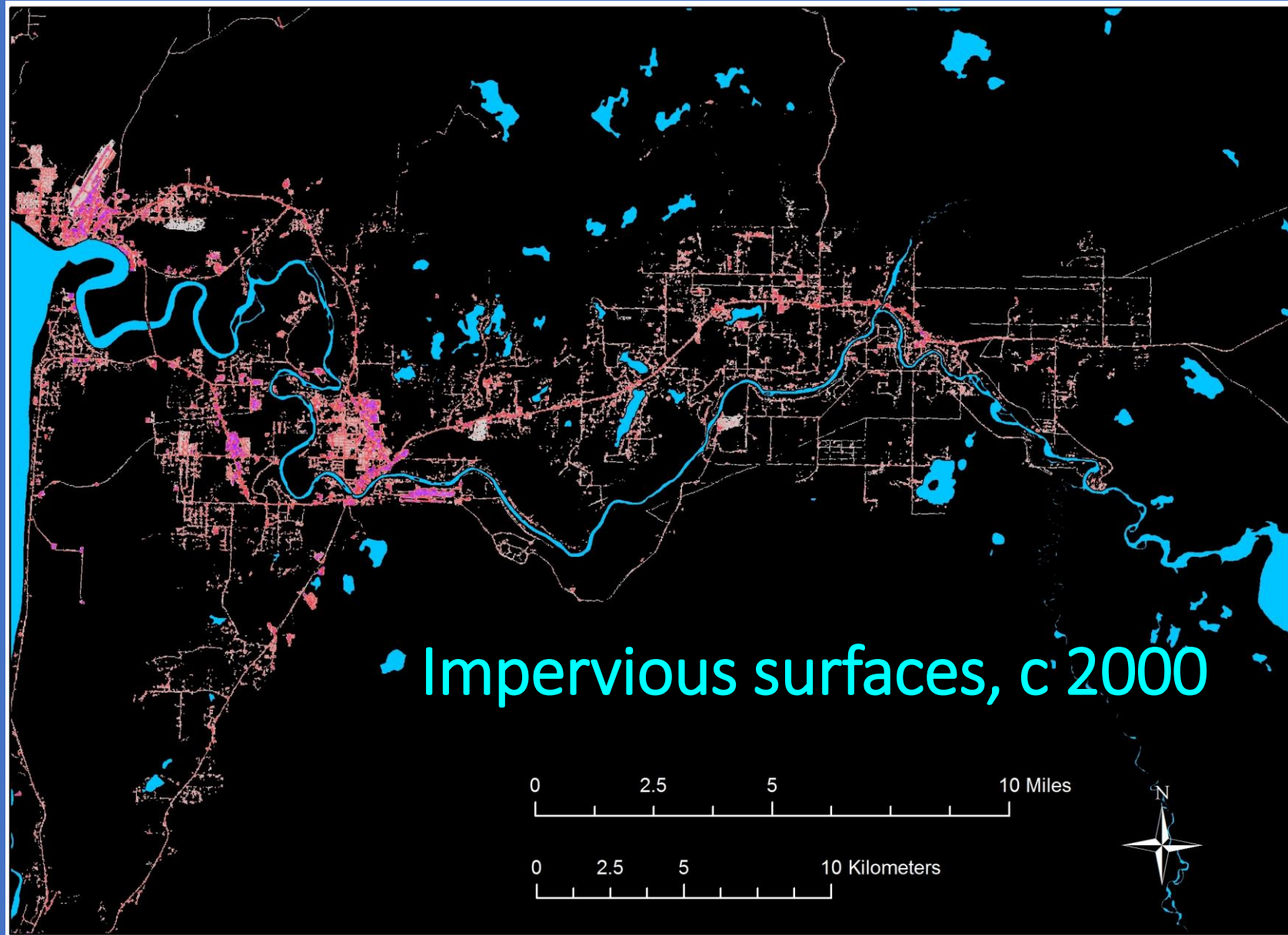




USACE – 1977  
Serious studies  
of problems  
began





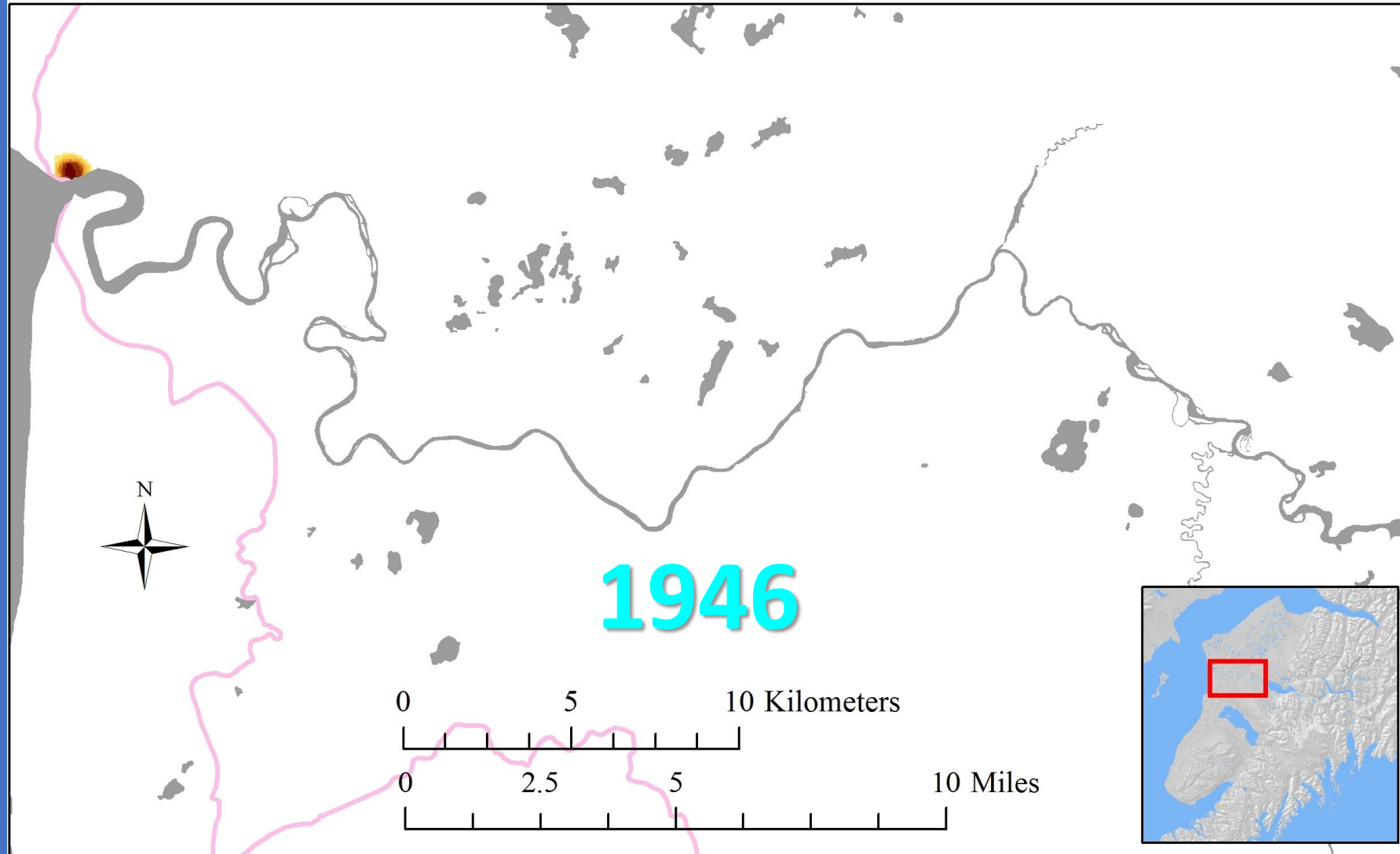


Threats  
remain

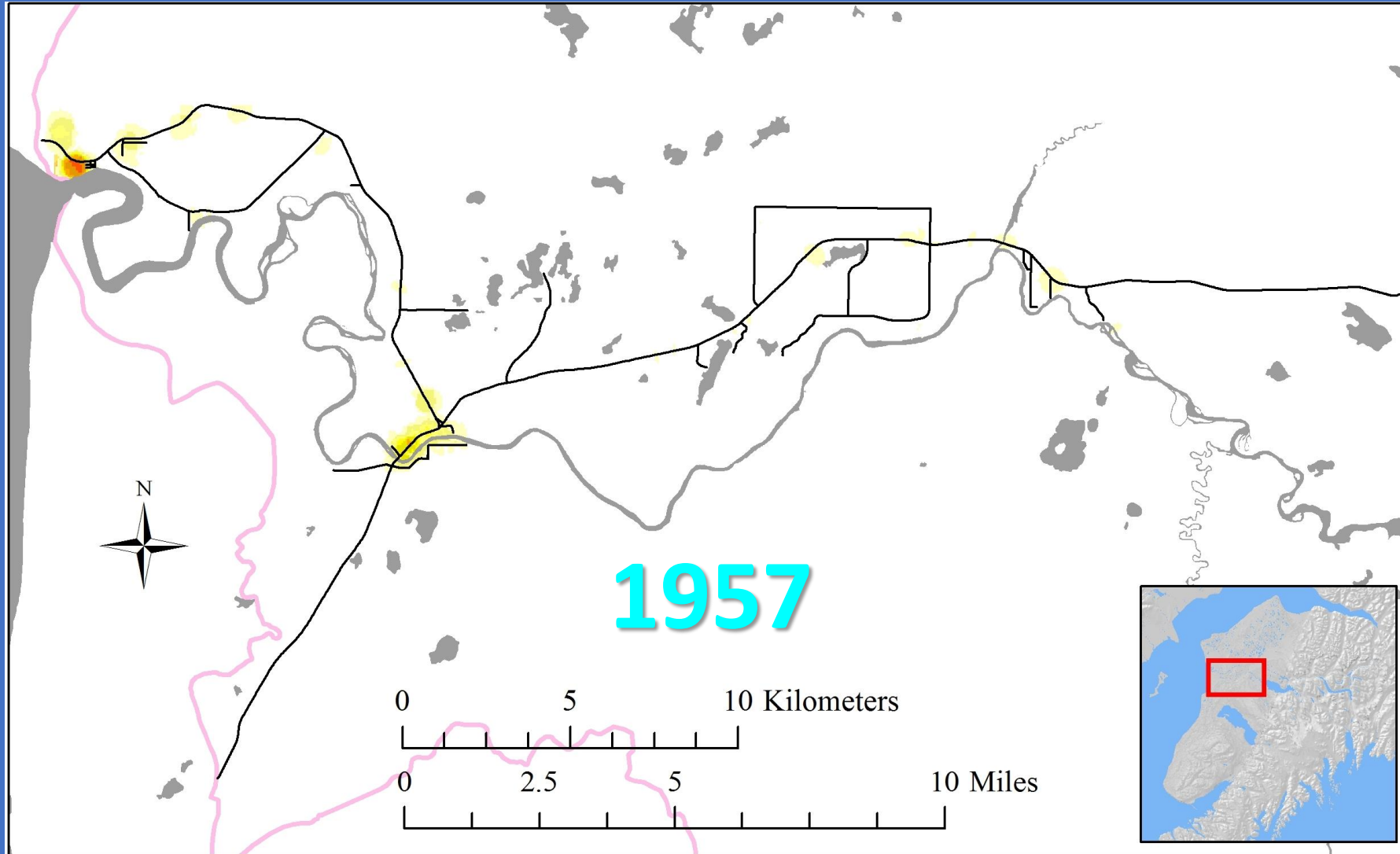


*Thank you*  
for decades of real  
progress on  
preserving and  
revitalizing riverine  
habitat.

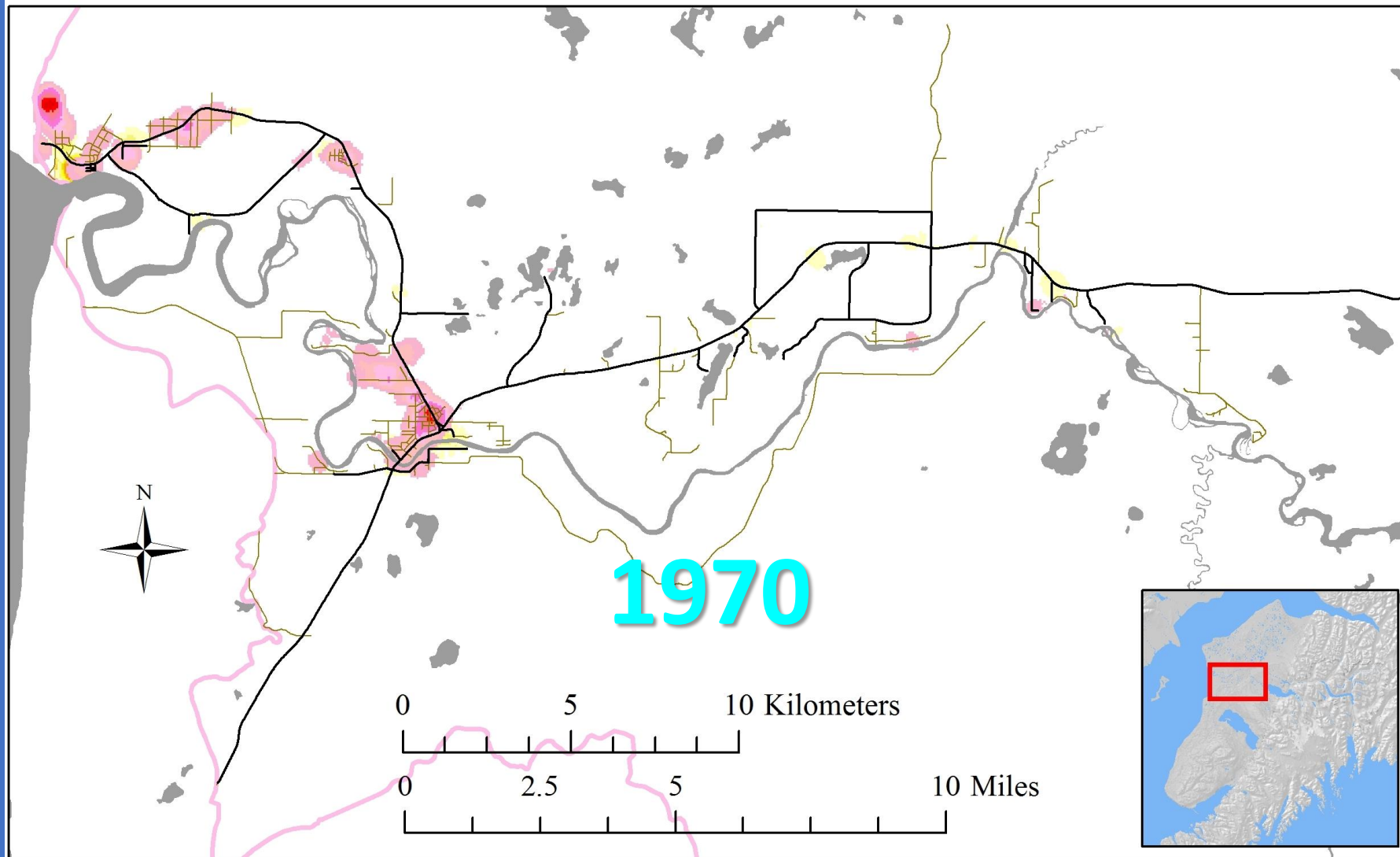
# Density of development in the lower Kenai River watershed



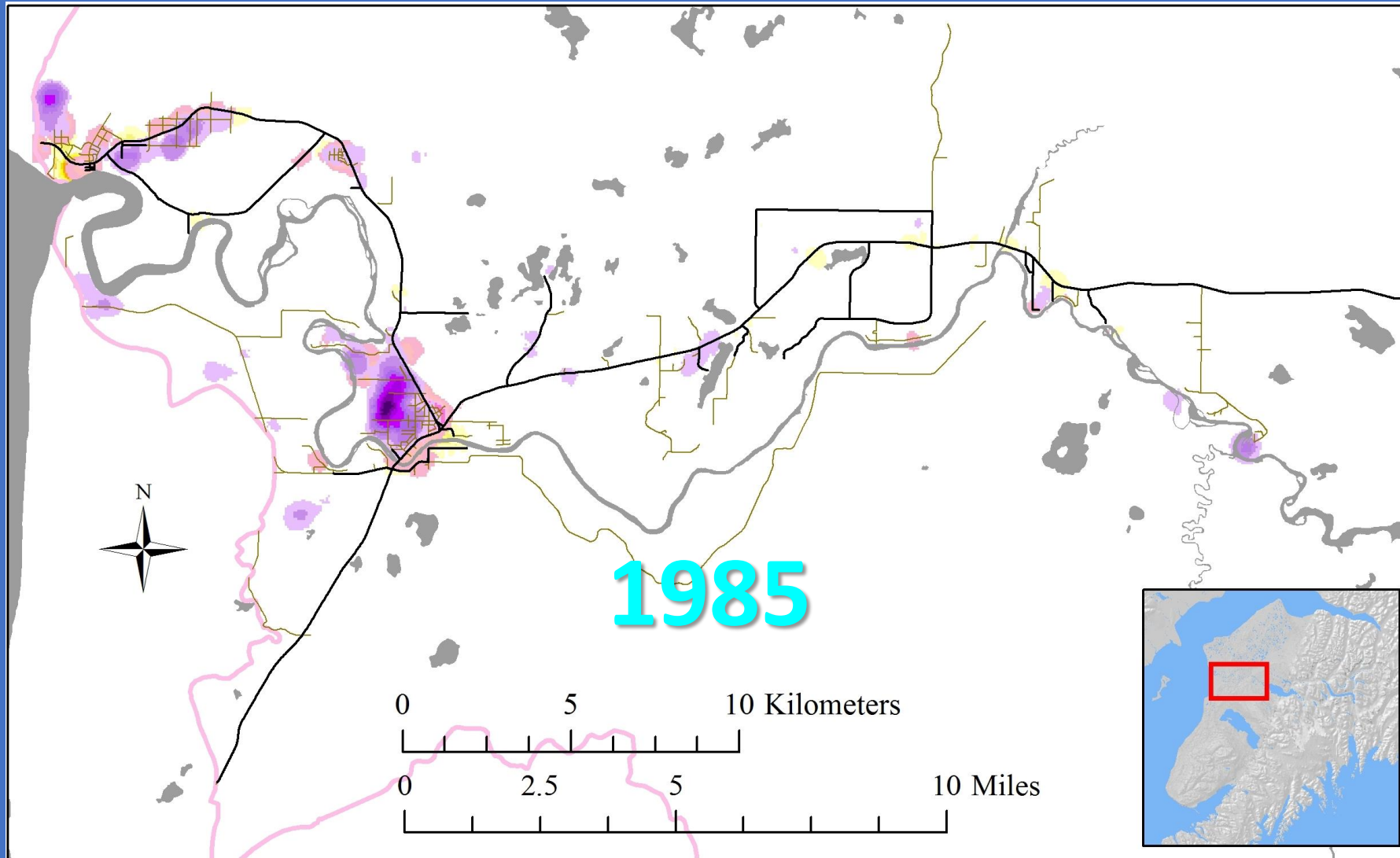
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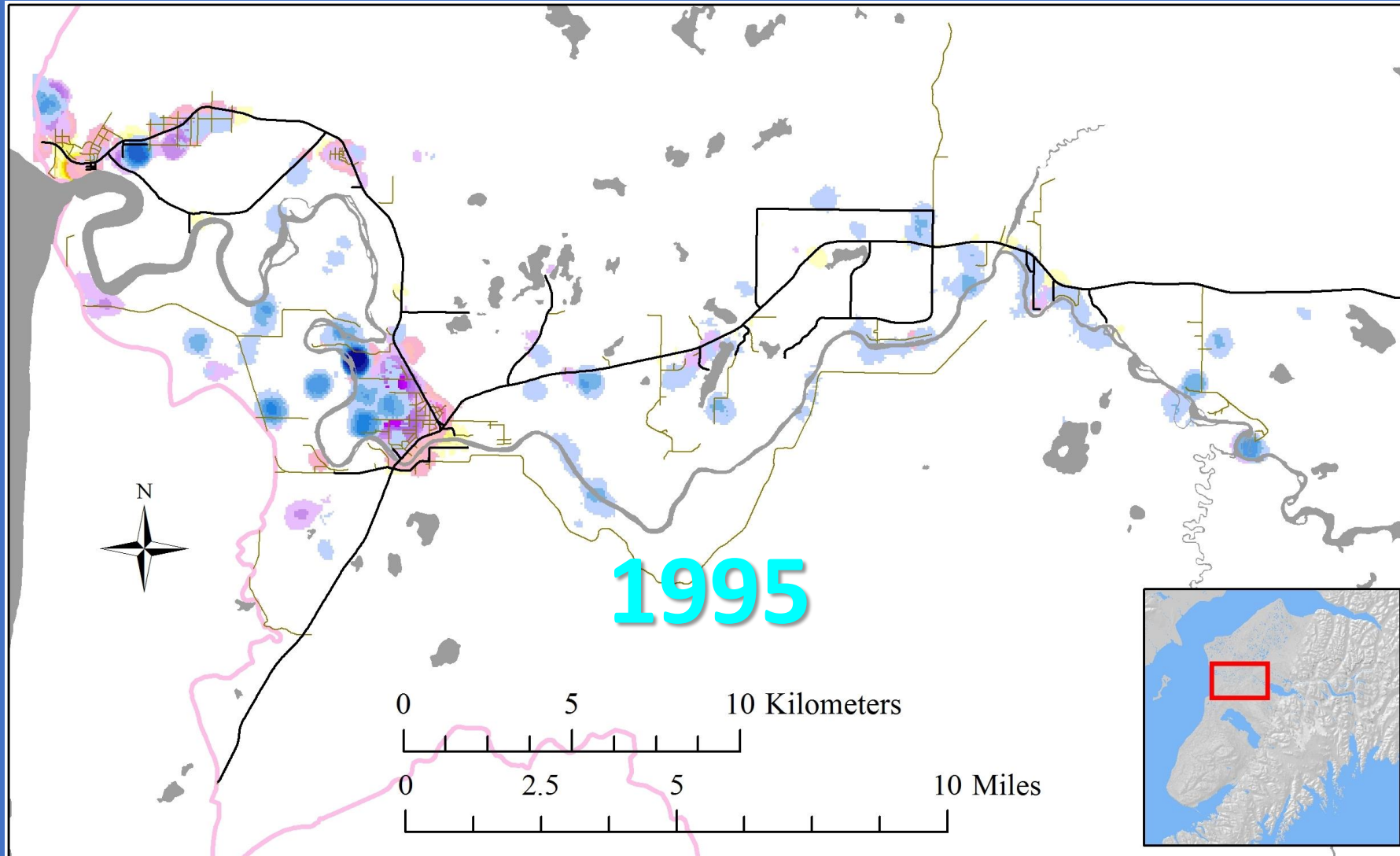
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