

DOT/PF Comments on HB199

How do Title 16 ADF&G Fish Habitat Permits Affect DOT&PF Projects?

Many DOT&PF projects affect creeks, streams, and rivers that support anadromous fish. Current AS 16.05.871-.901 specifies that all activities within or across a specified anadromous waterbody requires a permit from ADF&G before altering or affecting “the natural flow or bed” fish stream. This is commonly referred to as the “Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit”.

DOT&PF environmental, engineering, and hydrologist staff work closely with ADF&G fish habitat biologists during the project development process and Title 16 fish habitat permitting process to create transportation projects that preserve or improve fish habitat while improving transportation infrastructure for Alaskans. For example, DOT&PF works with ADF&G to improve culverts to allow for anadromous fish passage at every opportunity; similarly, bridge abutments and piles are designed to allow for the natural meander of fish streams and to increase fish habitat.

DOT&PF staff value the input of the public and resource agencies throughout the project development process. Conversations early in project development allow for design modifications to be incorporated into the project, allows the environmental impacts to be accurately analyzed in the NEPA document, assures compliance with our federal funding partners, and gives the public and agencies more opportunities to voice their concerns and improve outcomes for anadromous fish habitat. In particular, discussions with ADF&G fish habitat biologist beginning at project scoping, continuing through the NEPA process, and concluding with Title 16 permitting allows DOT&PF to design and build projects that often improve fish habitat.

Overview of Public and Agency Involvement During DOT&PF Project Development

Project Development Step	Public and Agency Input
Planning / State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)	General project need, STIP review, public comment
Scoping	Agency scoping letter, environmental impact identification, public notice of beginning environmental and engineering
NEPA document development	Environmental impact analysis, alternative identification, public/agency comment, mitigation development
NEPA decision	Alternative selection, Public notice, appeal period
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 Wetlands Permitting	Agency and public notice, consultation on mitigation measures, Corps NEPA
ADF&G Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit	Consultation with ADF&G habitat biologist, DOT&PF engineers and hydrologists, technical tweaks to in-water work