



# THE ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY OF SALMON IN THE MAT-SU BASIN:

## Preliminary Framework for Valuation of Salmon Ecosystem Services

---

### PROJECT

This project is designed to improve understanding of the economic and social value of salmon habitat, and to support resource planning in the Mat-Su Basin. This will be accomplished by synthesizing the best available data on the economics of salmon fishing in the Mat-Su, use of salmon by residents and visitors to the area, and distribution of habitats in the region that support salmon production. Economic values include market and non-market net benefits related to commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries for salmon species from anadromous streams in the Susitna and Matanuska River basins. Another data gathering method for this project will consist of key respondent interviews with knowledgeable Mat-Su residents to collect information on location specific local knowledge related to habitat quality and the human dimension of sport fishing with particular emphasis on Chinook salmon fishing opportunities.

### WHY CONDUCT THIS RESEARCH

Significant investments have been made in recent years to study the relative economic contributions of salmon, the temporal and spatial use of salmon by people, the distribution of anadromous waters, and the relative abundance of salmon species among sub-basin watersheds within the Mat-Su Basin. While region-wide assessments have been conducted, we seek to investigate the extent to which relative economic values can be mapped and attributed to specific water bodies at a spatial scale relevant to local and regional decision-making. We also seek to understand the social value of access to locally available salmon for residents of the Mat-Su Basin.

### PARTNERSHIP

The research project is funded by The Nature Conservancy of Alaska, also a partner on this project. This is a collaborative research effort between The Nature Conservancy, Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and The Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

### PRODUCTS

This project will produce a GIS map project that incorporates spatial data to assist resource management planning in the Mat-Su Basin. This will include harvest and use information of salmon by sport harvesters, nearby commercial harvesters, and subsistence harvesters. A final report will analyze net economic benefits of salmon fishing by residents and visitors to the Mat-Su Region.

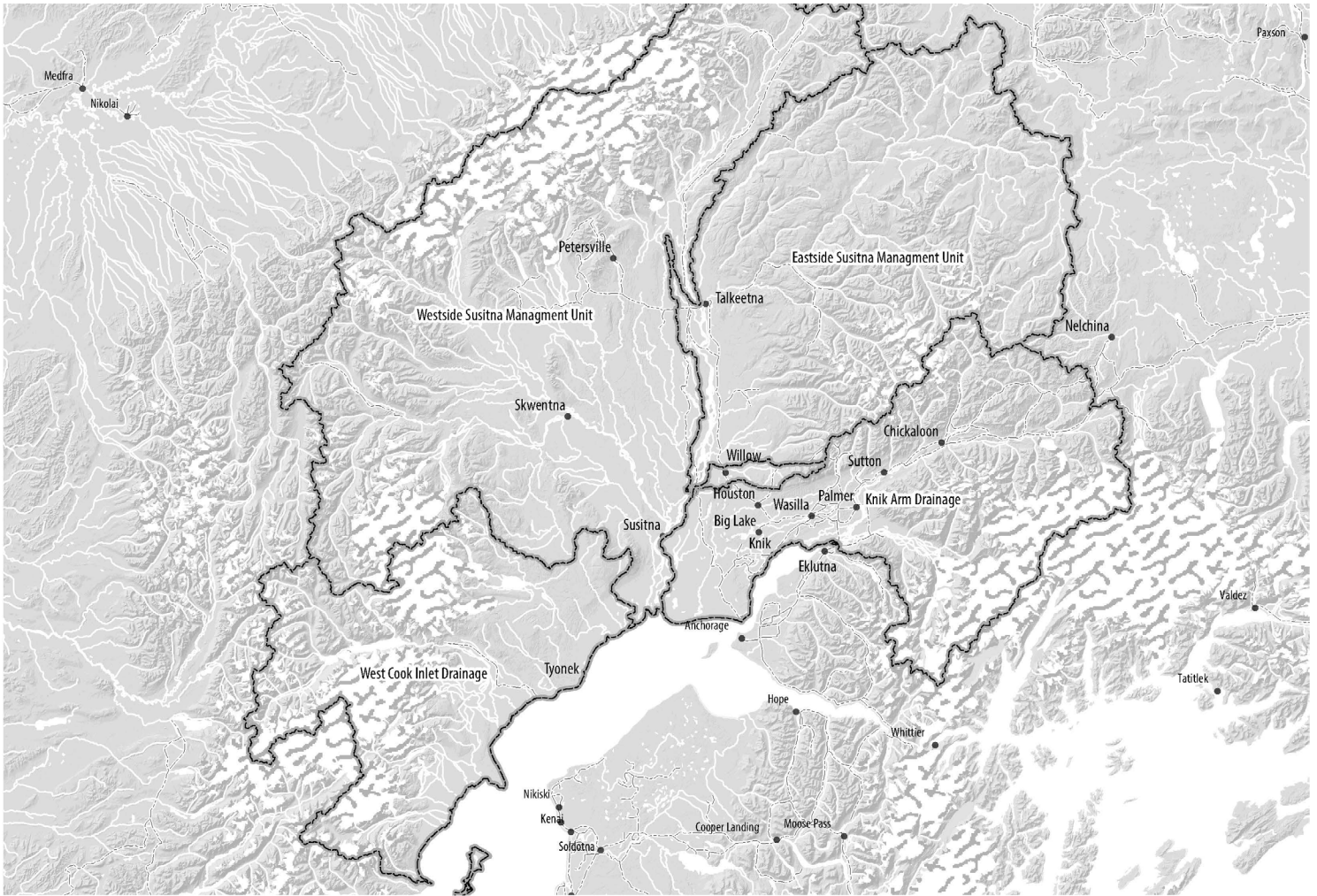
### TIMELINE

This project began in April 2014 when project partners began gathering data from various entities. The project partners are working on a draft GIS database to be completed by the end of October 2014, and will present preliminary data to the Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission in November 2014.

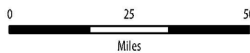
Also in November researchers are seeking to interview residents of the Mat-Su to understand why living in an area with salmon fishing opportunities is important. Final analysis, a completed GIS database, and final report are scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2015.

---

# STUDY AREA



Project Study Area



## ADF&G Contact

Davin Holen  
Subsistence Program Manager, Southern Alaska  
Division of Subsistence  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
907-267-2807  
davin.holen@alaska.gov

## ISER Contact

Tobias Schwörer  
Research Professional  
Institute of Social and Economic Research  
tschworer@alaska.edu  
907-786-5404



**DIVISION OF SUBSISTENCE**