



KENAI
PENINSULA



**FISH HABITAT
PARTNERSHIP
2024
ANNUAL REPORT**

About KPFHP

The mission of the **KENAI PENINSULA FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP** is to protect, maintain and enhance fish habitat.

The Kenai Fish Habitat Partnership (KPFHP) is committed to fostering effective collaborations to preserve healthy fish populations, ecosystems, and economies within the Kenai Peninsula Borough. This report summarizes the collective accomplishments of all KPFHP projects in 2024 Funding for these projects, including KPFHP coordination, is provided by the National Fish Habitat Partnership. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners for their hard work and dedication to fish habitat conservation.

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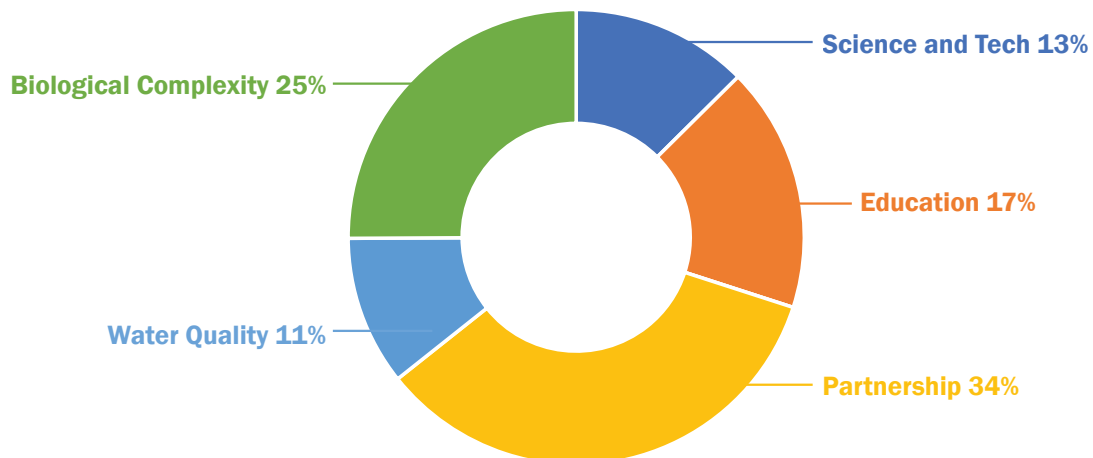
www.kenaifishpartnership.org



KPFHP Funding Concentration 2010-2024

\$2.2 Million NFHP Funds

\$3.1 Million Matching Funds



KPFHP Partners



SOLDOTNA



Quartz Creek Watershed Instream Flow Reservations and Anadromous Waters Catalogue Nominations

This project will establish legal protection through instream flow reservations for up to 13 river reaches and one lake, while making over 5 years of hydrological time series data from the Quartz Creek watershed publicly available. ADF&G expanded the stream-gaging network originally established in 2018, extending its operation by an additional year and incorporating two new discharge measurement sites at Bean Creek and Devils Creek - both additions to the project's original scope.

Throughout this period, we conducted fish presence surveys to update the Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC), with opportunistic sampling occurring on Devils Creek and other streams in the area. Our August 1 electrofishing survey of Devils Creek documented several Coho salmon fry, juvenile Dolly Varden, and adult Sockeye salmon spawners. This data has led to an AWC nomination currently in progress, which will provide official documentation of anadromous habitat and ensure fish habitat protection for Devils Creek.

The hydrologic data collected serves multiple purposes, including informing fish passage design, supporting streambank and habitat restoration initiatives, enhancing floodway management strategies, developing climate resilience models, and facilitating Title 16 permitting processes. Based on our findings, we developed comprehensive hydrologic recommendations aimed at ensuring the long-term conservation of fish populations and their essential habitats in the region.

This work builds upon the instream flow program's significant accomplishments, which include filing rights-of-way on over 350 river reaches and 4 lakes since inception, totaling over 2,600 river miles of protected fish habitat. Under this approach, much of the water in these rivers remains available for out-of-stream uses while ensuring that fish and wildlife water needs are prioritized. The perpetual nature of prior appropriation water rights underscores the importance of securing sufficient water for instream flows, as there is seldom a second chance to do so.



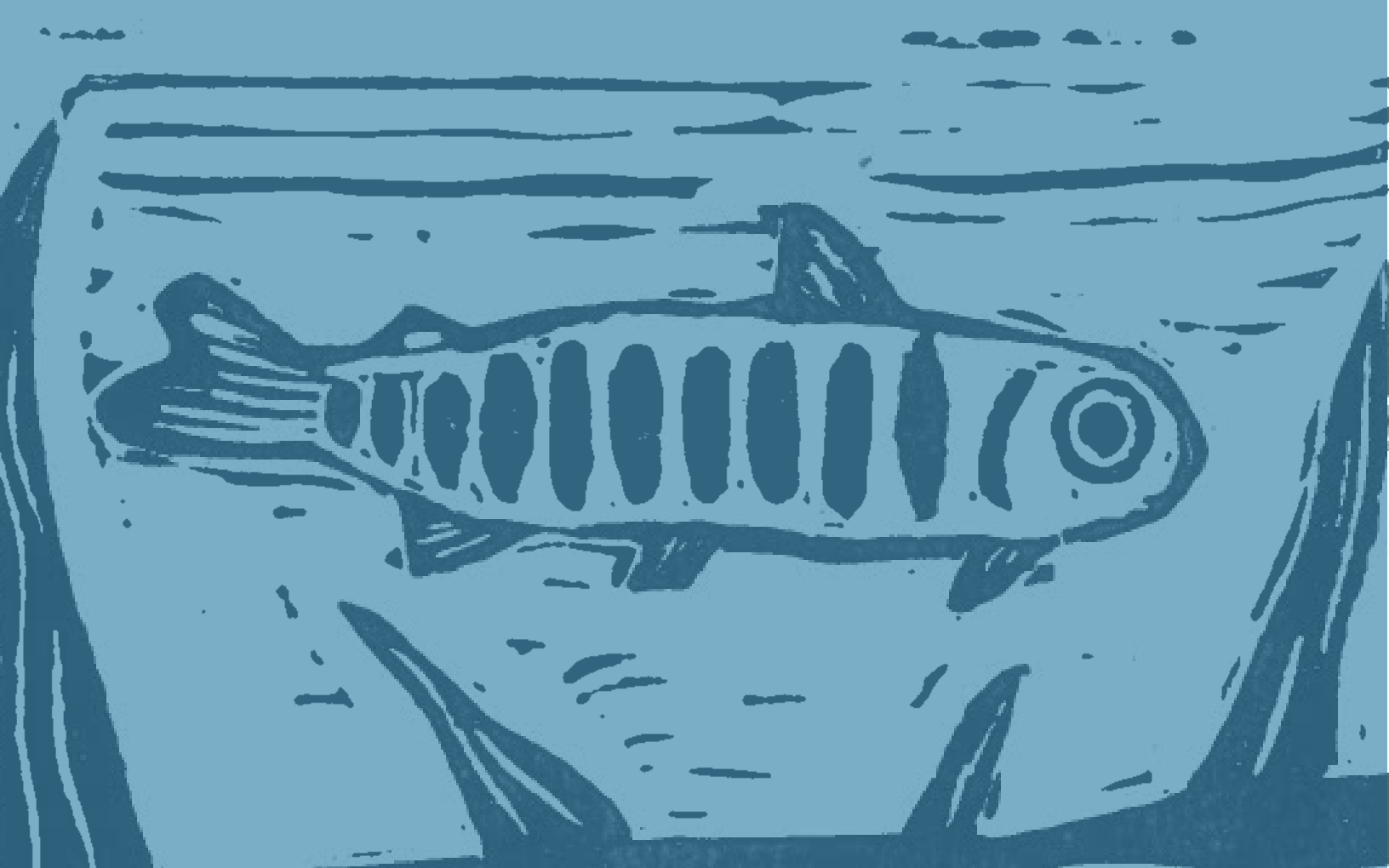


Quartz Freshwater Invasive Species Mitigation and Control on the Kenai Peninsula

This project safeguards the Kenai Peninsula from destructive freshwater invasive species including Elodea, Northern pike, and dreissenid mussels through comprehensive early detection methods such as vegetation surveys and eDNA sampling. Additionally, the project implements key components of the updated KP-CISMA Reed Canarygrass Strategic Management Plan, including containment, control, and eradication operations, alongside targeted education and outreach within selected watersheds.

During the 2024 field season, KWF staff conducted thorough invasive aquatic plant surveys at eight lakes: Douglas Lake, Longmere Lake, Loon Lake, Scout Lake, Spirit Lake, Sports Lake, Tirmore Lake, and Vogel Lake. Using a combination of rake throw and visual (aquascope) survey techniques, they confirmed no Elodea presence at any of these locations, generating 332 absence records for submission to AKEPIC.

The KWF Invasives Coordinator led two high-impact outreach events in 2024 that effectively reached recreationists, commercial fishing guides, and school-aged children. In May, they hosted a booth at the three-day Kenai Peninsula Sport Rec & Trade Show, where KWF staff and KP-CISMA partners promoted awareness of Elodea and northern pike to approximately 450 hunters, anglers, boaters, and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts. In June, the Invasives Coordinator staffed the KP-CISMA booth at KWF's Kenai River Fair, where educational and interpretive activities taught approximately 500 children about the threats Elodea and reed canarygrass pose to salmon habitat health.



Creating Kenai Watershed Stewards Through Adopt-A-Stream

Our comprehensive Adopt-a-Stream program provides students with immersive environmental education through a combination of classroom learning and hands-on creek exploration. Each program session includes both a Class Visit and a Creek Walk, where students delve into essential topics including Water Quality 101, watershed science, Salmon Life Cycles, Aquatic Macroinvertebrates, Invasive Species, Scientific Tools, Cold Weather Safety, and Fish Anatomy.

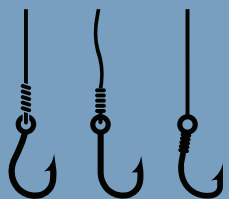
In 2024, our program achieved remarkable engagement with **3,860** Student Contact Hours, conducting **66** Creek Walks and delivering **74** Class Visits.



Stream Watch by the Numbers

In 2024, Stream Watch trained 79 volunteer ambassadors through in-person and on-line formats. The Ambassadors performed regular stewardship/educational activities and bolstered conservation efforts.

136



Pounds of fishing line recycled

3,420



Pounds of litter removed

7,163



Cigarette butts collected

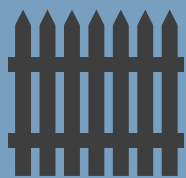
2,691



Volunteer hours donated



3.5+



Miles of habitat fencing installed

9,166



Members of the public interacted





National Fish Habitat Partnership Board

Visits the Kenai Peninsula!

At the end of July 2024, the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board of Directors held one of their in-person board meetings in Anchorage. Following the meeting, KPFHP hosted the NFHP Board of Directors and Staff for a field trip and tour of several KPFHP projects sites. The first stop was at the Russian River to take a tour and learn about Stream Watch. Next, the board traveled to Soldotna (pictured above) to see the Kenai River and learn more about a habitat restoration project contributed by the USF&W Service, ADF&G, and Trout Unlimited. The last stop, on the way back to Anchorage, was Tern Lake. Here ADF&G explained the importance of in-stream flow reservations and anadromous waters cataloging.

